



GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS JOIN FORCES WITH FIRST NATIONS, MLAS & ACADEMICS TOWN HALL TO PROTECT WATER, WILD PLACES AND WILDLIFE

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Community groups concerned with clearcut logging of primary forests and watersheds in BC's Interior have organized a Town Hall Meeting at UBC's Okanagan Campus in Kelowna on Saturday, April 13th, 2024. Speakers include Syilx elders, MLAs, academics, community organizations and conservationists.

The purpose of this town hall meeting is to inform, unite and provide the community with options to work with our government to make changes to our forest policy.

The Interior Watershed Task Force (IWTF), consisting of several grassroots organizations, is hosting a community town hall meeting to discuss commercial clearcut logging in community watersheds across BC.

Invited speakers include Syilx elders and knowledge keepers, Grouse and Pamela Barnes plus the Cultural program lead for Okanagan Nation Alliance and former Penticton Indian Band councillor, Elliot Tonasket. "All I can say is action is better than words," claims K'ninm'tm'ta?nq'w'ic'tn's Wilfred "Grouse" Barnes of Westbank First Nation. "For us to help protect it, to help keep it clean, is far better than just talking about it." Grouse and Pamela will offer ways we can all get involved.

The outspoken MLA, Mike Morris, from Prince-George Mackenzie is the key-note speaker. Morris has been on a one-man campaign to inform his colleagues in the legislature that clearcut logging in BC is unsustainable, and he has the wildlife numbers to prove it. Morris states "British Columbia's new normal should not be wildfires and widespread flooding threatening the lives and safety of our citizens. It should not be the extirpated wildlife populations or depleted salmon and steelhead runs. It should not be the loss of hundreds of thousands of songbirds every year." Come and watch this man of action and hear more inspiring words from an elected official.

The presenters also include the chairs of leading environmentalist community groups in BC including Conservation North's Michelle Connolly and Boundary Forest Watershed Stewardship Society, Jennifer Houghton. These two community activists may shock you with their observations about our crown land forests, but will also leave you with optimism and ammunition to reform forestry.

Our panel of experts concludes with academics from UBC Vancouver hydrologist Dr. Younes Alila and UBC Okanagan University environmental anthropologist, Dr. John Wagner.

You are invited to a public meeting called **FUTURE OF OUR FORESTS** Preserving BC's primary forests today for water and wildlife tomorrow

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13
1:00-5:30 PM
UBCO, KELOWNA**

Alila, a hydrologist and professor in the Faculty of Forestry has synthesized decades of hydrology studies, concluding that many studies have "severely and consistently underestimated" the impact of forest cover on flood risk, resulting in a devastating effect on forest management policies and practices. Commercial clearcut canopy loss increasing the intensity, duration and frequency of floods and droughts will be discussed.

One of the IWTF's main goals is to raise public awareness about historical and recent logging/forest industry wrongdoings. We are calling on our communities to join forces. We are using factual information and new science to

lead forestry reforms in this province, forcing change from our provincial government.

It is time to stop clearcut logging in watersheds used for human consumption. It is time to develop proper policy that identifies climate change hazards and prevents loss to communities. We need a policy that ensures our watersheds are protected by mature, healthy forests, forests that also protect wildlife. Currently there are only two protected watersheds in all of BC: Vancouver and Victoria. We all deserve to have these same protections.

To register and for details about location and parking visit www.eventbrite.ca/e/future-of-our-forests-tickets-865717864437

For more info, to volunteer, participate or donate, contact:

Taryn Skalbania, 250-767-6456, Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance email: peachlandwpa@gmail.com

Clarice Bower, 250-870-1675, Central Okanagan, Joe Rich Area, email: jrforestryandtrails@gmail.com

RELATED LINKS TO OTHER IWTF ARTICLES:

IWTF backgrounder:

www.evergreenalliance.ca/portal-the-need-to-get-informed-organized-and-inspired-for-change/3/

MLA Mike Morris video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQtkaxdUdLQ

Link to Dr. Younes Alila, UBC Faculty of Forests:

www.focusonvictoria.ca/forests/115/

Video - Michelle Connolly, Conservation North:

<https://youtu.be/nJp0OAVXeMU>