

The Water Sustainability Act and On-Farm Water Supplies

BC Cranberry Congress
February 7, 2017



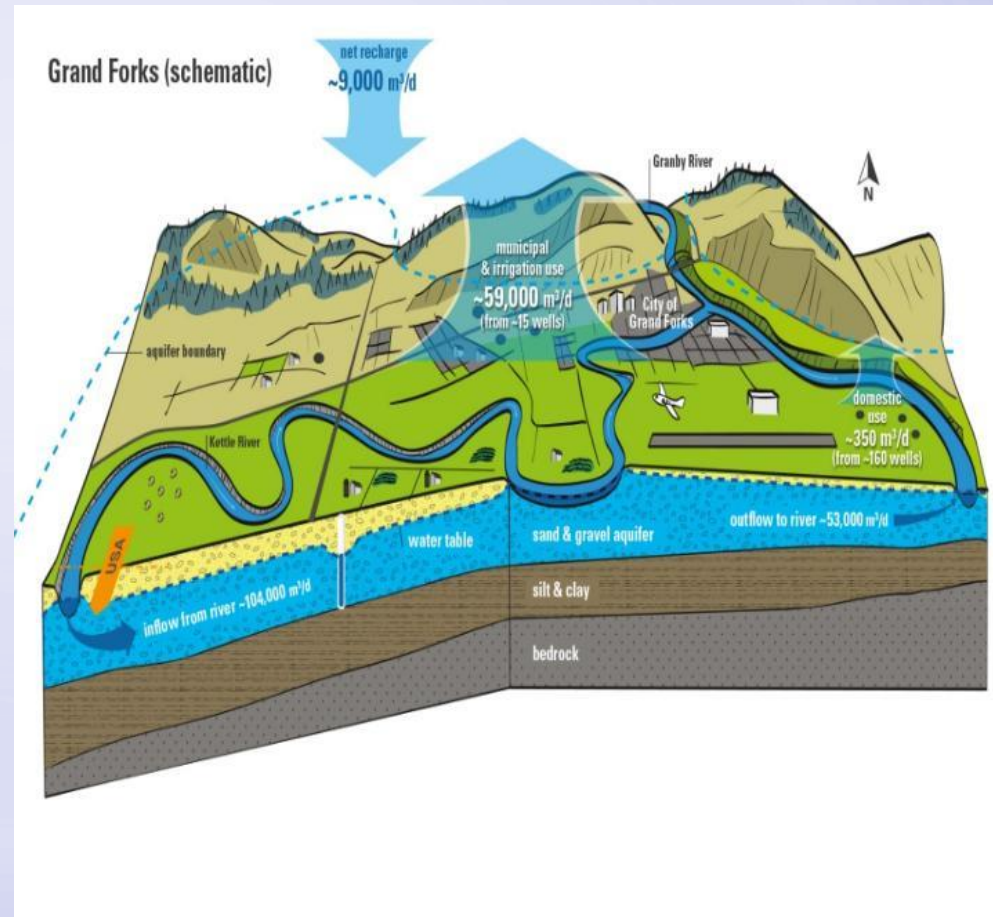
Outline

- **Water Sustainability Act Overview**
- **Groundwater Licensing**
- **Applying for a Licence**



Water Sustainability Act (WSA)

- February 29, 2016
- Updates historic Water Act
- Some Key Changes:
 - Regulate groundwater
 - Environmental Flow Needs (EFN)
 - Managing groundwater and surface water as one resource
- Phase 1 regulations enacted

