



SMALL WATER USERS ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A number of events have taken place since our last newsletter in March, 2009, which our members may find of interest. The following is a brief summary – anyone interested in more information is invited to contact me directly:

- April: participated in the organization of the British Columbia Water & Waste Association's annual small water systems symposium in Penticton.
- July: attended a drought planning workshop in Kelowna sponsored by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (www.obwb.ca). 2009 was a severe drought year in the Okanagan and other parts of the province, with many rivers and streams at or near record low flows.
- September: travelled to Victoria for meetings with the new Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport (responsible for drinking water legislation), the Ministry of Environment (regulation of private utilities and water users'

- communities), and the Ministry of Community & Rural Development (regulation of improvement districts and regional districts).
- September-October: Attended a knowledge transfer workshop for small water systems in Toronto, and a Board of Directors meeting of RES'EAU Waternet, a federally funded network devoted to developing affordable solutions for providing safe drinking water to small, rural and First Nations communities.
 - October: Small Water Users Association of BC workshops in Kamloops, Salmon Arm & Nelson. The theme of each workshop was "how to get off a boil order". A total of 200 people registered for the three workshops.
 - October: Gave a presentation on small water system issues & challenges at the Water Supply Association of BC's annual conference in Nelson.
 - November: Gave a similar presentation on small water system issues & challenges at the Indian & Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) First Nations Operators Conference in Vancouver. It was interesting to learn that the small native drinking water systems, despite a very significant amount of funding and hands-on assistance from the federal government, still face numerous problems with the operation and management of their systems.

Denny Ross-Smith
Executive Director

FOLLOW UP TO THE OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

You will recall from the last newsletter that the BC Ombudsman challenged the five regional health authorities to step up enforcement of the Drinking Water Protection Act, and to reduce the number of existing boil advisories. The sense we are getting is that Drinking Water Officers and Public Health Inspectors are stepping up the number of inspections of drinking water systems. In quite a few instances, systems that have been on long standing boil orders are being ordered in writing (or by conditions on their operating permits) to come forward with plans to install effective treatment or to otherwise comply with the regulations and the health authorities treatment expectations. In some cases 'tickets' for non compliance have been issued, leading to possible fines.

Unfortunately, nothing has been done to redress the inequities in government funding support. The health authorities recognize this problem, and are usually willing to give some latitude to a small system by allowing them time to plan and finance required improvements. Unfortunately, many systems with zero or limited treatment in place still seem unwilling to work towards a solution. It is unfortunate because, as our workshops this past year showed, moderate cost solutions are often available, and it may not always be necessary to have an expensive engineering study done to design the project.

We expect that government enforcement will continue to increase in the coming year, although there may be some regional exceptions. Any member

that is uncertain of how to proceed, or was unable to attend the recent workshops, is welcome to contact us for advice.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

At a number of the workshops we have put on in recent years the subject of watershed protection has come up. Usually this relates to some perceived threat to the water supply or quality, for example logging activities in the watershed, cattle grazing in a stream upstream of the intake, etc. The type of questions most often asked are: “what can we do”? “Who can we call”? “Will anybody in government take action”?

Section 29 of the Drinking Water Protection Act (DWPA) sets out a process for dealing with requests for investigation of threats to drinking water. It states:

- 1) If a person considers that there is a threat to their drinking water, the person may request the drinking water officer to investigate the matter.
- 2) A request under subsection (1) must be in writing and must include specifics of the facts that the person considers constitutes the threat.
- 3) On receiving a request under subsection (1) the drinking water officer must review the request and consider whether an investigation is warranted.
- 4) As applicable:
 - a. If the drinking water officer decides upon undertaking an investigation, the officer must advise the requesting person of this, and
 - b. If the drinking water officer undertakes an investigation, the drinking water officer must advise the requesting person of the results of the investigation.

At present there is no specific form by which a person may request such an investigation. A draft form has recently been proposed, and may soon be available from your drinking water officer (DWO). A key point is that it is not incumbent on the applicant to definitively prove to the DWO that a threat, health hazard or some other form of non-compliance exists. That is the purpose of the DWO’s investigation.

We would be very interested in hearing back from any of our members (or other water systems) that have requested their DWO to launch an investigation into a perceived threat to their watershed, - i.e. was an investigation carried out, and if so with what results? It is our impression (albeit largely unfounded) that DWOs are uncomfortable with their authority to carry out such investigations, particularly if the perceived offender is some other government agency.

POINT OF ENTRY/POINT OF USE STATUS

Ever since the Drinking Water Protection Regulation was amended in 2005 to allow point of entry (POE) or point of use (POU) as an option to central treatment for small water systems there has been considerable confusion regarding what conditions will be imposed by the health authorities when a small system elects to install POE or POU. As a result few systems in B.C., to our knowledge, have successfully implemented POE or POU.

