COMMUNITY WATERSHEDS

What does this measure & why is it important?

Many residents in our region get their drinking water from creeks or streams above their community or home. If the watershed provides clean water, then minimal water treatment is necessary, but if it becomes contaminated, boil water advisories or expensive treatment may become necessary. There are many potential sources of drinking water contamination including activities such as mining, forestry, road building, wildlife, livestock, and people.

This indicator measures the area of each watershed that has been logged in the past 20 years. Logging activities are associated with road building, which leads to greater public access, as well as the potential for increased erosion and sedimentation, all of which could lead to degraded drinking water quality. The measure only looks at the past 20 years because young forests have a different impact on the hydrology of an area than older forest. A watershed that has had more extensive recent logging will tend to have greater potential for more rapid runoff which may lead to more erosion and flooding.

What are the trends & current conditions?

Of the 28 municipalities in the region, 15 get drinking water from designated Community Watersheds, while 10 have drilled wells, two pump water from the Columbia River, and one gets water from Arrow Lake (Table 1).

For the 15 municipalities that get their drinking water from community watersheds, an average of 2.7% of the land has been logged in the past 20 years. Smaller communities may also have Community Watersheds, and many residents get their water from designated Domestic Watersheds above their homes. These Domestic Watersheds and smaller Community Watersheds have been logged almost twice as much in the past 20 years than the Community Watersheds serving municipalities (an average of 4.8 % have been logged).

In the Digital Basin map, you can click on your community watershed to see how much logging has taken place there since 1994. It is important to note that just because logging has been going on in your watershed, it does not necessarily mean that your water will be contaminated. There are many factors that influence the impact of logging, including the terrain and the logging practices employed. For example, Arrow Creek provides drinking water to Creston and this watershed has been logged more than any other municipalities' Community Watershed. But the Creston Community Forest is the company that operates there, and they take an ecosystem-based approach to forest management and work very hard to protect the water quality.

COLUMBIA BASIN RDI
RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, at Selkirk College, is a regional centre of excellence in applied research and information provision focused on strengthening rural communities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. Visit www.cbrdi.ca for more information.

Municipality	Source	Watershed 1	Watershed 2	Watershed 3
CANAL FLATS	Well Water			
CASTLEGAR	Arrow Lake			
CRANBROOK	Watershed	Gold Creek	Joseph Creek	
CRESTON	Watershed	Arrow Creek		
ELKFORD	Well Water			
FERNIE	Watershed	Fairy Creek		
FRUITVALE	Watershed	Kelly Creek		
GOLDEN	Well Water			
GRAND FORKS	Well Water			
GREENWOOD	Well Water			
INVERMERE	Watershed	Abel (Goldie Creek)		
KASLO	Watershed	Kemp Creek		
KIMBERLEY	Watershed	Matthew Creek	Mark Creek	Kimberley Community Watershed
MIDWAY	Well Water			
MONTROSE	Well Water			
NAKUSP	Watershed	Brouse Creek	Halfway Creek	Kuskanax Creek
NELSON	Watershed	5 mile Creek	Anderson	Selous Creek
NEW DENVER	Well Water			
RADIUM	Watershed	Forster Creek		
REVELSTOKE	Watershed	Greeley Creek		
ROSSLAND	Watershed	Topping Creek	Hanna Creek	Murphy creek
SALMO	Well Water			
SILVERTON	Watershed	Bartlett Creek		
SLOCAN	Watershed	Gwillum Creek	Springer Creek	
SPARWOOD	Well Water			
TRAIL	Columbia River			
VALEMOUNT	Watershed	Swift Creek		
WARFIELD	Columbia River			

Table 1: Water sources for community in the Columbia Basin Boundary Region