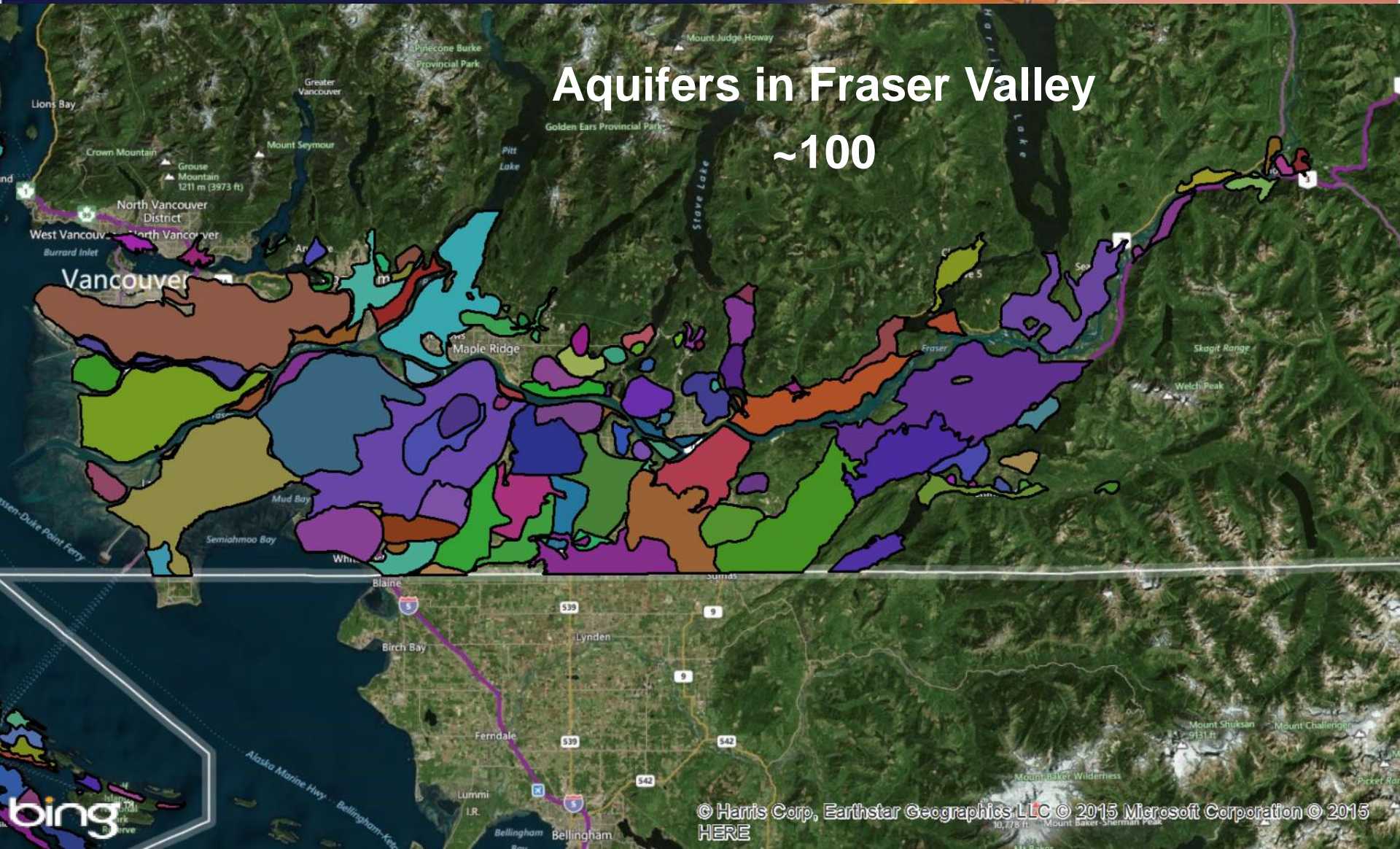


Groundwater Licensing

- Licensing groundwater use establishes equity between surface water and groundwater users
- Gives groundwater users rights to use water based on the priority scheme that currently exists (First in Time - First in Right)
- Enables better management to ensure water in the future

