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### Abstract

#### Water: A First Nations' Spiritual and Ecological Perspective.

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Water quality and availability is an urgent global concern. This paper documents, through the use of ethnographic research methods, First Nations' concerns and perspectives about water. The paper's scope is primarily limited to the views of three Elders from the southern Interior of British Columbia: Mary Thomas from the Secwepemc, Millie Michell from the Nlakaamux, and Mary Louie from the Syilx Nation. Secondary literature sources complement the Elders' sharing of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). The Elders' emphasis on the spiritual importance of water is contrasted with Western science's emphasis on water's unique physical and chemical properties. This fundamental difference raises questions about Western science's approach to freshwater ecosystem management and study. Ultimately, this paper documents the wisdom of highly respected Elders about water in relation to the culture and freshwater ecosystems of South-Central British Columbia.

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