



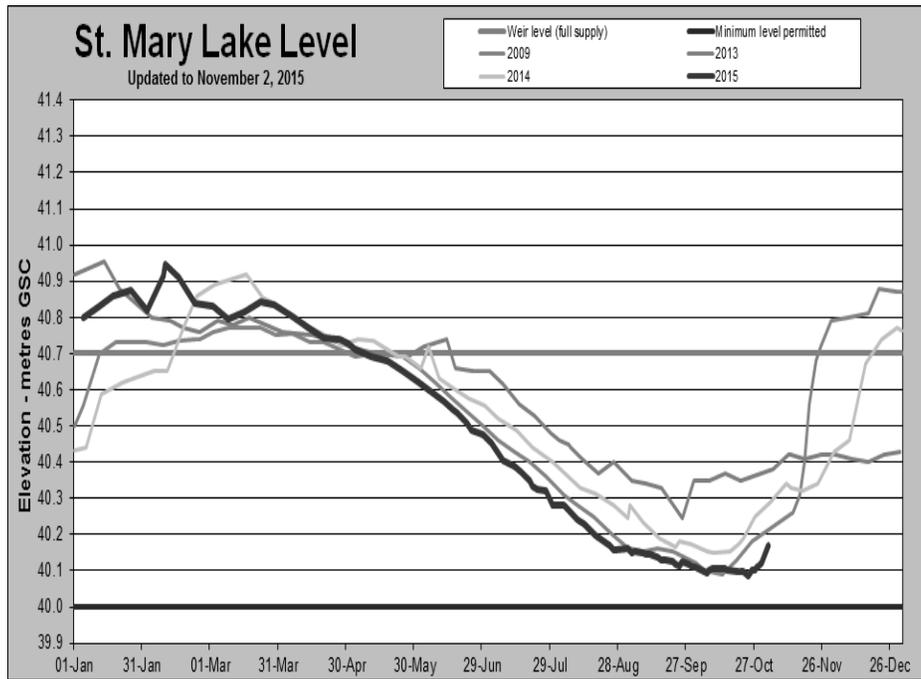
Every Drop Counts

# North Salt Spring Waterworks District

Be water savvy - Use only what you need.

November 2015

## Water Restrictions Continue



Finally, due to the recent heavy rain, Maxwell and St. Mary Lakes have begun to fill.

The District is being cautiously optimistic at this time as a lack of rainfall over the winter months could still mean that the lakes may not fully recharge. Starting the new year at less than 100% capacity could put the District in a difficult position next summer. For this reason, the District remains in Conservation Level 3 restrictions.

Please keep up your conservation efforts – every bit you conserve helps. Watch the District website for updates.

## Raising the Weir Is Critical to the Vitality of our Island Community

This year's drought increased awareness of just how vulnerable our island and our District are to climate variability. In fact, climate variability over the last few years has had a dramatic impact on our water supply, which is dependant entirely on rainfall for recharge. Without sufficient storage capacity in our reservoirs, the District will be increasingly challenged to meet summer demand or even winter demand if rainfall becomes scarce year round.

Further storage will be required to meet all existing commitments. Currently, the District is moving ahead with raising the weir on Duck Creek. In order to raise the weir, the District must reach agreement with all St. Mary lakeshore owners, while complying with all legislative and regulatory requirements. The goal, ultimately, is to complete the required work of raising the weir to 41.0m above sea level by the summer of 2017.

The Board of Trustees has engaged Fletcher & Company Municipal Consulting Inc. from the field of consultants who submitted proposals for RFP001: St. Mary Lake Lakeshore Property Owner's Liaison, Consultation and Remediation Design project.

Fletcher & Company's team are experienced in all aspects of the work required – community consultation, property negotiations, legal agreements, and working with planning and environmental legislation and regulations. The team has experience in land and waterfront development, water supply and water management related projects, and development within and adjacent to riparian areas. In addition, Fletcher & Co. has experience working on the Gulf Islands and is familiar with local by-laws and regulations. Over the next few months they will be meeting with property owners and working closely with District staff on the project. A presentation will be held for ratepayers in the spring to provide further information on the project.

## 2016 Parcel Tax – Bylaw 273

The Board passed the District’s 2016 Taxation Bylaw 273 on October 21<sup>st</sup> approving a parcel tax increase of 1.5%, and the Capital Construction Fund Surcharge was set at \$150.00 per ratepayer.

With construction on the new plant set to begin soon, and as Parcel Tax is only billed once per year, in February, we had to set the surcharge amount now to cover the initial long term lending payments which will begin late next year and cover the first few months of 2017. The 2017 Parcel Tax will reflect the full amount of the borrowing costs.

The borrowing of up to \$8.4 million was authorized by the Borrowing Bylaw 264 via referendum. The final amount of the surcharge for the new plant will not be known until construction is complete. Monies from the reserve funds will be applied to the project to reduce lending which will reduce the long-term surcharge. Funds collected are deposited in the Capital Construction Reserve Fund and will be used to pay the interest on the construction loan, when the time comes, and to pay for other needed capital infrastructure upgrades throughout the District. Also, the more money accumulated in the fund now will mean the less we have to borrow later, and the lower a future long-term borrowing surcharge will be.

In addition to the construction of the St. Mary DAF Plant, planned capital projects for 2016, totalling just over \$500K include:

- Upgrading a 950’ section of the Cranberry water main to 12” pipe
- Replacing a 200’ section of main on Margaret Ave.
- Replacing and/or upgrading 3 standpipes
- Adding another section of watershed protection fencing at Maxwell
- Raising the St. Mary Weir/Lakeshore Property Owners Consultation & Compensation Project

2016 Parcel Tax rates and penalty dates are as follows:

	BYLAW 273	BYLAW 273	TOTAL	Penalty Dates		
WATER PARCEL TAX 2016	2016	Surcharge	2016	1	Mar. 12, 2016	10%
Group A – up to 1 acre	\$363.67	\$150.00	\$513.67	2	June 1, 2016	5%
Group B – 1 to 5 acres	\$389.43	\$150.00	\$539.43	3	Sept. 1, 2016	5%
Group C – 5 to 10 acres	\$418.79	\$150.00	\$568.89			
Group D – over 10 acres	\$445.57	\$150.00	\$595.57			

Invoices will be mailed February 4, 2016 and due by 4:00 p.m. March 11, 2016. Pre-payments in lump sum or installments are welcomed, as are post-dated cheques. For more information on the District’s rates visit our website.

## Clean Drinking Water Campaign

The North Salt Spring Waterworks District will soon be launching a **Clean Drinking Water Campaign** with the goal of raising funds to offset the cost of raising the weir on Duck Creek and other projects. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of every dollar donated to the Clean Drinking Water Fund will be used to defray the treatment plant project costs that the District’s ratepayers have to finance, thereby reducing the costs passed on to individual ratepayers. Twenty percent (20%) will be allocated to the Duck Creek Weir project. The other two percent (2%) will be used to support the District’s conservation efforts, local water quality initiatives, community education, watershed protection, and to support collaboration with groups such as the Salt Spring Island Water Council.

We will be seeking contributions from our community, island residents, businesses and organizations alike to support the critical work that is currently being done by the District. Look for more information in your mailbox and on our website soon.