



the partnership
for water sustainability in bc

Living Water Smart in British Columbia: *Groundwater Users Put on Notice*

July 2021



Note to Reader:

The umbrella for Partnership initiatives and programs is the [Water Sustainability Action Plan for British Columbia](#)¹. In turn, the Action Plan is nested within [Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan](#).

This is the second in a set of Primers that has a focus on groundwater licensing implementation. It is a compendium of very persuasive and informed opinions from people who have expert knowledge and really understand the issue. The first primer was released in April 2021². This second primer builds on the first.



COVER PHOTO CREDIT: Mike Wei

¹ <https://www.waterbucket.ca/cfa/sites/wbccfa/documents/media/81.pdf>

² https://waterbucket.ca/wcp/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/05/PWSBC_Living-Water-Smart_Groundwater-Licensing_May-2021.pdf

Message from the Editor

Groundwater licensing is a foundation piece for successful implementation of BC's *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA), passed in 2016. This is once-in-a-generation, transformational legislation. After 5-plus years of the 6-year transition period, the provincial government has released this statement of intent:

“Existing groundwater users who have not applied by the deadline (March 1, 2022) must stop using groundwater.”

First, it is important to understand what is meant by the phrase, “existing groundwater users”. After 5 years, “existing” has become confusing, so this Primer uses the term “historical” to clarify the reference is to groundwater use that was taking place when the new law came into force on February 29, 2016. For the purposes of the legislation – and this Primer – ‘groundwater users’ refers to non-domestic uses only. Landowners are not required to apply for a licence to use a household well or groundwater solely for domestic purposes.

By not applying for a licence, ‘historical groundwater users’ (as defined above) are effectively giving the government back the volumes of water they have been using. [Missing the deadline means either temporary or permanent shutting down of businesses.](#)

Yet this message is not getting through to historical water users.

After 5-plus years, the dilemma is that a mere 1 in 5 small business owners and farmers who rely on groundwater have applied for a water licence. Workshops, ‘how-to’ sessions for making an application, ads in local papers, mail campaigns, and information bulletins on a government website are clearly not reaching groundwater users.

What will it take to galvanize the remaining 16,000 historical users to submit their applications to protect their legal access to groundwater? To learn more, continue reading. This Primer provides context and perspective on the value of a water right and why it is worth the time and effort by a groundwater user to APPLY RIGHT NOW for a water licence.

Lack of groundwater licensing is a crisis in the making. To create a tidal wave of groundwater licence applications, the situation calls for leadership plus a VALUED BY ALL ethic, as well as effective communication of consequences followed by enforcement. This Primer is intended to inform the conversation about solutions to the problem.

This is not a technical report. Because people learn through stories and anecdotes, the Primer storyline is built around quotable quotes from knowledgeable professionals to tell the “story behind the story”.

In Part One, we reproduce the government’s recent Information Bulletin. This is the springboard to Part Two on true risks of not applying for a water licence. In Part Three, we draw on experience of professionals to suggest game-changing solutions.

The key message to **historical** groundwater users:

**APPLY BEFORE THE
MARCH 1, 2022 DEADLINE
TO PRESERVE YOUR LEGAL
ACCESS TO GROUNDWATER**

A Call to Action. The Partnership for Water Sustainability is committed to doing our part to advance the vision and actions in [Living Water Smart, British Columbia's Water Plan](#). An over-arching goal of the *Water Sustainability Act*, which is the legislative piece of Living Water Smart, is to ensure groundwater is managed sustainably for future generations.

Groundwater licensing is a rare opportunity to make a difference and thereby make progress in bringing to fruition the Living Water Smart vision for water: **Safe, sustainable, valued by all**. From our observer perspective, the key challenge for government has always been and continues to be ensuring the public knows about the value of a water licence and realizes the consequences of not having one. Yet, sometimes government has difficulty conveying messages in ways that connect with the public. All too often, it seems, something gets lost in translation.

In the spirit of collaboration, we ALL have a responsibility to communicate in a way that fosters trust, respect, cooperation, and action. This is the moment for leadership from the highest level to demonstrate that the government is implementing the *Water Sustainability Act* in good faith. It is also a moment for ALL to embrace shared responsibility to 'get it right'. We invite the reader to help spread these messages to groundwater users and government alike.