Aquifers in Fraser Valley

~100



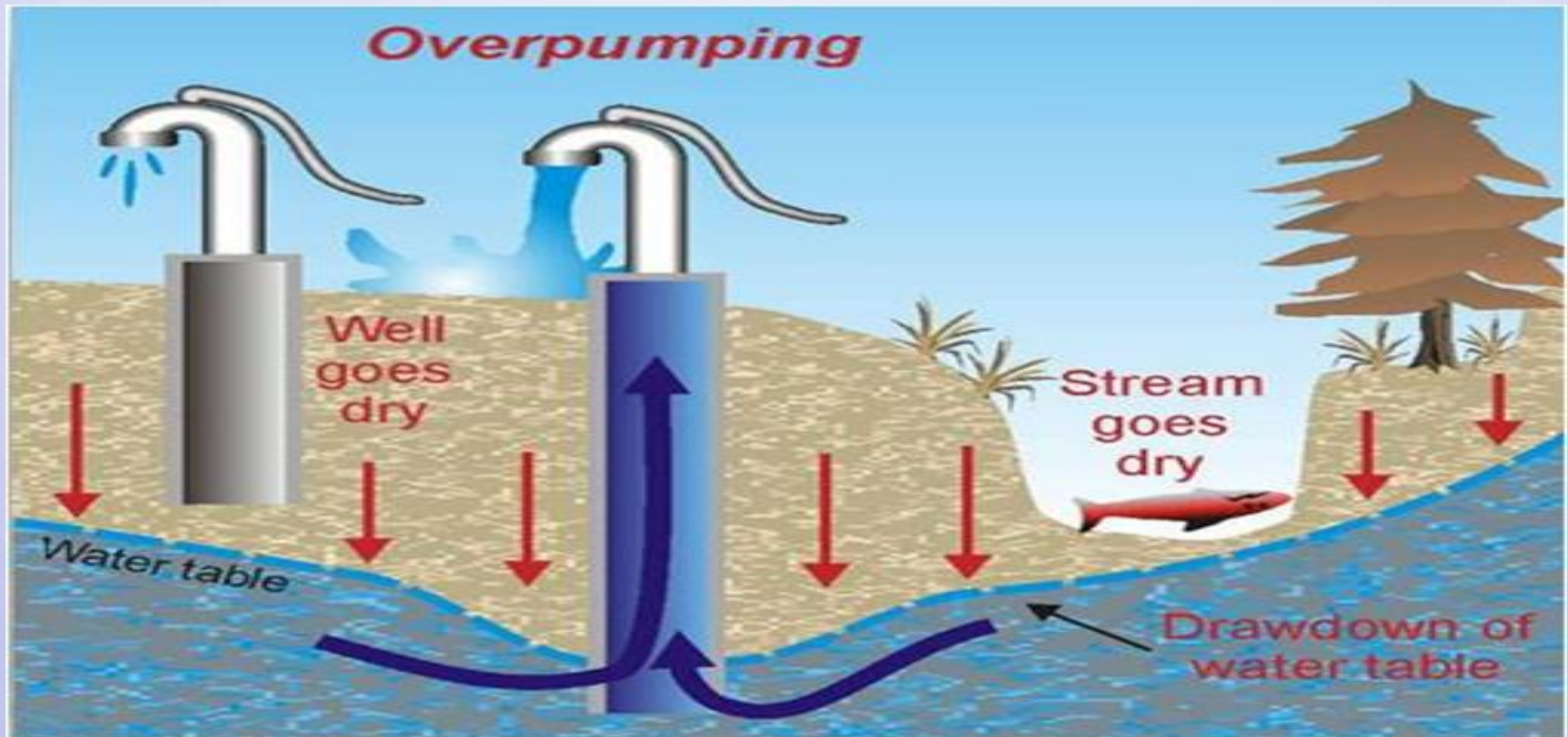
Groundwater Licencing

- Non-domestic – irrigation, industrial, waterworks, etc.
- Domestic use exempt
 - Must be taken into account in decisions



Licensing Wells

- Recognize hydraulic connection between surface water and groundwater





Existing Groundwater Users



- Existing users will have 3 years to apply to be transitioned into the licensing scheme
- Application fee waived until Dec 31, 2017 to incent early application
- Applicant can continue to divert and use groundwater until a decision has been made on the application
- Date of precedence based on date of first use
- Water rental fees begin the date the WSA comes into force (February 29, 2016)
- If an existing user fails to apply within the 3-year period, the use is not authorized

Priority date for transitioning groundwater use based on historic date of first use of water

Date from which the decision maker is satisfied that groundwater has been used from an aquifer

- Regularly and beneficially on an ongoing basis
- For a water use purpose
- On the appurtenant land, mine or undertaking



New groundwater use must be authorized before diversion and use begins



- Use beginning after Feb. 29, 2016
- Date of precedence = application completion date
- Application fees payable
- Rentals begin when authorization granted
- Qualified Professional required to drill new wells



Ministry of Forests, Lands
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Fees and Rentals

Example User	Volume (1000m3 /year)	Annual water rental (\$)	Application Fee (\$)
50 acres of blueberries drip irrigation	92	78	250
100 head of dairy cattle	5	50	250
Water bottler	200	450	5000
Municipal water supply	23,000	52,000	10,000

[Water Rent Calculator](#)

[Agriculture Water Calculator](#)

