

Our Shared Waters

Watershed Wanderings

By Megan Peloso
Pioneer Columnist

Last week, I was fortunate to spend five days sharing rooms, buses and one large voyageur canoe with some of the country's foremost freshwater thinkers, workers and healers at the Living Waters Rally and Watersheds 2016 forum in Vancouver.

From coast to coast, First Nations and non-Indigenous people, watershed groups, practitioners, researchers, politicians and funders gathered around the collective goal to share strategies for protecting freshwater and build capacity for collaboration across British Columbia and Canada.

I will be sharing some of what I've learned with you over the course of the next three months. And today I want to start with language.

Language matters

Our subtlest and most difficult task for the week was connecting different water narratives at work in our society. These are our core beliefs about how water should be, the ways it should be

managed and by whom. They have deep implications for what we do, how we do it, and who "we" includes and excludes.

Consider this phrase, which was offered up by a non-Indigenous colleague and lingered forcefully throughout the forum: "We all need to strike Canada's water from our vocabulary."

The legacy of a colonial system in Canada is playing out in land and water access every day, with First Nations communities clearly being left behind. First Nations people are marginalized by policies that do not recognize their right to self-determination, rights and title on the land, or their autonomy as decision-makers on a national scale.

So what does that have to do with water? How you or I talk about water's own-



ership (i.e. saying "Canada's water") is a powerful symbol of where we stand in being either complacent or change-makers in what is an uneven system.

Take the BC Water Sustainability Act, a modernized piece of water legislation made to guide decision-makers in the sustainable allocation of water

available in the province. Speaking of powerful language, the new Act still upholds "First in Time, First in Right", a mechanism that gives priority water access to the oldest water licence holders, without regard to critical ecosystem flow needs or existing First Nations rights. Just like that. While the Act presents a lot of potential for change, the language used in the legis-

lation still leaves gaping holes in the framework, holes we need to patch mindfully, especially as we confront growing water pressures that will require we work together.

Our Shared Waters

In this community, the Lake Windermere Ambassadors work to keep water on the agenda because it touches us all — it's in our catchphrase: healthy water for healthy communities. Yet, groups like

"No one owns the water, the lands, the animals, or the plants, we were put on this earth to take care of those resources and in return we were promised that they would take care of us. We can't manage these resources, we can only manage ourselves."

**Nevada Nicholas,
Land and Resources Stewardship Assistant, K'tunaxa Nation Council, sharing what has been passed on by K'tunaxa Elders and Knowledge holders**

ours across the country need to remember that freshwater protection is only possible by also restoring our shared water relationships. Using the phrase "our shared waters" can be a start towards acknowledging that water is indivisible despite our differences, and inspire us to work towards building a positive vision of a shared water future.

We can get lost in the rapids and the riptides of our lives, but one thing water teaches us is that we are undeniably connected. The next columns take a deeper look at two other phrases reported at the forum: "Climate change is *accelerating at an alarming rate*" and "Mother Earth is *healing herself*."

Megan Peloso is the Program Co-ordinator for the Lake Windermere Ambassadors. Email info@lakeambassadors.ca or call the office at 250-341-6898.

Regional District of East Kootenay

BYLAW 2722 Public Hearing Notice - Bylaw Amendment Windermere / Gotmy

The Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) Board of Directors is considering an application by James and Loretta Gotmy to amend the Upper Columbia Valley Zoning Bylaw. If approved, the bylaw will amend the zoning designation of the subject property from SH-2, Small Holding Semi-Rural Zone to SH-1, Small Holding Residential Zone. The subject property is located 4747 Nelles Crescent in Windermere as shown on the attached map.

Bylaw No. 2722 cited as "Regional District of East Kootenay – Upper Columbia Valley Zoning Bylaw No. 900, 1992 – Amendment Bylaw No. 316, 2016 (Windermere / Gotmy)" will amend the designation of Lot 1, District Lot 8, Kootenay District, Plan NEP63270 from SH-2, Small Holding Semi-Rural Zone to SH-1, Small Holding Residential Zone.

A public hearing will be held at: **Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce**
651 Highway 93/95
Invermere, BC
Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at 7:00 pm

The Board has delegated the holding of this hearing to the Directors for Electoral Area F, Electoral Area G and the District of Invermere.

If you believe that your interest in property is affected by the proposed Bylaw, you may prior to the hearing:

- inspect the Bylaw and supporting information at the RDEK office in Cranbrook from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays;
- mail, fax or email written submissions to the addresses/ numbers shown below; or
- present written and/or verbal submissions at the hearing.

Submissions cannot be accepted after the public hearing.

All submissions will form part of the public record and will be published in a meeting agenda posted online. Personal contact information such as phone and email will be removed from written submissions. Questions about the disclosure of your personal information may be referred to the Corporate Officer at 250-489-2791 or 1-888-478-7335.

This notice is not an interpretation of the Bylaw. For more information, contact Jean Terpsma, Planning Technician, at 250-489-2791, toll free at 1-888-478-7335, or email jterpsma@rdek.bc.ca.



EAST KOOTENAY Compost Pilot Project



The East Kootenay Compost Pilot Project is still accepting compost in the Columbia Valley through the end of October.

Bears are out in search of food and fruit trees are a perfect attractant. Now is the time to make sure the fruit is off your trees.

The fruit from your fruit trees can be taken to the compost bins at the Columbia Valley Landfill.



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