Kim A. Stephens, MEng, PEng,
Executive Director

Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC
July 2021



Backgrounder for the Busy Reader

1. **In 2016, water management in BC entered a new era** with passage of the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA). The WSA made it a legal requirement that all non-domestic groundwater users in BC be licenced or otherwise authorized. Until then, only water users drawing from surface sources had been regulated in BC. **Now, groundwater users are required to play by the same set of rules.**
2. **March 1, 2022 is the looming deadline to apply for a water licence** for those who were using groundwater from a well or dugout on or before Feb. 29, 2016, for non-domestic purposes. **In the final year of the 6-year transition period, the biggest groundwater licensing challenge has become convincing historical users that losing their status will have huge consequences for them if they miss the deadline.** Why is that? Because the financial implications have not been clearly communicated in the government messaging. Let's look at what the numbers are telling us.
3. **There are an estimated 20,000 historical groundwater wells** supplying farms, businesses, industries, utilities, and institutions across BC. Yet a mere 4000 reported applications have been submitted during the first five years of the 6-year transition period. The gulf between 20,000 and 4,000 has serious implications. It could also create inequities in the business landscape in BC, since it is believed that most of the 16,000 users are small businesses. The larger entities are likely already in the system.
4. **It will require immediate actions on the part of government to break through and galvanize** some 16,000 groundwater users to apply for a licence over the next eight months. Otherwise, an overwhelming majority of historical groundwater users will be in regulatory non-compliance.
5. **On July 2, 2021 the government issued an Information Bulletin** to signal to groundwater users that non-compliance would have consequences. **This is a small but critical first step in communicating the message that users must take groundwater licensing seriously.**



PART ONE - **Groundwater Users Put on Notice in British Columbia**

Deadline Approaching for Groundwater Users to Apply for Licence!

NOTE TO READER:

*This page presents,
verbatim, the Information
Bulletin that was posted by
the BC government on July
2, 2021*

“An important deadline for some groundwater users is less than one year away,” stated the opening sentence of the Information Bulletin issued by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development on July 2, 2021.

“March 1, 2022 is the deadline to apply for a water licence for those who were using groundwater from a well or dugout on or before Feb. 29, 2016, for non-domestic purposes, such as irrigation or industrial use. A water licence is not required for a household well or groundwater used for domestic purposes, such as watering lawns and gardens,” continues the Information Bulletin.

WHY A WATER RIGHT IS REALLY IMPORTANT:

*During times of water
scarcity or drought, the B.C.
government can apply a
number of regulatory
options to protect the rights
of water users, essential
household needs and
aquatic ecosystems.*

“Existing groundwater users who have not applied by the deadline must stop using groundwater and will lose recognition of their historical date of first use. That historical date is important because during water shortages older licences get priority access to water.”

“Missing the deadline could also be costly and may include fines for using groundwater without having applied for a licence, a new-user one-time application fee and the cost of additional studies to support an application. Application fees are waived for existing groundwater users who apply before the deadline.”

“Groundwater is water that is naturally occurring below the surface of the ground. Licensing groundwater helps protect aquifers and streams, along with businesses and livelihoods that depend on reliable access to water. It also provides a fair, transparent and accountable process to manage water use throughout B.C. and is particularly valuable during periods of water shortage.”

“Domestic well owners are encouraged to register their groundwater well, at no cost, to ensure their well use will be considered in new licensing decisions and during times of water scarcity,” concludes the Information Bulletin.

PART TWO – True Risks of Not Applying for a Licence

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING:

Groundwater licensing is the biggest undertaking in the history of water management in BC.

THE CHALLENGE:

Galvanize some 16,000 users to apply for a water licence within the next eight months.

“The Partnership for Water Sustainability gives government a thumbs-up for its clear statement of intent in the Information Bulletin posted on July 2, 2021. However, this is only one small step in a much needed and much bigger process to raise awareness and educate groundwater users about why they can’t afford to miss the deadline,” stated Kim Stephens, Partnership Executive Director.

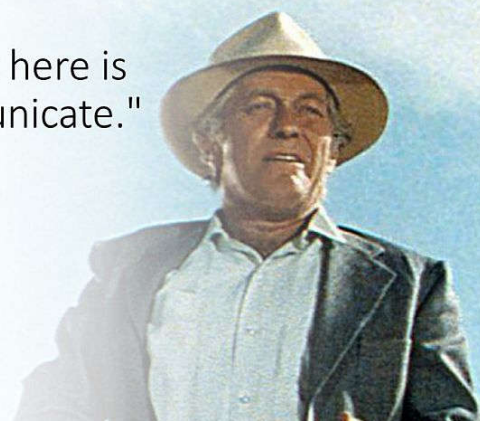
“The good news is that we have a clear statement of provincial intent. But it will take leadership at the highest levels, starting with the Premier, to get the attention of British Columbians. **Until and unless there is a true water champion who has the mandate and cross-Ministry authority to ‘make it so’**, it is a daunting task for anyone else to galvanize some 16,000 users to apply for a water licence within the remaining few months.”

