



WATERnews

IS YOUR LAWN GREENER THAN YOU ARE?

Water may be in short supply in the Regional District of Nanaimo this summer. With little rain and warmer temperatures in the current forecast, it is important for all residents to conserve so that a water shortage can be avoided. This means you may not be able to keep your lawn green throughout the summer months. A dry brown lawn may not be as attractive as a lush green one, but it shows that you are taking the necessary steps to protect our supplies for drinking water and fire protection needs.

According to the Regional District of Nanaimo's State of Sustainability Report (2006), water consumption in our region has increased faster than the growth in population, meaning that each person is consuming more and more water. The State of Sustainability Report suggests that water consumption in the region exceeds the provincial average. Even in our wet coastal area, there is only so much water for human use as water is also needed to support fish populations, sensitive natural landscapes and wildlife.

Summer 2009 is presenting a challenge in our Region. Unusually dry spring weather has continued into summer, putting the area at risk for a water shortage.

We are seeing warning signs that emphasize the importance of water conservation. The Arrowsmith Reservoir at the headwaters of the Englishman River is normally full and spilling water by June. This year, however, due to the shortage of rainfall and low winter snow pack at higher elevations, the reservoir has not completely filled. Englishman River flows are low, putting fish habitat at risk and potentially affecting water

extractions. Groundwater levels in the District are down as well, evidenced by low well levels. RDN staff have received reports of some private wells already experiencing problems or going dry. "We do have concerns about water availability this summer," said John Finnie, General Manager of Water and Wastewater Services for the RDN. "Our water levels are typically not this low this early in the year."

The RDN puts watering restrictions in place each summer to ensure that all residents have enough water for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene and fire protection.

This summer it is more important than ever for homeowners to set water use priorities that comply with watering restrictions, because the restrictions will not work if they are not followed. Outside water use is the major factor in high water use and evidence indicates that some residents are not following the Restriction Guidelines or are using unnecessarily high amounts of water.

Most RDN Water Service Areas are currently at Water Conservation Level 2 (outside irrigation twice per week). A reduction in supply due to excessive water use and poor compliance with the watering restrictions may require advanced restrictions, including the possibility of a Level 4 comprehensive water ban. The RDN has begun water patrols in the various service areas to monitor water use and remind residents of the restrictions that are in place. If you

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see RDN staff in your neighbourhood, feel free to talk to them about water use and WaterSmart tips to conserve our supplies.

Residents can play a significant role in determining watering restriction levels – a careful and common sense approach to how we use our valuable water resource can ensure that we have sufficient water to meet our needs. Rainfall may help us out but it may not be sufficient at this late date to replenish reservoirs and aquifers and support demands through the summer and early fall.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Regional District of Nanaimo Water Services Department at:
1-877-607-4111
or: wvsrv@rdn.bc.ca

Thirsty? Need a Shower? House on Fire?

Here's what you can do to protect these water supply priorities:

- Reduce your outside water use - **lawns are tougher than we think.**
- Operate your irrigation system efficiently - **driveways and roads don't need water.**
- Install an **automatic rain sensor** shutoff on your sprinkler system.
- Fix **indoor and outdoor leaks** - they serve no purpose.
- Follow the RDN's watering restriction guidelines.
- Plant **low water use native landscaping** - it looks great.
- **Sweep**, don't powerwash. It's good exercise too.
- Use a **rainbarrel.**
- Install **low water use fixtures**, especially toilets.
- Check out www.TeamWaterSmart.ca for more water conservation tips.

Did you know?

Your lawn needs at most one inch of water per week, including rainfall. Overwatering is a leading cause of lawn problems and too frequent watering can weaken your lawn. **Brown lawns are not dying – they are just waiting for the fall rains to green up again.**



Get the whole family on board and put this on the fridge for the summer.



Show Your True Colors: Brown is the New Green