The dilemma that many small systems face is that what was intended as a lower cost option to central treatment becomes just the opposite when too many arbitrary conditions are imposed. No doubt from the viewpoint of the health authorities most of these conditions are necessary to ensure that water at the tap consistently meets their potability expectations. But it does little to address the original problem: how to enable very small systems ('micro systems') to affordably deliver potable water to their users.

At the very least the 'rules' for POE or POU should be consistent across the province and clearly stated in writing, either by legislation or by notice from the health authorities. It is our understanding that the government is undertaking a review of POE/POU this year, and perhaps some clarity will result. In the meantime if your water system is considering POE or POU, our best advice is to discuss your plans with both your drinking water officer and public health engineer before committing to any significant expenditures.

SURVEY OF ISSUES – OCTOBER 2009 WORKSHOPS

At the three workshops we sponsored this past October attendees were asked to write down what they considered to be the top three issues facing their water system. A total of 27 people responded. Since the workshop topic was 'suggested steps to remove a boil water notice', most of the attendees were from systems on a boil order. This should be kept in mind when considering the results of the survey. The issues identified, in decreasing order of frequency, were:

Access to financing for upgrades	(14)
Source protection (who to call, what to do)	(8)
Cost of complying with 4:3:2:1:0 or other requirements	(5)
Age of water system components	(4)
Operators (training costs, obtaining CEUs, recruitment)	(4)
Opposition to chlorination by users	(2)
Liability and insurance	(2)
Leak detection by homeowners	(1)
Dealing with government bureaucracy	(1)
Planning (governance)	(1)
Government enforcement but no assistance	(1)
Turbidity	(1)

- Cost of submitting samples – time & effort (1)
- 'Pressured by IHA to treat, pressured by members not to' (1)

OPERATOR TRAINING COURSES

We receive quite a few requests from water systems wanting to know where their operator can take a training course for small systems, or where their operator can obtain continuing education units (CEUs). (Operators who are certified under the Environmental Operators Certification Program [EOCP] are required to obtain a minimum number of CEUs in order to maintain their certification). For those who may not already know, operator training courses are available from a number of sources including, but not limited to, the following:

- British Columbia Water & Waste Association (www.bcwwa.org)
- Thompson Rivers University. (www.truwater.ca)
- MTS Maintenance Tracking Systems Inc. (www.mtsinc.ca)
- Workshops and other courses that qualify for CEUs are also offered from time to time by various water associations, including
 - the Small Water Users Association of BC (www.smallwaterusers.com)
 - the Water Supply Association of BC (www.wsabc.com),
 - The BC Groundwater Association (www.bcgwa.org)
 - The Coastal Water Suppliers Association (www.cwsa.net)
- The Environmental Operators Certification Program website (www.eocp.org) contains a complete listing of available courses that qualify for CEUs.

UPCOMING EVENTS (2010)

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| March 15-19 | British Columbia Groundwater Association (www.bcgwa.org)
2010 convention & tradeshow
Delta Grand Okanagan Resort, Kelowna |
| April 29-30 | British Columbia Water & Waste Association
(www.bcwwa.org)
Managing Small Water Systems course
Courtenay |
| May 1-5 | British Columbia Water & Waste Association
Annual conference & tradeshow
Whistler convention centre
(Note: the small water systems symposium will take place on Monday, May 3) |

GWUDI

Did you know that GWUDI means “ground water under the direct influence of surface water”? GWUDI is defined as ground water that is:

- a) Hydraulically connected to nearby surface waters and,
- b) Is susceptible to contamination by pathogens.

Section 5 of the Drinking Water Protection Regulation states that “water from a water supply system must be disinfected by a water supplier if the water originates from ground water that, in the opinion of a drinking water officer, is at risk of containing pathogens”. The provincial government is presently developing a ‘GWUDI Guidance Document’. Its purpose is to assist public health officials (DWOs, PHEs, etc.), water suppliers, professional engineers and geoscientists in investigating and assessing situations where ground water is at risk of containing pathogens.

MINISTRY OF HEALTHY LIVING AND SPORT

Drinking water legislation in B.C. used to fall under the Ministry of Health Services. More recently it is the responsibility of the new Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. Their website contains a lot of useful information on drinking water including the current legislation, various reports and publications, boil order notices, etc. The link is: www.hls.gov.bc.ca/protect/dw_index.html.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Community & Rural Development has responsibility for overseeing improvement districts and regional districts. Their website, www.gov.bc.ca/cd, (click on ‘local government’), contains a lot of information of use to our improvement district members. In particular there is a new “Improvement District Trustees Guide”, as well as a very comprehensive “Improvement District Manual”.