“Context is everything. After five years of being in transition mode, a mere 1 in 5 users has applied for a water licence. Responsibility for the poor response is shared by government and groundwater users alike. Government has not been effective in communicating the [Living Water Smart vision](#) and the true risks of missing the deadline. At the same time, most groundwater users have yet to experience an Ah-ha moment that shifts their understanding to do this in their own self-interest.”

“The Partnership role is to remind ALL of the [Living Water Smart vision](#). Groundwater licensing is the biggest endeavour the Province of BC has taken on in its water management history. Yet, as the record shows, commitment and follow through to make it happen has been lacking. This transcends successive administrations.”

"What we've got here is failure to communicate."

Strother Martin
memorable quotable quote
from "Cool Hand Luke", 1967



Well Registration and Groundwater Licensing are not the Same Thing!

Ted van der Gulik is the former Senior Engineer in the Ministry of Agriculture and was inducted into the BC Public Service Hall of Excellence in 2014 for his outstanding contribution to the Province.

Ted led the teams that received Premier's Awards for the Water Balance Model and the Agriculture Water Demand Model, respectively, and was the recipient of the Premier's Legacy Award in 2014. He helped create the vision for the Water Sustainability Act.

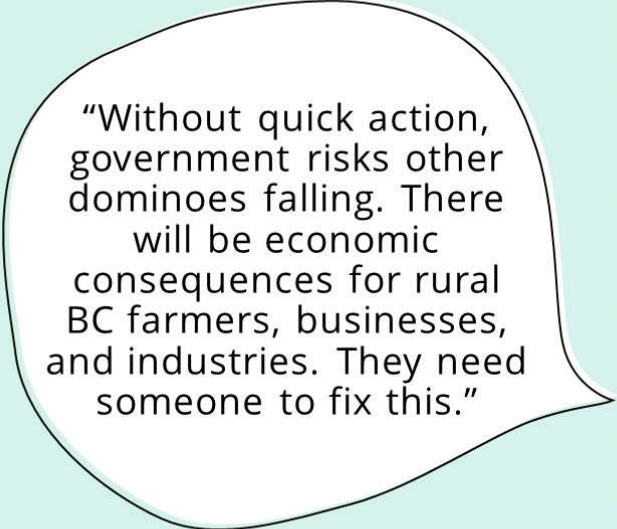
“You would think that the difference between well registration and licensing would be easy to communicate but apparently not, Because of the work we are all doing, it is starting to change but most articles in the press still use interchangeably ‘registration’ and ‘licensing’ as one and the same,” observed Ted van der Gulik, Partnership President and a leading voice in the call for commonsense action by government to turn around the groundwater licensing situation.

Ted shared an anecdote that illustrates, the inability of government, thus far, to communicate effectively about consequences.

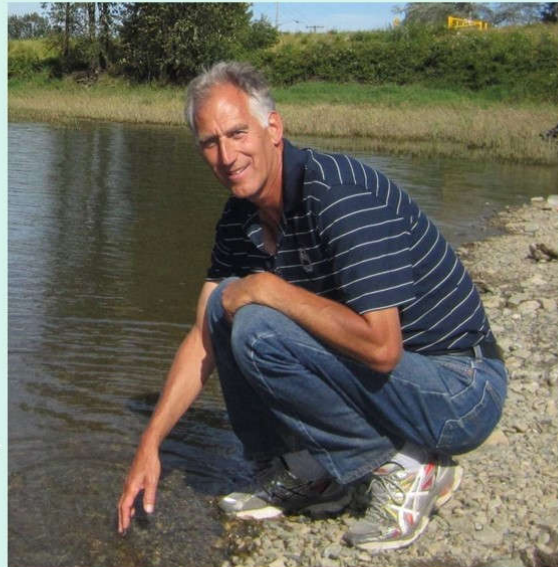
“I know a couple who have a small farm and had a well drilled a few years ago. The well driller indicated to them that he would register the well – that is, submit the well record to government, as they are required to do - but did not inform them of the need to get a licence.”

“This is not an isolated instance. Whenever I mention that well registration and groundwater legislation are not the same thing, often the response is that the well driller is looking after that.

“It raises the question that, if I am having difficulty getting someone to understand the difference between ‘registering a well’ and ‘licensing the water use’, what about the thousands of other users out there who are not being properly informed?”



