

**PRESENTATION TO NANAIMO CITY COUNCIL**

**BY**



**WATERSHED GOVERNANCE**

**APRIL 27TH, 2015**

Greetings to each of you and thank you for allowing me to speak.

My name is June Ross and I reside at #5, 3400-Rock City Road, Nanaimo.

I am here as a follow-up to a previous presentation I did on March 9th, 2015 on behalf of Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition and because we noted in the AGENDA that Mr. Sims had prepared the promised report for Council on Watershed Governance. I thank him for his diligence and for preparing this report.

There are several areas of this report I would like to comment on or more than anything...to ask questions about. I would like responses to my questions in writing following this Council meeting please;

First comment;

We did not, through our presentation, suggest that the City should not continue to support the RDN in their endeavors. We would assume that your support would always be there for their endeavors even with the creation of a Watershed Board. As you have indicated however, their mandate is to look after areas outside the City Boundaries. I also do not understand how you are of the opinion that the RDN's mandate comes anywhere near being a Watershed Board? I do not see the Snuneymuxw sitting on this Committee and I see the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Committee as one that has been struck with mostly staff versus having a technical committee comprised of sectors outside of staff, environmental people, etc. that is there to advise the elected personnel of issues that require addressing. The staff of the RDN should be advising the technical Committee and they in turn should be advising the Board. This is not the structure I am seeing in the RDN nor in the Nanaimo River Roundtable. In addition to this the RDN has indicated they have not looked at the Nanaimo Watershed. In regard the RDN Action Plan - where is the environment addressed? How has the PUBLIC been consulted with?

Second Comment -

Yes we know our Watershed is owned by Two Forest Companies....which is why we are here asking for change.

I am going to refer to page 31 of the report that was received by council and in particular the Points to consider:

#3 - There is nothing in writing to assure access always to our watershed. There is nothing in writing to ensure the property cannot be sold off and parceled out to others...just as what occurred in Shawnigan Lake... and,,, just what occurred back in the late 1800's when Dunsmuir was given the E and N Land grant and then sold it off in parcels to the highest bidders. You rely only on a "strong partnership" and in our view....this is not adequate.

#4...It is said ..."the primary risk to the watershed is not logging. it is extreme rainfalls , climate change and pathogens present in surface water". On this piece we say this is not correct. Extreme rainfall and pathogens will present problems because of the logging that has occurred, and the roads that have been dug into the sides of mountains to gain access to the forests. There are few trees remaining that can stop slides from occurring and there is little natural vegetation left or roots from trees to provide the natural filtration system that occurs, thus not only do slides occur but pathogens form. Our Water Treatment plant that has been built at a huge expense, in our view, would not have been necessary if we had a natural watershed....one that is laden with trees and undergrowth. What was the total cost of the treatment plant to build? What will the cost be per annum to run the treatment plant?

#6. It is indicated that placer or mineral mining claims cannot be staked in a community watershed. Does this include coal mining? Does this include no dumping of hazardous material as has occurred in Shawnigan Lake's watershed?

From our perspective, the Watershed requires greater protection than what it currently has. The environment is suffering drastically all around us and nowhere do we see the environment being addressed first and foremost in any of the plans that currently exist. Environment includes all of the life that is supposed to exist in our watersheds....not just human life.

One last comment....I did an hour and a half webinar with the Freshwater Alliance of Canada. This Webinar was strictly on the BC Water Sustainability Act. If Mr. Sims is being told that Governance regulations are 3 or 4 years down the road.....I would like to see that in writing please because my understanding from the webinar was that the first of the regulations were to come out in June this year and the rest were to come out in January of 2016. Even if they are three or four years down the road, why would we have to wait before a watershed board is created?

In closing...I note in a Facebook page that mayor and council had a trip up into the Watershed. I am asking, did you have to wear steel toed boots and wear safety vests in order to do this tour?

The reason I am asking is that four years ago when we had a 300 person attendance at VIWWC's Nanaimo Forum on Water, we had hired buses and sought permission from Island Timberlands and Timberwest to take the buses up into the watershed on a tour. These two so called "friendly companies", placed such restrictions on us that we instead had to do a tour of the Parksville Watersheds. The restrictions were; everyone had to wear steel toed boots and safety vests and an Island Timberlands person had to be on each bus, even though we had City Employees willing to do the tour. So much for public involvement in the well being of our Watershed!

Our view has not changed. We believe the City needs to plan on developing a watershed board for governance and management of our watershed. This can be done now and it is right to do it now.

I thank you for listening and we remain hopeful you will do what is right to do.



## VIWWC MEMBERS

- Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition Society
- Coalwatch
- Comox Valley Water Watch Coalition
- Gabriola Groundwater Management Society
- Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition
- Martindale Residents Association
- Mid-Island Coalition for Strong Communities
- North Oyster/Diamond Ratepayers Association
- Oceanside Coalition for Strong Communities
- Parksville Residents Association
- Save Our Valley Alliance
- South Wellington & Area Community Association

# WATER

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# LIFE

VANCOUVER ISLAND



WATER WATCH COALITION

[www.vancouverislandwaterwatchcoalition.ca](http://www.vancouverislandwaterwatchcoalition.ca)

