

## Doing Our Part to Conserve

With no significant rainfall forecast and temperatures at or above seasonal, Stage 4 water restrictions are crucial to ensure essential water needs for drinking water, hygiene and fire protection are met, and water flows for fish and aquatic habitats are maintained.

East Vancouver Island has been at provincial Drought Level 5 since July 14 with the province advising water providers reduce usage by implementing stricter watering conditions. The added summertime water demands resulting from outdoor water use are the primary stressor on supply and with almost no precipitation in the forecast, there will be continued pressure on the water resources in our region.

Through regular operations, the City continues to adjust systems and strategically reduce water consumption in all aspects of our work. We continue to improve and move toward less water use, more efficient water use, and drought tolerant measures. Significant changes to operations have been made to reduce water required for irrigation while balancing the needs for recreation, tourism, and public safety. Major functional economic assets such as sports fields and significant trees will be preserved using efficient irrigation systems.

Residents have expressed concern certain key areas within the City are still being watered. We hope this information will explain where and why we are watering and where we have notably reduced.

### **Sports fields**

If water to the fields is shutoff, the turf areas will die. To protect this valuable infrastructure without water, the fields would be closed to use. Allowing play would irrevocably damage the fields and potentially cause injuries due to pitting and uneven surfaces. Fencing and security would be required to protect these million-dollar assets and special events such as this month's BC baseball provincials would be cancelled.

### **Parksville Community Park**

Many systems have been completely turned off and those which remain are much reduced. Critical infrastructure would cost millions to taxpayers to replace. An example is the Arboretum, the only one in BC and one of four in Canada with ArbNet accreditation. A portion of the kite field will receive water and because this is a high traffic area, we are concerned with permanent damage. Similarly, we are watering less frequently to critical areas to protect the infrastructure, such as the outdoor stage area. The splash park operating hours are limited to 1 pm to 6 pm as well as reduced hours at the outdoor shower facilities.

We are providing limited water to trees along the waterfront walkway. Signage will explain why the trees are being watered; without deep irrigation, these trees will die and because most are memorial trees, replacement trees would be costly. For this reason, we will attempt to preserve the trees in this public area.

It is important to understand, if watering to all areas is turned off, use would be restricted, and it would be necessary to cancel large special events to protect our natural assets and mitigate risk to users.

### Climate change impacts

The City and our urban forest are adapting to our changing climate. Forest health impacts of particular concern include increased heat and drought stress, more wildfires, flooding, and pest and disease outbreaks. Trees within the City are used to help adapt to climate change impacts as well as mitigate greenhouse gas emission. Urban forests assist with climate adaptation by, for example, providing shade and cooling in hotter summers. Natural asset preservation is critical to help mitigate higher temperatures because of climate change.

There are many areas in the City where the water has been turned off and we will monitor our natural assets to prioritize water use to prevent irrevocable damage and/or for public safety. Examples are the 90 trees along Highway 19A, 22 trees at Springwood Park, and the 50 trees and 100-year-old memorial elms in downtown Parksville.

### Off-leash dog park

Necessary for sanitation, watering has been reduced to three days per week. Dog excrement, urine build up and smell creates an unsafe environment. Should all water be turned off, the dog park would be closed for hygiene reasons.

### Other City initiatives underway to conserve water are listed here:

- Non-potable water will be used for the hydro excavation truck and street sweeper. Working with the sweeper manufacturer, we have reduced non-potable water use by one third.
- Storm and sewer main flushing will be conducted in the fall instead of during times of conservation measures.
- Non-potable water is used for all hand watering
- No fleet washing unless for health, safety, or sanitary reasons such as cleaning after picking up a dead animal.
- Many City planted feature flower beds are no longer being watered. An example is the bed near the post office. Water to the Pym Street garden will cease next week.

The City of Parksville appreciates the efforts of homeowners and business to conserve. Going to Stage 4 much earlier will help conserve and make it possible to meet water demands during peak times, satisfy river flows, and maintain emergency water storage levels for emergency firefighting.

Detailed information about City of Parksville water restrictions may be viewed on our [website](#) and [Let's Talk Parksville](#). The City is a partner in the Regional District of Nanaimo's [Team WaterSmart](#) programs.

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### For more information:

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*The City of Parksville is located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Nations,  
home to the Snaw-Naw-As First Nation and the Qualicum First Nation.*

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