“Without quick action, government risks other dominoes falling. There will be economic consequences for rural BC farmers, businesses, and industries. They need someone to fix this.”



Ted van der Gulik, President, Partnership for Water Sustainability

Learn from the Experience of Others

“If ‘someone’ does not ‘fix’ the groundwater licensing problem, it will get messy for everyone after March 1, 2022. It seems inevitable that government will be forced to act against unlicensed groundwater use – based on fairness to those who did apply,” continued Ted van der Gulik. “It will be difficult for government to shut down businesses. However, there are a few scenarios that have already come forward in the past few years that indicate what the future may look like after the March 1, 2022 deadline.”

“Unless historical users are given ALL the information, they will be relying on the government's historically low rates of enforcement on unauthorized use of water to lull them into a false sense of security (i.e., “I don't have to worry unless I get caught”). Then it will be too late,” warns Donna Forsyth, retired civil servant who led the team that developed the new water law under the Water Sustainability Act.

Consequences of Not Having a Water Licence: “For example: A farmer had a new well drilled on his property after 2016. The well driller informed him that it would be no problem obtaining a licence. The farm installed the pump and irrigation system and then applied for a licence.”

“Upon review of the well and the potential impacts on a local stream, the local water manager deemed that the irrigation system would reduce the flow in the stream, thereby impacting fish survival. The licence application was refused. The farmer appealed, but the Environmental Appeal Board upheld the decision³. This means that the farmer cannot use his well for any non-domestic purposes.”

“Within the same watershed, there are 284 historical wells. At least 36 are for irrigation and 212 are for unknown use, some of which could also be for irrigation. Of the 36 known historical irrigation wells, only 2 have applied for a licence. The other 34 had not as of the time of the appeal decision.”

“These historical wells have the opportunity of getting a licence if they apply before March 1 of next year. After that date, they will all be treated as new wells. If the province has already turned down a licence application for a new well in this watershed, what is the likelihood that any of the 34 that did not apply by the deadline will eventually get a licence? Based on the story I have just told you, I would conclude, not good”

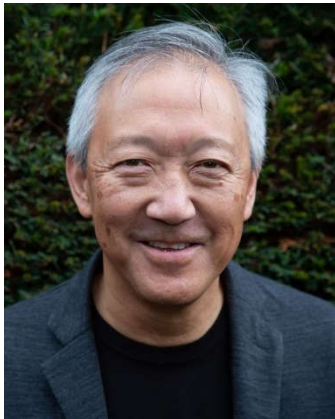
“While not all historical wells would necessarily be issued with fines or shut down after the deadline, at least not right away, it is most likely that those in a watershed where a licence has already been denied will be. The message is clear,” stated Ted van der Gulik:

Do not delay. Apply now!

³ <http://www.eab.gov.bc.ca/water/2017wat007a.pdf>

Leadership and Enforcement Would Demonstrate Good Faith

Over the past several years, Mike Wei has been tireless in his efforts to draw attention to a crisis in the making. A former Deputy Comptroller of Water Rights, now retired from government, he has similar stories about the pervasive lack of awareness about the groundwater licensing issue throughout the BC Interior, Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley.



A career civil servant in the Ministry of Environment, Mike Wei received the R. N. Farvolden award in 2017 from the Canadian Geotechnical Society and the International Association of Hydrogeologists for his outstanding contributions to the disciplines of earth science and engineering that emphasize the role and importance of groundwater. Mike was also a recipient of the Premiers Legacy Award in 2017.

While on a road trip in June 2021, for example, he talked to small business owners and operators along the way to ascertain what they knew about groundwater licensing.

“Wherever I travelled, I sought out conversations with locals,” reported Mike Wei. “Through this process, and through observation, I am becoming increasingly aware of the number of small businesses operated by people with very limited resources and trying to deal with a variety of regulatory requirements. This got me thinking: how does one reach all of the segments within this diverse group?”

Reflections on How to Connect with Diverse Groups: “It is clear to me that this is much bigger than sending out students or contractors, for example, to talk to farmers and small business owners throughout the Province.”

“The groundwater licensing issue requires someone with profile, such as a Minister or an MLA, to reach out to local community leaders and talk to them about how to engage their communities about the benefits of compliance versus consequences of not applying. Just posting an information bulletin on a government website will not achieve this.”

“It is surprising how many small businesses in rural BC, such as roadside restaurants, motels and gas stations, use groundwater. Many are operated by families. These are typically small business operations and owners who are not familiar with all the various government requirements. Many are unaware, and even surprised, to hear of the requirement for groundwater licensing; it’s just not on their radar.”