For some reason, quite a few of our improvement district members seem to be unaware that they have the opportunity to arrange long-term financing from the government for capital expenditure projects. The procedures are explained in the “Improvement District Manual”, and financing is arranged by the Ministry of Community & Rural Development, through the Ministry of Finance.

WILDFIRES

A wildfire in your watershed can severely impact both the quality and quantity of your water supply. A wildfire should be reported immediately to the Ministry of Forests & Range. The contact number to report a fire is 1-800-663-5555, or 5555 from a cellular telephone. You should also take steps to fireproof and protect your treatment plant and other assets.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP – AFFILIATES

Our affiliate members include equipment vendors, consulting engineering firms, water test laboratories, and educational institutions. We appreciate their support for our Association. Each affiliate member has a listing on our website with information about their products or services. However if you do not wish to scroll through the list to find what you are looking for, just give us a call or email us and we'll suggest who to contact. New affiliate members since publication of our last newsletter include:

Van Isle Water services Ltd., Victoria
Eco tech Laboratory, Kamloops
Focus Corporation – Environment & Geosciences Group, Kelowna
Aquadiversities Inc., Nelson
Fred Surridge Ltd., West Kelowna

For the current list of affiliate members please see Appendix 1.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP – WATER SYSTEMS

We occasionally get inquiries from our members asking for contact or other information on water systems in their vicinity. In Appendix 2 we have listed all of our current members by location. If a member wishes to contact other members please give us a call and we will provide telephone numbers or email addresses.

“Water, taken in moderation, cannot hurt anybody”
-Mark Twain

“Once, during Prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water”
-W.C. Fields

“I never drink water. That is the stuff that rusts pipes”
-W.C. Fields

APPENDIX 1 CURRENT MEMBERSHIP LIST - AFFILIATES

1. Abram Consulting Services
2. A.J. Pumps Water Treatment
3. ALS Laboratory Group, Environmental Division
4. Aquadiversities
5. Avensys Solutions
6. BC Fishing Resorts & Outfitters Association
7. BC Groundwater Consulting Services
8. BG Controls
9. Cantest
10. Capri Insurance Services
11. Caro Analytical Services
12. Cdn Water Management Consultants
13. Con-Cur West Marketing
14. DWG Process Supply
15. EBA Engineering Consultants
16. Eco Tech Laboratories
17. Filterco Water Treatment
18. 1st Team Consulting
19. Focus Corporation, Environment & Geosciences Group
20. Four Star Waterworks
21. Fred Surridge
22. Grundfos Canada
23. GW Solutions
24. Highland Consulting
25. Hy-Geo Consulting
26. I. G. Micromed Environmental
27. Koers & Associates Engineering
28. L&M Engineering
29. MB Laboratories
30. MMM Group
31. MPC Consulting
32. McGill & Associates Engineering
33. Mearls Machine Works
34. MS Filter
35. MTS Maintenance Training Systems
36. National Process Equipment
37. Neptune Technology Group (Canada)
38. North Island Labs
39. Omega Communications
40. Pennco Engineering
41. Precision Service & Pumps
42. PSI Pump Systems
43. Pure Solutions Water Treatment

44. Smith Cameron Pump Solutions
45. Source to Tap Water Management
46. Summit Environmental Consultants
47. Sustainable Infrastructure Society
48. T&E Consultants Inc.
49. Thompson Rivers University
50. Thurber Engineering
51. Urban Systems
52. Van Isle Water Systems
53. Ward Engineering and Land Surveying
54. Watertiger

APPENDIX 2 CURRENT MEMBERSHIP LIST – WATER SYSTEMS

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Agoki Spring Water System | Boswell |
| 2. Akokli Creek Development | Creston |
| 3. Anglemont Water Utility | Anglemont |
| 4. Aqua Vista Estates | Mission |
| 5. Armstrong Bay Improvement District | Wynndel |
| 6. Atlin Improvement District | Atlin |
| 7. Avola Improvement District | Avola |
| 8. Baerg Creek WUC | Nakusp |
| 9. Balfour Irrigation District | Balfour |
| 10. Barron Creek Management | Campbell River |
| 11. Beaver Valley Golf Club | Fruitvale |
| 12. Belcarra Water Users Society | Belcarra |
| 13. Big Eddy Waterworks District | Revelstoke |
| 14. Birch Island Campground | Clearwater |
| 15. Birkenhead Lake Estates | D'Arcy |
| 16. Bourke Creek Improvement District | Nelson |
| 17. Braeloch WUC | Kelowna |
| 18. Brisco Recreation Commission | Brisco |
| 19. Brkich MHP | Prince George |
| 20. Buntzen Lake | Burnaby |
| 21. Callaghan Country | Whistler |
| 22. Camp Jubilee Retreat | Port Moody |
| 23. Camp Mewata | Okanagan Falls |
| 24. Canyon Alpine Improvement District | Boston Bar |
| 25. Casa Loma Utilities | Kelowna |
| 26. Cascade Cove RV Park | Christina Lake |
| 27. Cedar Cove MHP | Christina Lake |
| 28. Charis Camp | Chilliwack |
| 29. Cherry Creek MHP | Kamloops |
| 30. Cherryville Estates MHP | Cherryville |
| 31. Christina Lake Water Suppliers | Christina Lake |

