

WHAT YOU CAN DO



We all live in watersheds, and our actions can impact water quality. Here are some homeowner tips:

1. Make sure you know where your wastewater goes. Are you on a septic system, or connected to sewer? If it's septic, you're responsible for keeping it in good repair. The *Septic Smart Homeowner's Guide* is a good place to start:

csrd.bc.ca/septicsmart/homeowners-guide

2. Properly dispose of unused medications – return them to a pharmacy



3. Pledge not to flush personal care products such as floss, swabs, and wipes

ABOUT THE SHUSWAP WATERSHED COUNCIL

The SWC is a collaborative group of 17 people representing local governments, first nations, provincial agencies, and communities. Its mandate is to enhance water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap watershed for the long term.



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watershed council

WATER PROTECTION INITIATIVE

shuswapwater.ca

Our actions on land can impact water in nearby and downstream watersheds.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?



A watershed is an area of land that is defined by where water flows. Watersheds receive precipitation (rain or snow) and over time, water drains to a single point of convergence, such as the outlet of a river or lake. Smaller watersheds make up larger watersheds. For example, the Bolean Creek watershed feeds the Salmon River watershed, which feeds the Shuswap watershed, then the Thompson watershed, and so on.

WHAT WATERSHED(S) DO YOU LIVE IN?

This is the entire Shuswap Watershed – it's much more than the lake. It includes mountain ranges, creeks, rivers, and several other lakes all of which drain to a single point at the outlet of Little Shuswap Lake.

Image courtesy of the Shuswap Watershed Project, shuswapwatershed.ca

WATER QUALITY AND NUTRIENTS IN THE LAKES – IT'S A MATTER OF BALANCE

Aquatic life such as algae, invertebrates, and fish need nutrients such as phosphorus, nitrogen and carbon to grow and reproduce. Naturally-occurring nutrients are important for making a lake or river biologically productive, and supporting a healthy ecosystem.

It is important for nutrients to remain in a balance with plants and animals in the ecosystem. Excessive nutrients and algae can reduce water clarity, create odours, and reduce the quality of water for drinking and recreation.

NUTRIENT RESEARCH UNDERWAY IN THE SHUSWAP WATERSHED

From 2011 – 2013, a comprehensive water quality monitoring program was carried out in the Shuswap watershed. Generally, water quality is good in most places at most times of year. However, high concentrations of nutrients in the lakes – phosphorus (P) in particular – were found to be coming from the Shuswap and Salmon Rivers. The Shuswap Watershed Council has entered into a three-year research agreement with UBC – Okanagan to better understand where and how P and other nutrients get into lakes and rivers, and how to protect water quality and the health of our aquatic ecosystems.



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