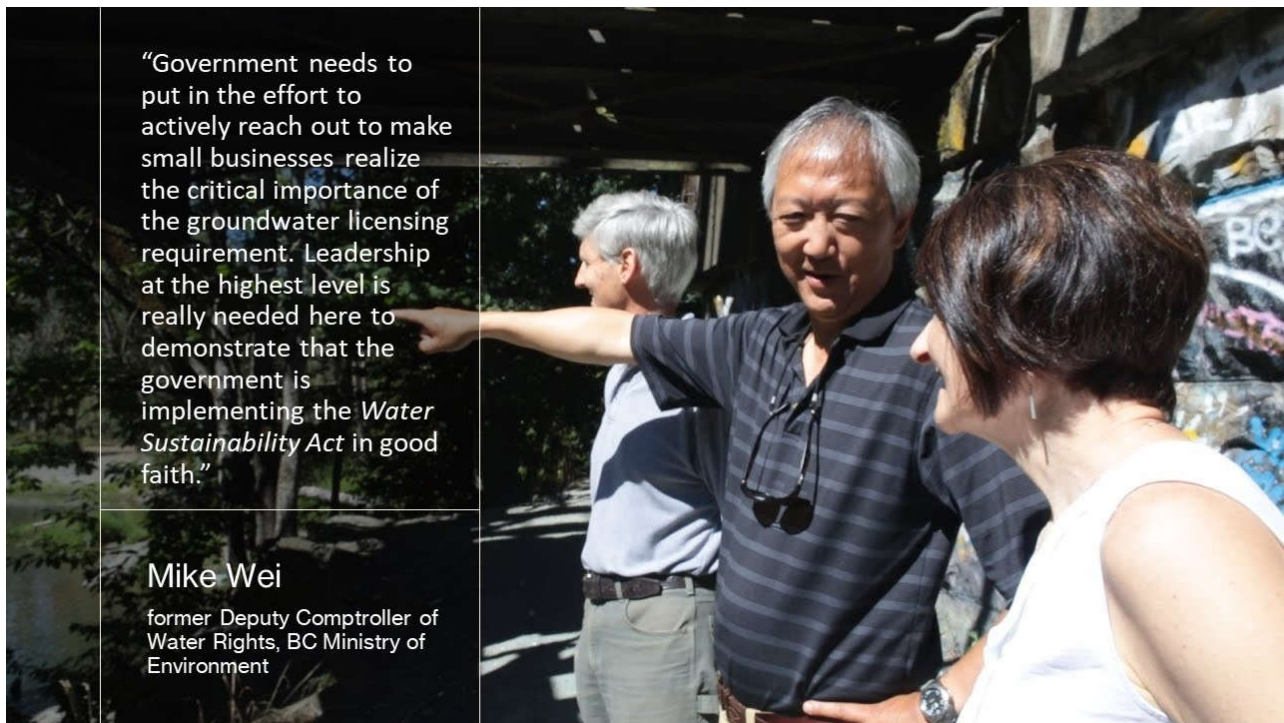
The Quandary for a Small Business

“If a business owner does not apply by the deadline, the owner has two options: Continue to operate the business with unauthorized water use, or shut the business down until they get a licence,” added Mike Wei.

“Realistically, they are not going to choose to do the latter. Under the current situation, this effectively means that the provincial government is not setting businesses up to do the right thing. Is that really how we want small businesses to operate in BC?”

“As I see it, leadership and enforcement by government would help demonstrate good faith. One key strategy to ensuring people know that government is serious about the water resource is to systematically check compliance and conduct enforcement on unauthorized water uses.”

“Government’s moral authority to manage and protect water resources will only come if the vast majority of water users buy into the water licensing system,” concluded Mike Wei.



“Government needs to put in the effort to actively reach out to make small businesses realize the critical importance of the groundwater licensing requirement. Leadership at the highest level is really needed here to demonstrate that the government is implementing the *Water Sustainability Act* in good faith.”

Mike Wei

former Deputy Comptroller of
Water Rights, BC Ministry of
Environment

Missing the Deadline Would Mean Shutting Down Businesses

"I believe that it is very important to be crystal clear about the impacts of the end of the transition period given how the law is written. I am providing this information for the public, the groundwater users and for government (executives, staff and elected representatives)," stresses Donna Forsyth.

"The messaging in the Information Bulletin is better than what we have seen to date, but government needs to add content that further clarifies what is at stake," stated Donna Forsyth. "Since the government made a 'once in a century' change to the water law, merely communicating that you 'will have to stop using groundwater or you may pay fines and penalties' is not sufficient. Government needs to ensure that they communicate ALL of the ongoing financial risks to historical businesses and the potential devaluation of their properties, if they miss the deadline."

