

## **For Whales' Sake**

**By Jackie Hildering**

### *Water, Water*

Water – essential to life. From drinking to cooking, flushing to generating electricity, water is the most valuable resource on our planet.

Maybe as Canadians, our current apathy in protecting our water is to be understood. There seems to be an endless supply of it – there for us all to share.

However, we need to remind ourselves that even though water supplies are renewed through the hydrological cycle, the renewal rate can be very long. Supplies can be used up faster than they are replenished. With pollution, we reduce what was available as fresh water. The result: a growing global water shortage.

As it is with valuable commodities, they are less likely to be shared. We know the reality of Gas Wars. Let me be wrong, but there may be Water Wars in our future.

There is evidence aplenty that our waterways are being privatized and even industrialized, eroding our ability to access water and protect the environment.

Case #1: The provincial government has imposed that, as of 2002, all new hydropower must come from the private sector. The result is that hundreds of BC's waterways have been privatized. Our hydro-electricity and the fate of streams and rivers are now in the hands of for-profit corporations.

Case #2: There are proposed changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act that would remove our right to go where we want in our canoe, kayak, raft or motorboat. The NWPA, as it has stood since 1882, ensures that our waterways are protected, allowing for navigation. If the changes go through, the default situation would become that government determines if a waterway is indeed navigable, allowing access to the public to be denied and opening the door for industry to impact navigability without recourse.

Case #3 (and this one shocked even this battle-hardened environmental educator): Schedule Two of Canada's mining effluent regulations is planned to be put into effect to allow at least 16 Canadian lakes to become "tailings impoundment areas." That's right, instead of the inconvenience of having to build containment ponds, mining corporations may put harmful waste into our lakes.

Time to show resistance my dear fellow Canadians before these lines from the Ancient Mariner reflect our national reality "Water, water everywhere. Nor any drop to drink."

Nor fish to eat. Nor whales to watch.

For more information and action points, see [www.earthlingenterprises.ca](http://www.earthlingenterprises.ca) .

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