Environmental Protection

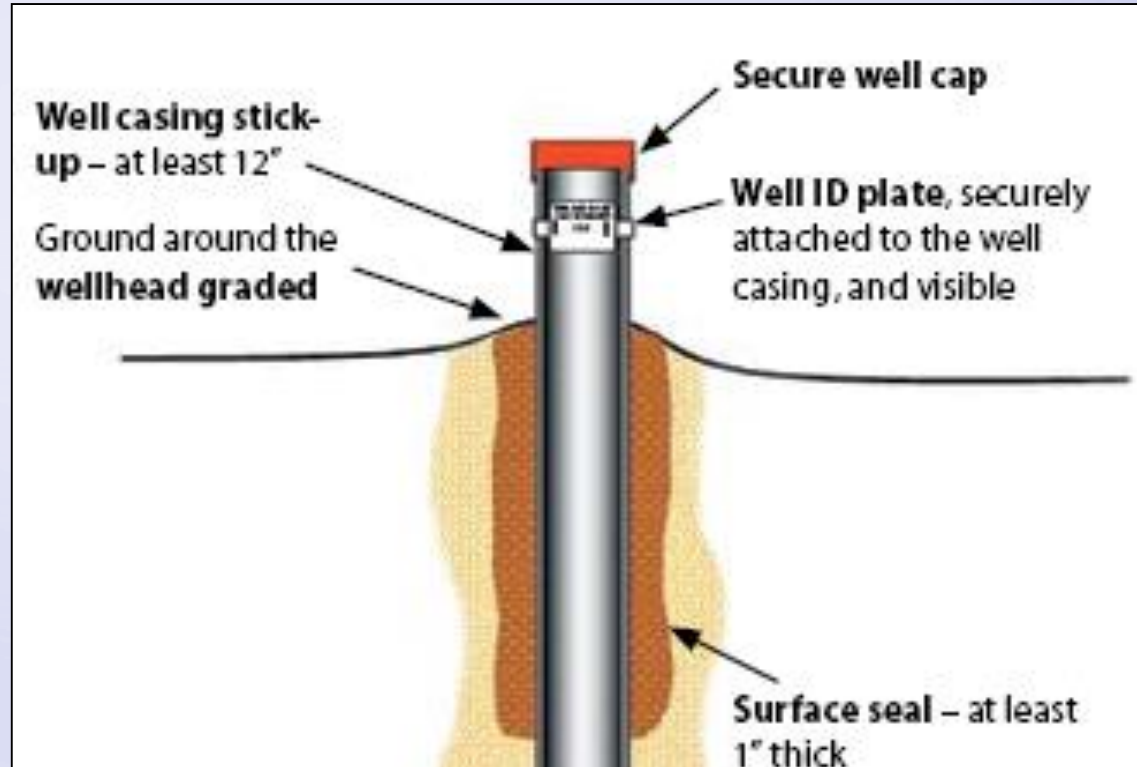
Environmental Flow Needs –must be considered for new applications

Critical Environmental Flow Threshold – new means of protection during times of scarcity



Groundwater Protection Regulation minimum well construction requirements

- Secure cap
- Identification plate*
- Minimum stickup $\geq 0.3 \text{ m}^*$
- Ground around well graded to prevent ponding of water around the well head*
- Surface seal is intact



*Good practice and legal requirement for "new" wells constructed on or after Nov. 1, 2005

Groundwater Protection Regulation

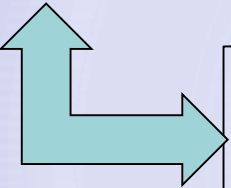
- Must keep a 3m radius around wellhead clear of “foreign matter”
- No new well pits
- Backflow prevention devices on new pump installations
- Certified thermoplastic liner, drop pipe, and sounding tubes
- Owners must retain well records
- Drillers **must** submit records



How to License Your Groundwater Use



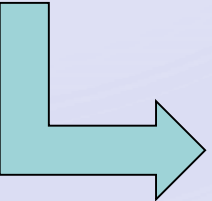
1. Applicant: logon with BCeID to FrontCounter BC website and fill out application



2. FrontCounter BC: staff will review application for completeness



3. Water Authorizations Staff consultation, referrals, technical report



4. Decision: Water Manager decides whether to approve license





Basic Application Requirements (New & Existing)

- 1. Proof of Use** (existing only)
- 2. Proof of Ownership** (significant interest in land)
- 3. Legal Description of the Land** (license is appurtenant to where water is used)
- 4. Volume Estimation** (Single or Multiple Purposes)
 - i.e. frost protection/flooding, irrigation, storage
- 5. Area(s) to be Irrigated and Type of Crop(s)**
- 6. Well Information**
- 7. Map**



Ways to Apply

1. Online System (*preferred*)

- Submit your application in Virtual FrontCounter BC's online system
- www.frontcounterbc.ca

2. In-person

- Requires an appointment be made with a FrontCounter BC staff
- Requires all of the required information and documents be brought to the appointment

3. Over the Phone

- FrontCounter BC Contact Centre staff can help get you started on an application.
- 1-877-855-3222



Ministry of Forests, Lands
and Natural Resource Operations

More Information

www.gov.bc.ca/water

Applications: FrontCounter BC

www.frontcounterbc.ca

➤ What you need to apply

FrontCounterBC.Surrey@gov.bc.ca

604-586-4400



Questions?