What is Missing from the Information Bulletin: "Specifically, what is missing are two key messages beyond the end of their legal access to groundwater and the loss of priority status," emphasized Donna Forsyth.

"First, late applications will no longer get the benefit of being able to use the water while their application is being considered. **Since these licence decisions often take years, this means that thousands of farms and other businesses would be shut down at least temporarily** and I believe that means BC's economic recovery plan will fail."

"Secondly, late applications are 'new' applications. This makes them vulnerable to refusal even if significant expenses are incurred to attempt to show water is still available. The risk is real that refusals would cause businesses to be permanently shut down and land values to be significantly impacted. **There is no financial compensation available to these historical users under the Water Sustainability Act.**"

Donna Forsyth worked at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (under its various names) from 2006 to 2019 as a legislative advisor. In this role she was involved in the development of policy, as well as leading the team tasked with drafting the WSA. She also supported the minister in the Legislature when the bill was passed in 2016. In addition, she led teams developing the regulations supporting the Act.



"By not applying, the historical water users are effectively giving the government back the volumes of water they were using. After March 1, 2022, these volumes go back into the communal system for reallocation and when they apply, the historical users will be at the back of the line."

Donna Forsyth
former Legislative Advisor
BC Ministry of Environment

Communicate in a Way that Fosters Trust, Respect, Cooperation and Action

THE BOTTOM-LINE?

It is just not worth missing the deadline.

“An analogy that may be helpful to the reader is the consequences of drinking and driving,” stated Donna Forsyth. “Some will still do it, but most people do not because they know the consequences. These include financial penalties (such as fines or loss of driver’s licence, causing lost wages) and social stigma (because of potential injury to self or others; having a ‘drinking problem’).”

“Most people will now take a taxi or a ride from a friend because ‘it is just not worth it’. They know the law and the consequences of breaking it. So, how do we reach and connect with historical groundwater users so that a similar perspective that ‘it is just not worth missing the deadline’ takes hold?!”

An Effective Communication Strategy: “In a similar fashion, I believe this new and significant change to the law and the impact upon the legal right to use groundwater can be communicated through a three-pronged message,” says Donna.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

If a non-domestic user does not have a water right, their water use will be cut off first the next time there is a drought. Consider the early heat wave and drought of 2021 as a preview of BC’s climate future.

Information on ALL of the impacts of missing the deadline, including the ongoing legal implications of not applying in time and the costs and risks of becoming a ‘new’ user and having to shut down temporarily or permanently.

Enforcement action and costs of getting caught. Government could start taking action now against all ‘new’ (post February 29, 2016) unauthorized water users and provide more information on the pitfalls of waiting to get caught.

Social stigma of taking water illegally. Using water without legal authority is effectively ‘stealing’ a public resource from everyone and avoiding being accountable for the fees (that others are paying) and for how the use will cause impacts to other users and to the environment. Many will step up and do the ‘right thing’ and those who do not will be vulnerable to social stigma. As the impacts of climate change grow, illegal use of water will become increasingly unacceptable to the public.

“Different people will react to different messages. The question is what message is the most crucial at this time and can reach the most people? I see the lack of information about the law and the consequences of missing the deadline as the most pressing issue. Government’s current messaging about the consequences of missing the deadline is really the equivalent of saying ‘do not drink too much or you might get caught’. Fortunately, when the new laws were brought in for drinking and driving, government and other organizations filled the media with information about what the new laws were and the penalties for ignoring them. We all need to step up now and give the same attention to water as to booze!”

It is Within Our Collective Grasp to Get It Right

“Ted van der Gulik, Mike Wei and Donna Forsyth are ‘water sustainability volunteers’ who have shouldered a burden because they believe in shared responsibility. They have stepped up for the common good. Why do they feel such a strong sense of duty? The answer is that they and other volunteers do not want government to allow ‘the water bucket’ to be dropped during this once-in-a-generation opportunity to ‘get it right’” Kim Stephens stated.

“Donna, Mike and Ted have professional expertise, experience, and wisdom. This magical combination equips them to build bridges of understanding from the past to the present and to the future. Because they helped create the vision for the *Water Sustainability Act*, they know its potential to effectively manage the resource for the future. They believe it is within government’s grasp to successfully execute this groundwater foundation piece. They also believe that the Living Water Smart vision ultimately depends on individual and collective accountability.”

“It is critical that the Premier take command of the groundwater licensing issue.”

