

Wells & Groundwater Licensing in the Trust Area Webinar

We have provided answers to some of the questions that we're not answered during the webinar:

Question	Answer
Do instructions and requirements that specify "wells" also include ponds or dug wells? Are they considered the same thing under the WSA? Do ponds and open, dug wells need to be registered?	A pond is considered a stream under the Water Sustainability Act (WSA) and an authorization is required before a person can divert water from any stream in BC. A well is any artificial opening in the ground made for diverting groundwater. This includes drilled wells and dug wells, and often includes dugouts since dugouts usually intercept and collect groundwater. The use of water from any well for non-domestic purpose requires an authorization. Domestic groundwater users do not need an authorization and are encouraged to register their well.
Preserving forest cover on the Gulf islands is an important way to protect our groundwater, maximize absorption and retention of rainfall. Does the ministry understand how important it is to prevent clearcutting, and insisting on ecologically sustainable annual cut rates for commercial logging?	You may be interested in government's proposal to develop a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. More information on the project can be found at https://engage.gov.bc.ca/watershedsecurity . A discussion paper has been prepared based on what the government has heard from Indigenous peoples, key stakeholders, internal experts, opinion leaders, and the public. It highlights some of the science and policy opportunities the eventual watershed security strategy may explore. Feedback on the discussion paper is invited between January 25 and March 18, 2022 at 4 PM
One matter I am hoping to learn about is the benefit of licensing for conservation and influence on decision-making.	The definition of conservation purpose is "the diversion, retention or use of water for the purpose of conserving fish or wildlife and includes the construction of works for that purpose." Water cannot be licenced for the purpose of preventing it from being diverted and used for another purpose. Environmental flow needs must be considered for every application made under the Water Sustainability Act.

	<p>Another tool to prevent water from being licenced for other purposes is a water reservation under Section 39 1 (d) of the Water Sustainability Act.</p>
<p>We have a parcel of land on Gambier Island that is a group of 10 family summer cabins (not rentals) but isn't a strata but maintained/owned as a corporation for last ~80years with shares to each family cabin. Would we require to license and register since technically we are a corporation but all water use is domestic? And if we have more then one well for different uses; gardening and domestic use, do you have to license each?</p>	<p>The type of land ownership (e.g., private, corporation, government) is not a factor in determining whether the use is domestic or non-domestic; rather, it is what the water is being used for. It sounds like the summer cabins (as long as they are not rentals) with adjoining gardens (less than 1000 m2 in area) could be considered domestic use. The Water Sustainability Act does not specify limits to the number of dwellings or wells that can use domestic groundwater.</p> <p>That being said, there may be other details pertinent to this situation that could change this answer (for example, it is possible this could be considered commercial, or camps and public facilities, purpose). For groundwater users who are unsure whether they meet the definition of “non-domestic”, we encourage submitting an application before the March 1 deadline. When we review the application, we can reject it if it found to be domestic use only (fees would be returned).</p> <p>The Drinking Water Protection Act may apply to your situation; please contact your local Health Authority if you have questions on this.</p>
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