



# You are Recreating in a Watershed

The Comox Lake watershed is a beautiful and complex system of mountains, lakes, rivers, and creeks. The water within this watershed - the snowmelt and rain - runs over land and into small streams and larger waterways such as the Upper Puntledge River, the Cruikshank River, and Perseverance Creek. Some of this water soaks into the ground but much of it flows into Comox Lake. In Comox Lake, the water is available for fish and wildlife habitat as well as being used for power generation and stored as drinking water for the Comox Valley.

The Comox Lake watershed supplies drinking water to over 45,000 people in Comox and Courtenay via the Comox Lake Drinking Water System and to 3700 people in Cumberland. Have you ever wondered “What allows me to have safe water I can drink?” By helping to protect the Comox Lake watershed you can help ensure that we have safe drinking water.

## How do we protect this shared resource?

### Stay on existing roads and trails

The land around waterways provides important ecological functions. Streamside vegetation and soils moderate stream flow, preventing erosion and flooding. They also reduce or remove suspended sediments, bacteria, viruses, parasites, and excess nutrients from the water before it reaches Comox Lake. It is important to leave these areas undisturbed to maintain high quality drinking water and to reduce the cost of water filtration and treatment.

### Do not build new trails without permission

Trails built within the watershed should follow a standard from the International Mountain Biking Association or the Whistler Trail Standards that consider the important ecological function of streamside areas. Trail building should only be done in consultation with landowners and trail stewardship groups.

### Keep poop and pee away from the water

Poop can carry bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Using the designated bathrooms and picking up dog poop at beaches and campgrounds reduces the risk of these pathogens entering our drinking water system. Empty the holding tanks of boats and recreation vehicles only at designated stations. If you are in the backcountry, pack out your poop and do not pee in waterways. Peeing on rocks, pine needles, and gravel in the backcountry is less likely to attract wildlife that can cause damage to sensitive and important ecosystems along waterways.

### Camp at designated campgrounds

Camping outside designated areas increases the risk of streams being contaminated by bacteria from human poop and increases the risk of damage to ecosystems from fires.

### Do not have a campfire outside of designated campgrounds

A small fire can quickly get out of control and destroy large tracts of forest within the watershed. Healthy forests are critical to moderate and remove suspended sediments, bacteria, viruses, parasites, and excess nutrients from the water as well as prevent flooding. A loss of healthy forests due to wildfire could significantly increase the cost of water treatment.

### Get informed

There is so much more you and others can do to protect the Comox Lake watershed. Learn more on the Comox Valley Regional District Website.

We are all connected by water.