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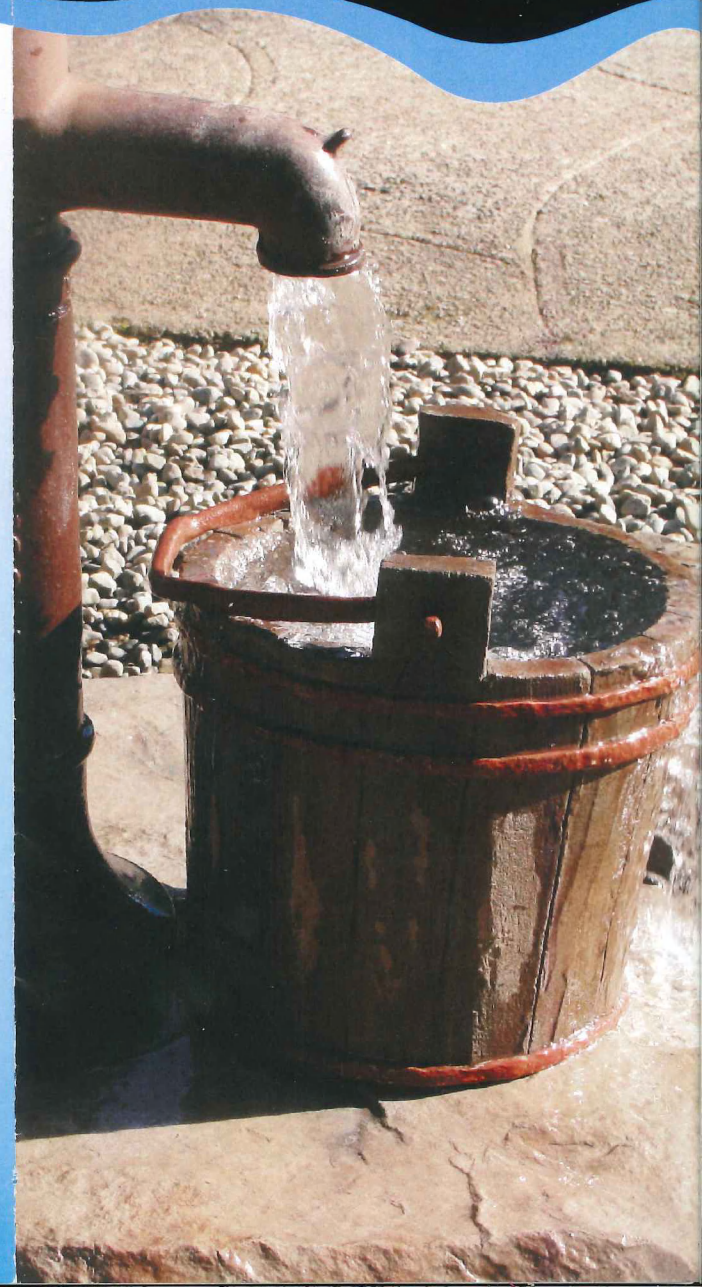
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VANCOUVER ISLAND



WATER WATCH COALITION

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# ≡ ABOUT VANCOUVER ISLAND WATER WATCH COALITION

Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition (VIWWC) was founded by a small group of concerned citizens in 2005 due to a concerted effort to privatize community water systems by profit seeking, out of province and country, corporations. The need to provide the public with accurate information regarding the harm privatization of public infrastructure and water resources would cause was imperative and, as a result, VIWWC was formed.

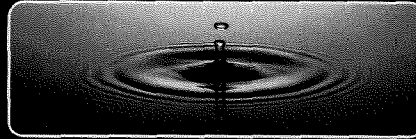
Vancouver Island Water Watch is a non-partisan, multi-community organization that accepts no government funding and has expanded Island-wide to include a broad range of individuals, regional groups and organizations.

As an umbrella organization, the mission of VIWWC is to work at guiding and supporting our member groups in lobbying all levels of government while we engage in various water-related projects. Our goal is to inform citizens of the dangers of privatizing our water and the watersheds that sustain our communities. We believe that a well informed public will make the right choices for themselves, the communities they live in and the generations who will follow.

Water is a human right and must not be sold as a commodity. Nor is water just for human consumption, it sustains all life and we citizens must guard against those who would use profit as a means to control our environment and our communities. Ownership and Control of water/wastewater must be kept within the public domain Anything less and we will have failed the generations which follow us.

Join us in keeping water clean, safe, affordable, and accessible to all.

VANCOUVER ISLAND



WATER WATCH COALITION

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#### ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE

- Hosted three Large, well-attended Water Forums - Qualicum Beach, Nanaimo and Courtenay with speakers including Maude BarLow, Council of Canadians; Bill McKibben, 350.org; Linda McQuaig, Author; Doug White, former Snuneymuxw First Nations Chief; journalists Andrew Nikiforik, Ingmar Lee, and Damien Gillis; and many more.
- Lobbied municipal boards/councils encouraging them to become Blue Communities, with Nanaimo, Cumberland and Comox meeting the challenge.
- Displays VIWWC's 3-D Watershed maps at gatherings, in schools, government buildings and community events.
- Hosted a meeting in Nanaimo that saw representatives from all Island points, Shawnigan to Sayward, formulating responses plus amendments to the proposed Water Sustainability Act.
- Meets individually with respective MLA's as well as the BC Liberal government Deputy Ministers in Victoria to discuss the proposed new Water Sustainability Act.
- Sent delegates to the 2014 Polis Project on Ecological Governance, a forum for water practitioners, watershed groups, First Nations and other decision-makers, held at the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre in Duncan.
- Provides legitimacy for smaller groups and assists in preventing bully tactics by local governments.
- Currently in 2015, VIWWC is presenting to local government bodies advocating for watershed governance through community led watershed boards as well as public ownership/expropriation of community watersheds.