

Environment March 22, 2019 5:07 pm

Updated: March 22, 2019 5:57 pm

# Okanagan watershed forum held near lake above Peachland



By Kelly Hayes

Video Journalist Global News

A circle of mostly strangers gathered in the Central Okanagan on Friday with one thing in common: water.

This is World Water Day, hence the gathering of community leaders at Headwaters Lake above Peachland — the community's main source of water.

"The watershed that we work on, the Okanagan Valley, as it's better known, it starts up in the headwaters and so we're here at Headwaters Lake to better understand what is going on in the upper watershed," said Anna Warwick Sears of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

**Okanagan WaterWise**

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The experts say that what's going on in the watershed above Peachland is turbidity, in large part because of three consecutive summers of heavy rains as a result of climate change.

"We're certainly seeing in the last two or three years water quality issues persisting longer," said water engineer Don Dobson. "By that, I mean sediment in the water."

Some blame the logging industry for the drop in water quality and say it's time to think about a moratorium.

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“They (logging) contribute to how the water comes off the mountain, they contribute to flooding,” said native leader Chris Eneas. “They contribute to the degradation of our water.”

But a forestry industry rep at today’s gathering says licenses and permits to log are already in place, so a moratorium is out of the question.



Scores of people attended the forum on Friday.

*Global News*

“That said, we recognize that it has to be done in concert with looking after the values such as water quality and ecosystem health,” said Ray Crampton of the Okanagan-Shuswap Natural Resource District.

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Peachland mayor Cindy Fortin stops short of calling for a logging moratorium above her town’s watershed.

“Not a complete moratorium but let’s take a look,” said Fortin. “Let’s evaluate our watersheds and evaluate what’s going on.”

“They’re talking about collaboration between forestry companies. I think that’s a good start.”

In an effort to get the turbidity under control, Peachland

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is in the midst of building a \$22 million water treatment facility that should be ready in two years.

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