Leadership Must Come from the Top: “They further believe that leadership must come from the top, in particular from the Premier. When there is no designated ‘water champion’ to provide clear and compelling direction, you wind up with the current situation where the clock is ticking down and 4 out of 5 users have yet to apply,” continued Kim Stephens.

“BC is at a defining moment. The climate is changing. We should all understand that by now. Only the Premier has the authority and accountability to direct adequate resources and attention to motivate historical groundwater users to apply before it is too late and to ensure there are equitable groundwater supplies for the future.”

“We understand that government intends to get more Information Bulletins out in the coming months with evolving messages to draw fresh attention to the issue. However, the government communications process has many levels of approval between drafting and final posting.”

“This is why it is critical that the Premier take command of the groundwater licensing issue. Until he does, the communication efforts of the Partnership and others are at best stopgap in highlighting the issue,” concluded Kim Stephens.

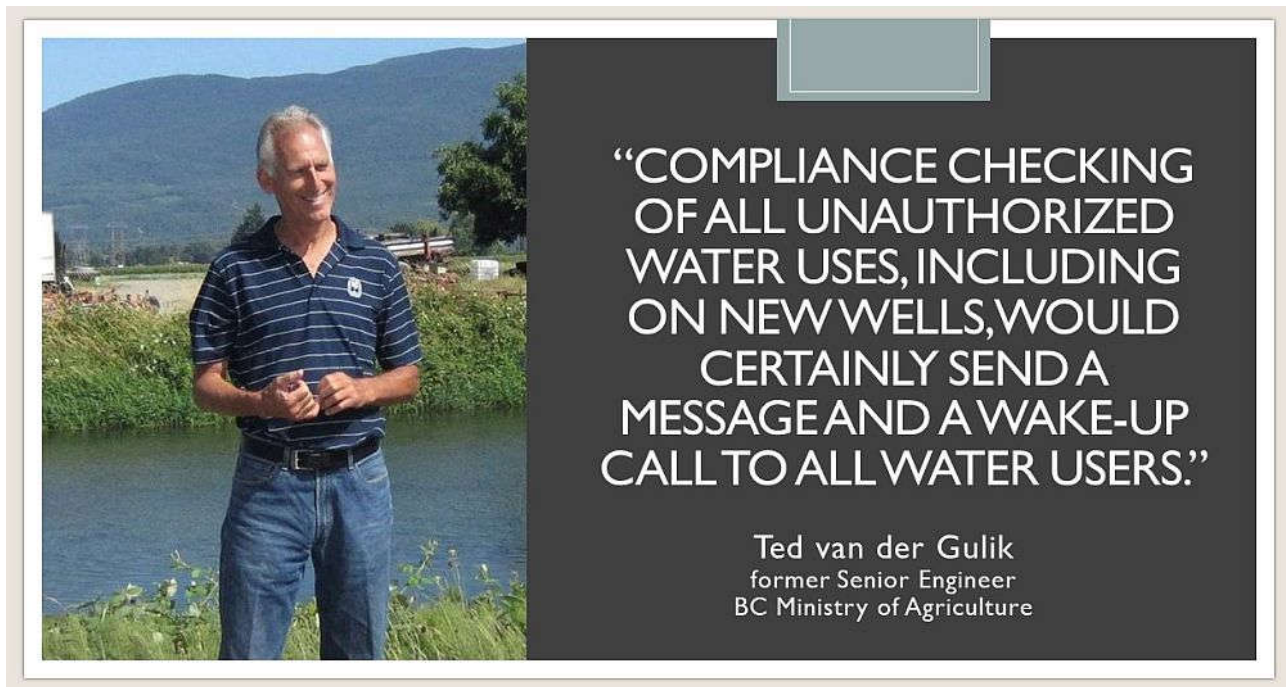
Historical Groundwater Users Risk Losing Their Legal Access to this Resource

Ted van der Gulik, Mike Wei and Donna Forsyth make a clear distinction between HISTORICAL and NEW non-domestic groundwater uses. Historical groundwater uses are those that existed as of February 2016. Thus, they pre-date introduction of groundwater licensing in British Columbia under the Water Sustainability Act.

“New use” describes applications to divert and use groundwater from wells that were drilled and placed in service on or after March 1, 2016. When the transition period ends, “historical uses” without a licence would be considered “new uses” and thus would lose their legal access.

Starting Point for a Game-Changing Strategy: “Dealing with 16,000 non-compliant historical water users after March 1, 2022 would be overwhelming for government. The Province desperately needs a two-prong strategy to motivate historical non-domestic groundwater users to apply: communication and enforcement,” stated Mike Wei.

