



North Salt Spring Waterworks District

Be water savvy – Use only what you need.

September 2015

It Has Been a Long, Dry Summer

Thank you once again to all our consumers. Every drop counts and your conservation efforts have and continue to make a difference!

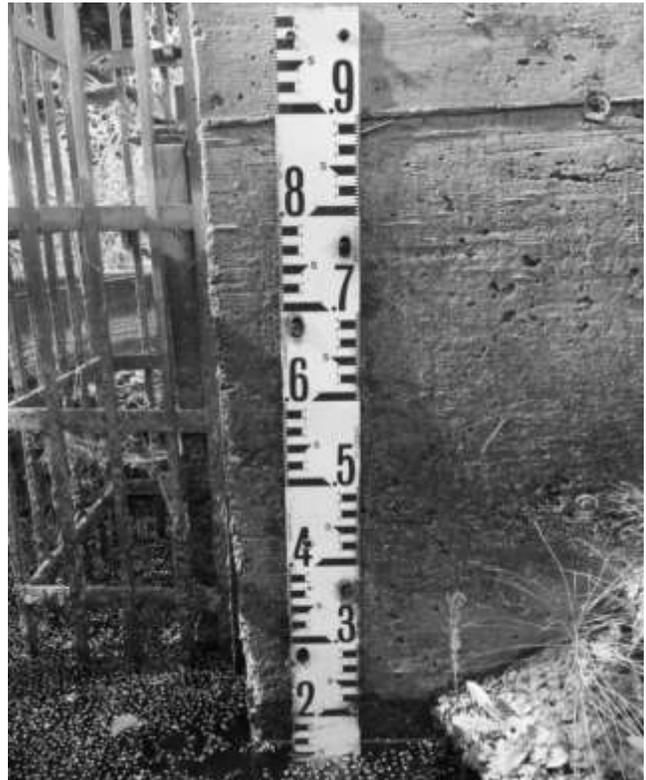
Although the nights are getting cooler and we've finally had some rain, weeks of rain are needed before the drought situation on Salt Spring improves. We remain at Level 4 drought. Currently, Environment Canada is predicting a 100% probability that the next 3 months will be warmer than average. Precipitation forecasts for the same period are less certain; however, there is still a very real possibility that Salt Spring Island will have less than normal rainfall this winter. Surface and groundwater sources on the island are already strained and the prospect of a dry winter is very concerning to the District.

Water Restrictions Expected To Continue

To enable science-based decision making, the District recently engaged KWL consulting engineers to develop refill projections for both St. Mary and Maxwell Lakes. These projections show that if there is less than average rainfall this winter, the lakes may not completely refill. In that case, the District would enter the dry season of 2016 at less than full capacity and even more stringent conservation measures could be required. For this reason, conservation measures may remain in place until both lake sources are at full capacity.

The Level 4 drought has also taken a toll on the District's resources, consuming staff time and resulting in the additional cost of consultants, while operating revenues are down due to conservation measures, resulting in the postponement of two capital projects. The Board of Trustees appreciate the fact that the community is doing their part, which is evident by the colour of the sports fields, parks and lawns and dusty cars all around the island.

District staff continue daily monitoring of lake levels, rainfall and temperature.



Lake level gauge at Duck Creek Weir on St. Mary showing lake at 40.148m on September 8th – the lowest ever for this time of year.

Emergency Short-Term License Approved

In addition, staff have worked with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to secure a short-term water license that will permit continued withdrawals from St. Mary Lake when the lake level falls below 40.0m elevation, which is expected to happen in mid to late September.

The short-term licence has only been approved as an emergency measure so that the District can continue to supply the town with water despite ongoing drought conditions. It is temporary, conditional and does not mean that the moratorium and ongoing conservation are no longer necessary. As a requirement of the short-term license, the District must engage a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to report to the Ministry on impacts to riparian

habitats and species and water quality and aquatic species. District staff will work closely with the QEP to monitor to the effects of drawdown on St. Mary Lake and protect habitat in Duck Creek.

The District has also let a Request for Proposal to search for a consultant to assist with the work involved in raising the weir on Duck Creek. The goal is to raise the weir to 41.0 m by next summer to capture the 2016/17 winter runoff. To achieve this, the District is seeking an innovative solution that will balance water supply needs with those of lakeshore property owners all while improving health of the riparian zone and facilitating better storm water management.

Please keep up your conservations efforts – every bit you conserve will help us make it through!

Winter is Coming – Be Prepared

Although it's hard to contemplate now, winter will arrive sooner than many of us would like. To avoid a costly leak be sure to winterize your water system.



Ensure:

- Pipes are adequately insulated and, if appropriate, buried to protect them from freezing.
- Outside taps are turned off and hoses drained and disconnected.

If going away:

- Shut off your water (and water heater) at your in-home main shut-off valve, or take advantage of the District's Turn Off/Turn On Service and have it shut off at the meter. (Current charge is \$71.00)
- Arrange to have your property checked by someone every few days to ensure all is well.
- Make sure the District has your contact information and a local emergency contact person and phone number on file for your property. Information change forms are available from the office and on our website.

- If someone is going to come and use your home for a few days during your absence, make sure they know how to turn everything off again when they leave.

In general, please be sure your outside taps are turned off when not in use and make sure all your taps and toilets are in good working order. The District's *Leak Allowance Policy* can be viewed on our website in the Documents section, and tips on leak detection are located on our FAQs page.

Those of you going away during the winter months may also want to consider pre-paying a balance on your water and/or tax accounts or leaving post-dated cheques with the office. You can also call the office from anywhere and pay with Visa or MasterCard.

Channel Ridge Parties Bring Suit Over Water Service

The District, along with the Islands Trust, the SSI Water Preservation Society and the Province of British Columbia were recently served with notice that legal action is being taken by Paradigm Mortgage and Channel Ridge Properties regarding the District's denial of water service for the envisioned 1986 build-out plan for the Channel Ridge Subdivision.

The matter is being handled by the District's law firm. As such, the Board and staff can make no further comment at this time, other than to say that we believe we have a strong case and stand by this decision.

Moving? Change Your Account # if Paying Online

Moving to another home in the District? Water Toll and Parcel Tax account numbers are connected to the physical address of the property.



When you move your account number changes to that of your new address. If you use online banking to pay your bills, be sure to update your North Salt Spring Waterworks account numbers for your online "payees" so that your payment is credited to the correct customer – you.