

Cowichan Bay Waterworks District

Cowichan Bay Waterworks District is committed to providing our community with high quality drinking water that is safe, cost effective and sustainable, including provisions for fire protection, now and in the future.



Newsletter Fall 2023

Office Hours

OPEN: 9 am to 4 pm, Tuesday - Thursday
After Hours Emergency Number: 250 710 8207
Website: www.cowichanbaywater.com

Contact Us:

Office Location: 1760 Pavenham Road
Office Telephone: 250 748 1687
Office Email: info@cowichanbaywater.com

Trustee's Message - By Trustee Wendy Gregg

Greetings from the CBWD Board of Trustees! I hope you are as happy as we are to welcome the autumn rains. While we are no where near to replacing the missing rainfall from the past spring and summer of severe drought, it is a huge relief to have the rains return. As I write this, our Chief Water Operator is collecting information that we hope will allow us to reduce the current water restrictions. If nothing else, this year taught us all not to take our water for granted. It is an increasingly limited commodity and needs to be managed as such.

I also want to thank all of the CBWD customers who complied with the water restrictions and who were able to remind their friends and neighbours about the need to conserve our most essential resource. Yes, we had dusty cars and homes and brown, crunchy lawns, but it is a small price to pay for helping to prevent a community wide water shortage. Thank you for demonstrating responsible citizenship.

As a Board of Trustees, we also take our responsibilities seriously. One of those responsibilities is creating a water utility that can continue to operate effectively for generations to come. This means planning for this year, 5 years down the road, 10 years ahead and leaving the healthy legacy of a resilient water system for the foreseeable future. To do this we are addressing the present shortcomings of the system such as back up water supplies and adequate water and pressure for firefighting. We are looking to relieve a shortage of qualified staff by training our own operators and administrative staff with an eye to the future. We need to replace significant amounts of the old infrastructure pre-emptively, thereby avoiding critical future service disruptions. And the list continues.....

I am sharing this to help you understand the reasons behind the many changes made to CBWD in the past couple of years and the significant increase in water tolls, parcel taxes, and other fees. We can no longer avoid investing in the organization and infrastructure that delivers our water. We intend to do our best to ensure the water stays on in Cowichan Bay through droughts, development and climate change.

Thank you for your support!

District Administrator's Message - by Cheryl Wirsz

Alert! Sign Up Contest Winner! – Margrit B on Longwood !
Sign up for **Alerts!** to keep informed and up to date on work, projects, and events that may impact you and your family.

The provincial drought level has been reduced to Level 4 and Stage 3 Outdoor Water Use Restrictions remain in effect. Water conservation remains important in order to allow the aquifer to refill in readiness for the drought next summer.

We here at Cowichan Bay Waterworks District often get questions about who we are and what we do. Cowichan Bay Waterworks District [CBWD] is an improvement district under Part 17 of the *Local Government Act*. Improvement Districts are akin to a city, town or regional district, the main difference being that an improvement district has a single function. In CBWD's case, its function is the provision of potable water for domestic use and fire fighting purposes. CBWD has a Board of five trustees who are elected on a rotating basis by community members each year at the Annual General Meeting [the next AGM will be held in May, 2024].

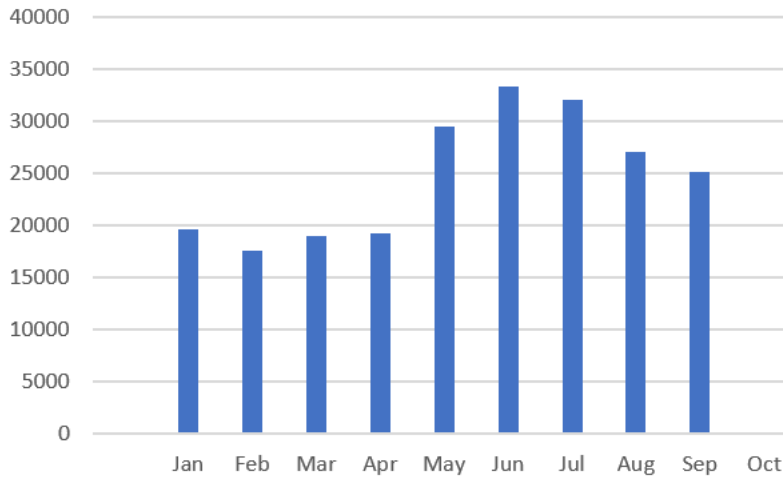
Questions are also asked why one has to pay a parcel tax if one is not connected to the water system. CBWD must have the infrastructure to produce enough water for every parcel in the district, even if that water is not used. CBWD also has to produce enough water for the provision of fire fighting purposes, even if that parcel is vacant. Regarding this, most of the parcels in question were added to the system upon application by previous owners for the purpose of development or due to a low quality well. A change in ownership does not impact the status of the parcel being within the boundary and water is available for the owner to use under the current density, and is always available for fire protection.

Ratepayers also ask why they paid for the new lots in the new subdivisions. Ratepayers do not subsidize development. The Trustees have a User Pay philosophy wherein the associated costs are recovered - Developers are required, by bylaw, to pay a Development Deposit, which is used to pay for all of the engineering reviews, infrastructure upgrades [i.e larger water mains, new valves, the blue Ordano reservoir, a fire pump, booster pumps, the two PRV stations *etc.*] plus a 20% administration fee.

Water Conservation:

Conservation improved over the same time last year, largely in part to the community effort to support outdoor water restrictions, despite the increase in population. For everyone with golden-brown lawns and wilting flowers, give yourself a big pat on the back. Your efforts have been noted and are appreciated!

2023 Water Production by m³



2023/24 Key Dates

January 2024	April 2024	July 2024	October 2023	December 2023
• Watch for your water invoice within the 2 nd or 3 rd week	• Watch for your water invoice in the 2 nd week	Watch for your water invoice in 2 nd week	• Watch for you water invoice in the 2 nd week	Parcel tax invoices have been mailed and are due December 1.
\$85 + tier use	\$85 + tier use	\$85 + tier use	\$85 + tier use	\$225 residential

Reminder

Be sure to sign up for **ALERTS!** in order to receive the most up to date information as it happens. And be sure to share any **ALERTS!** with your friends and neighbours know to ensure the word gets out.

Volunteer Opportunities

CBWD is a community owned facility and community volunteers help reduce costs and help alert the community to very important health matters. As such, there are two sets of volunteer opportunities:

- (1) Teams to install emergency event signage in local neighbourhoods.
- (2) Teams to hand deliver emergency event notices door to door in local neighborhoods.

If you are interested in volunteering for one or both of these opportunities, please email info@cowichanbaywater.com or call the office, with your name, address, phone number, which Team you would like to volunteer on, and your preferred area.

Water Tolls vs. Parcel Tax

Water tolls are based upon consumption and cover the cost of operations [chlorine, hydro, vehicle, repairs and maintenance, insurance, internet, computer and engineering services, salaries, lab fees, material and supplies, *etc.*].

Parcel taxes are charged per parcel and cover the cost of capital upgrades, such as the recent fire flow water line upgrade work done at Cowichan Bay Road and Glen/Longwood. Further projects are planned for fire flow waterline upgrades at Wessex Road and along Wilmot Road between Cowichan Bay Road and Prichard Road. The capital project plan is further detailed in the [Master Plan](#) and the [2022-2024 Action Plan](#), both available for review on the website under the Documents and Reports tab – cowichanbaywater.com.

The parcel tax roll underwent a comprehensive review this year, resulting in some classification changes and the addition of several parcels that had inadvertently being left off the roll, unfortunately equalling sticker shock for those who had not received tax notices in previous years.