“Leadership at the highest level and a clear strategy to motivate historical groundwater users to apply, including signaling that government will deal with unauthorized water use, would be the game-changer that groundwater licensing desperately needs right now.”



Immediately Ensure New Wells are in Compliance, Learn by Doing, and Adapt the Strategy for Enforcement

THREE PRONGS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Communication
 2. Enforcement
 3. Valued by All
-

“In addition to government's two-pronged responsibility for better communication and enforcement, there is a third responsibility that we can all take on. We all need to recognize the importance of water as a shared resource and communicate to business operators and elected officials that groundwater licensing is fundamental to water management in BC and illegal water use is unacceptable,” concludes Donna Forsyth.

“Reflecting on what I know about the agricultural sector, it seems to me that government needs to focus on an aspect of groundwater licensing that would be manageable,” stated Ted van der Gulik.

“Specifically, government could choose to focus its enforcement efforts on first contacting owners of wells drilled during the period 2016-2021, then checking whether and how many of the new wells in use are licenced.”

Tackle a Manageable Segment to Get User Attention

“The number of new groundwater users is a minor fraction of the 16,000 historical groundwater users. Thus, new groundwater use is a more manageable segment to tackle before March 1, 2022. This manageability is key to my ‘big idea’, which is to pilot a ‘learn by doing’ approach to compliance and enforcement of unauthorized water use.”

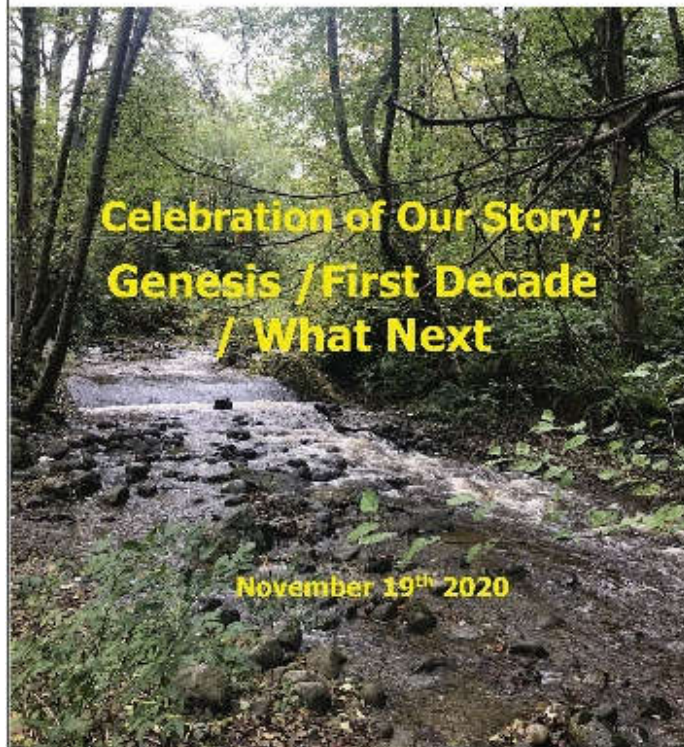
“If government would follow through with compliance checking for ‘new’ unauthorized water uses, it would certainly send a message and a wake-up call to ALL water users – especially if accompanied by a concerted education and communication effort. What would the succinct message be? It would be that government intends to systematically check compliance, now and beyond March 1, 2022.”

“Based on my experience, word would spread like wildfire that government is serious about unauthorized water use. This decisive action would demonstrate to the groundwater community that government means business and that should result in a surge in applications from historical groundwater users.”

“If the outcome is that most water users comply with the Province’s licensing requirements by March 1, 2022, the vision for water sustainability would be on its way to becoming a reality,” concluded Ted van der Gulik.



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for water sustainability in bc



TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:

<https://waterbucket.ca/about-us/>

About the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia

Incorporation of the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia as a not-for-profit society on November 19, 2010 was a milestone moment. Incorporation signified a bold leap forward.

Over two decades, the Partnership had evolved from a technical committee in the 1990s, to a “water roundtable” in the first decade of the 2000s, and then to a legal entity. The Partnership has its roots in government – local, provincial, federal.

The Partnership has a primary goal, to **build bridges of understanding** and pass the baton from the past to the present and future. To achieve the goal, the Partnership is growing a network in the local government setting. This network embraces collaborative leadership and **inter-generational collaboration**.

The Partnership believes that when each generation is receptive to accepting the inter-generational baton and embracing the wisdom that goes with it, the decisions of successive generations will benefit from and build upon the experience of those who went before them.



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