

City Asks Residents to Conserve Water

The City of Parksville is asking residents to voluntarily reduce water consumption as watering restriction stage 3 becomes effective on July 1. Stage 3 restrictions, the same as stage 2, enable residents to choose where they wish to cut back and most importantly, provide an opportunity to defer stage 4 or a comprehensive watering ban.

The City constantly monitors water demands to ensure a continued supply as the existing surface water intake from the Englishman River is under capacity. With the aging infrastructure at our Englishman River pump station, we are no longer able to pump as much water as we once did. The infiltration gallery is plugging up with fine material and as a result, we are restricted to running one of three pumps at any time. Unfortunately until the new intake and water treatment plant is built, this will be a challenge. Once constructed, the new surface water intake planned as part of the Englishman River Water Service project scheduled for completion in July 2019 will be able to supply increased water demands into the future.

Although we have definitely had a wet cool spring, the dry weather is now upon us and Environment Canada is predicting a dryer than normal summer. Residents are asked to voluntarily conserve water, particularly discretionary outdoor water use such as the watering of lawns. Pro-active water conservation is critical for protecting stream flows for aquatic habitat and is essential for avoiding or deferring stricter watering restrictions as the summer progresses. Should we not see reductions in water consumption, it will be necessary to implement **stage 4** watering restrictions, a **comprehensive watering ban** which prohibits all outdoor watering, filling of pools, washing of vehicles, etc.

At this time, the City is the only municipality within the Regional District of Nanaimo moving to stage 3 watering restriction. The City will continue to monitor demands daily and we do appreciate the efforts of residents to voluntarily conserve water this summer.

As a reminder to residents, stage 3 watering restrictions are as follows:

- Residents are encouraged to voluntarily reduce watering of lawns to a minimum in an effort to avoid potential future watering ban if City water demands cannot be managed.
- Vegetable gardens and fruit trees are exempt from all watering restrictions.
- Watering of ornamental shrubs, flowers and trees is restricted to a hand-held container or a hose equipped with a shutoff nozzle if watered outside of the times permitted.
- Washing of vehicles, boats and exterior building surfaces may be washed using City supplied potable water using a hand-held container or hose equipped with a shutoff nozzle.
- Washing of sidewalks, driveways or parking lots may be washed using City supplied potable water using a hand-held container or hose equipped with a shutoff nozzle.
- Swimming pools, wading pools, hot tubs and water features may be filled.
- Odd numbered civic addresses may water on odd numbered days and even numbered civic addresses may water on even numbered days. Watering times are 7 am to 10 am OR 7 pm to 10 pm for a maximum of two hours of total allocated watering per day.

What can residents do to make every drop count?

- Lawns naturally go dormant in the summer months and return with fall rains. Lawns only need one inch of water each week including rainfall during the hottest, driest weeks of the year.
- Understand you're the watering needs of your plants - limit watering of trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetable gardens and use mulch, such as leaves and compost around trees and shrubs to hold in moisture. Water with a container or hose with a shutoff nozzle.
- Avoid washing vehicles or boats unnecessarily, unless for safety reasons (windows and headlights).
- Sweep outdoor surfaces such as driveways or decks with a broom rather than using a hose or power washing.
- Continue to reduce indoor use by turning off the tap when brushing your teeth or washing dishes, take shorter showers and run full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.

What is the City doing to conserve?

With the major drought in 2015 experienced throughout the province, the City made significant changes to parks operations to reduce water required for irrigation while balancing the needs for recreational users, tourism and to maintain public safety. This year, the City will perform an assessment of irrigated areas to determine if further reductions are possible. As well, at a cost of \$8,000, the City will apply a surfactant to our largest turf areas (sports fields in the Community Park and Springwood Park) and for the first time, to the kite field in the Community Park. This surfactant increases the uniformity of the water in the soil to improve the amount of available water. Stress tolerance is also improved increasing the turf/grass ability to recover from drought. Previous applications have indicated a savings close to 20% of water used on the fields.

Detailed information about the City's water restrictions may be found on the City of Parksville website at parksville.ca [Quicklinks/Water Restrictions]. The City is a partner in the Regional District of Nanaimo's Team WaterSmart programs. For helpful tips on saving water and for a map with information on local watering restriction stages, visit www.teamwatersmart.ca.

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