



The
WATERWEALTH
Project

All Candidates Questionnaire

April 18, 2013

The Importance of our Water Wealth

Context: As we talk with more and more people in our communities, the WaterWealth Project is hearing that clean, safe and flowing water in the Valley is one of people's biggest concerns. We've attached the results of our community survey. This survey is echoed by a 2010 McAllister Opinion Research poll that showed 94% of British Columbians believe water is our most important natural resource.

Question 1: If you become our local representative, where will freshwater protection place on your priority list?

1st 2nd 3rd Other

Comments: I'm sorry, but this question doesn't lend itself to a rank order response format. I would have suggested this question be posed in a Likert scale response format and I

would have responded “strongly agree” to the question, “should freshwater protection be a priority?”

Community Control Over Our Local Home Waters

Context: We are also hearing that people are frustrated with having little to no voice in the decisions that affect our local home waters such as the lack of meaningful consultation on the Kinder Morgan pipeline, the chlorination of drinking water in Chilliwack, and the development of the Aggregate Pilot Project.

Question 2: Do you support greater community involvement in decisions that affect our local home waters and the right for our communities to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to major proposals that affect us?

Answer: I would like to see more community involvement in local and provincial issues across the board. Certainly communities should be encouraged to take an interest in such matters and express their views.

Question 3: Would you support the formation of a citizens roundtable or watershed board co-chaired by First Nations and non-First Nations community members to provide leadership on a long-term protection plan for our local home waters?

Answer: The BC Liberals' platform promises to "consult on the Water Sustainability Act in 2013 with the intention of passing this legislation in 2014. The Act will protect BC aquifers and drinking water resources while providing industry with a framework under which drinking water allocations are made." These types of roundtables would be a worthy component to the consultation process.

Indigenous Rights and Title

Context: The waters of the Valley and the life sustained within it have supported Indigenous communities for thousands of years. Long before the first visit of Simon Fraser in 1808, this water wealth allowed them to develop sustainable economies and governance systems. As long-term stewards of lakes, rivers and streams, indigenous communities nurtured the healthy waters we enjoy today.

Question 4: Given that recognition of indigenous rights and title is essential for the long-term protection of our shared home waters, what would you bring to the table to support First Nations-Crown reconciliation of rights and responsibilities?

Answer: Indigenous rights and title are recognized in the Constitution and through a number of SCC and other Superior Court rulings. I believe in and support the treaty process towards reconciliation.

The BC Water Act

Context: The BC Water Act, our most important piece of water legislation, is over 100 years old and completely out-dated. It

has no provision to ensure there is enough water in rivers and streams to support fish ('ecosystem flows'); it doesn't put any limits on groundwater withdrawals (BC is the only jurisdiction in Canada with no rules for groundwater removal); and it allocates fresh water through an antiquated system called First in Time, First in Right.

Question 5: Do you support the implementation of a NEW BC Water Act that would ensure enough water flows through our home waters for fish and other wildlife, enacts groundwater protection, creates the framework to enable comprehensive community planning for water protection, and respects indigenous rights and title?

Answer: As previously noted, the BC Liberals have committed to (and I have signed on to this as a candidate) "consult on the Water Sustainability Act in 2013 with the intention of passing this legislation in 2014. The Act will protect BC aquifers and drinking water resources while providing industry with a framework under which drinking water allocations are made."

Drinking Water Protection

Context: The recent controversy around the decision to chlorinate Chilliwack's drinking water has highlighted the importance of keeping contaminants out of our drinking water sources (like the Vedder-Sardis aquifer) in the first place. Experts agree the best way to protect drinking water and reduce the need for expensive treatment solutions is to protect the source of drinking water.

Question 5: Do you support comprehensive provincial source water protection legislation that would empower local communities to work with government to develop enforceable plans to protect their drinking water?

Answer: As noted earlier, I support and encourage local involvement in such matters of interest. A provincial authority, however, is essential as we don't want the decisions and actions of one community having a negative impact on another community down stream.

Your Position on Threats to Our Home Waters

Context - **Kinder Morgan** is increasing transportation of heavy bitumen oil through its existing **TransMountain pipeline** that crosses 100 rivers and streams on its route from Alberta through the Fraser Valley. It is proposing to **triple** the amount of oil transportation from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels per day by building a new pipeline. Since 2005, there have been four ruptures along the existing pipeline. In 2012, a similar pipeline carrying bitumen ruptured and emptied 3,000,000 litres of bitumen into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, devastating an entire community and becoming the costliest pipeline spill in US history.

Question 6: What is your position on a) the increasing transportation of bitumen through the existing Kinder Morgan pipeline and b) the creation of a new pipeline to triple the capacity of heavy oil transportation?

Answer: The BC Liberals have established five conditions that must be met in order for any such project to be given the green light. This is a responsible approach and one that I support.

Context: Government and the aggregate industry has developed the **Aggregate Pilot Project**, which maps out very large areas of this region that would be open to mining for corporate profit. This has been developed with limited input from local communities despite the substantial impact this mining could have on our rivers, lakes, and groundwater that are our drinking water sources, and which support fish, wildlife and local economies.

Question 7: Do you support the Aggregate Pilot Project?

Answer: I support the stated purpose of this approach which is to “significantly reduce conflicts and secure a long term, economic, stable supply.”

Context: Scientific experts such as Marvin Rosenau and Otto Langer have shown that the practice of **in-river gravel mining** can be extremely damaging to salmon and other fish habitat, and has questionable benefits for flood control. They have

called for the development of a long-term management plan for dealing with this issue for 15 years.

Question 8: Do you support the development of a long-term management plan for sediment removal developed with full involvement of First Nations, scientific experts, and community members?

Answer: Our platform includes a long term plan for Fraser river gravel removal.

Private Hydroelectric Diversions (also known as Independent Power Projects) - a freedom of information request from the Wilderness Committee discovered 700 instances of non-compliance at 16 private diversions in the past few years, indicating regulatory disarray for this industry. These projects can cause significant harm to fish habitat if improperly installed and operated and the cumulative impacts can be extremely disruptive to river systems.

Question 9: Would you support undertaking a comprehensive cumulative environmental assessment prior to approving any new private hydroelectric diversions in the Fraser Valley?

Answer: The existing assessment procedure is already thorough. Of course we are always open to suggestions that can strengthen any existing process.