32. Circle Square Ranch	Armstrong
33. Clayton Creek Improvement District	Nelson
34. Collins Farm Strata	Bowen Island
35. Columbia Ridge Waterworks	Fairmont Hot Springs
36. Corix	Panorama
37. Country Aire MHP	Qualicum Beach
38. Covert Irrigation District	Grand Forks
39. Cowan Point Utility	Bowen Island
40. Crooked Tree Strata	Windermere
41. Crystal Mountain Resorts	Westbank
42. Denarta Services	Terrace
43. Dungate WUC	Houston
44. Dutch Creek Utility	Fairmont Hot Springs
45. Eagle Creek WUC	Nelson
46. Eagle Ridge	Kamloops
47. East Shore Cottages	Gray Creek
48. Evergreen Place MHP	Duncan
49. Fairhaven	Vernon
50. Fairwather	Bowen Island
51. Farleigh Lake WUC	Penticton
52. Sicamous Creek MHP	Sicamous
53. Fife WUC	Christina Lake
54. Gallagher Lake Waterworks	Kelowna
55. Gavin Lake Outdoor Centre	Williams Lake
56. George Pringle Memorial Camp	Shawnigan Lake
57. Gibson-MacNeal WUC	Boston Bar
58. Gillies Bay Improvement District	Gillies Bay
59. Gordania Estates	Rosedale
60. Hagensborg Improvement District	Hagensborg
61. Haggards Cove Strata	Port Alberni
62. Haven Foundation	Gabriola Island
63. Hoggan Springs WUC	Powell River
64. Honeymoon Creek WUC	Bowen Island
65. Hummingbird Cove WUC	Calgary
66. Hyde Mountain Golf Club	Sicamous
67. Kearsley Springs WUC	Maple Ridge
68. Kemano Community	Kitimat
69. Kendall Acres WUC	100 Mile House
70. Kirby Lake WUC	Telkwa
71. Kitchener Improvement District	Kitchener
72. Kokanee Springs Resort	Crawford Bay
73. Kootenay Trout Hatchery	Fort Steele
74. Laird Improvement District	Armstrong
75. lakeshore Waterworks	Penticton
76. Lang Bay Water Works	Powell River
77. Lansdowne Waterworks District	Armstrong

78. Larch Point Industries	Windermere
79. Last Chance Waterworks	Langley
80. Lewis Bay Water Utility	Boswell
81. Lillooet Lake Estates	D'Arcy
82. Liumchen Village MHP	Chilliwack
83. Longueval Creek WUC	Boswell
84. M. Allen Logging	Louis Creek
85. MW Helicopter Skiing	Blue River
86. Mallandaine WUC	Creston
87. Maracaibo Strata	Saltspring Island
88. McGillivray Falls	D'Arcy
89. McLeese Lake Acres	Williams Lake
90. Miller's Sunshine Valley Estates	Merritt
91. Mirror Lake WUC	Kaslo
92. Misty River Community Water	Sooke
93. Montague Improvement District	Galiano Island
94. Moss Point Water Association	Powell River
95. Mountainview Property Owners	Kitwanga
96. Mountain View Waterworks District	Armstrong
97. Moyie Shores Estates Strata	Cranbrook
98. Moyie Water System (RDEK)	Cranbrook
99. Nakiska Ranch	Clearwater
100. Nasookin Improvement District	Nelson
101. Nicola Lakeshore Utility	Merritt
102. Noosatum Waterworks District	Hagensborg
103. North Canyon Improvement District	Canyon
104. Ocean Falls Improvement District	Ocean Falls
105. Ocean-Highway Heavy Haul	Osoyoos
106. Ogilvy-Wills Property Owners	Fairmont Hot Springs
107. Orde Creek Improvement District	Canyon
108. Osprey Lake Waterworks District	Princeton
109. Otter Lake water Company	Surrey
110. Otter Road Water System	Langley
111. Parr Utilities	Athlmerne
112. Peachland Investments	Peachland
113. Pineridge Water Utility Society	Kaslo
114. Playmor Junction Improvement District	South Slocan
115. Ponderosa KSP 270	D'Arcy
116. Ponderosa Resort	Canim Lake
117. Poplar Ridge Water Users Society	Crescent Valley
118. Princeton GC	Princeton
119. Pumptown Estates	Clearwater
120. Quarry Harbour Strata	New Westminster
121. Rainer Farm	Darfield
122. Red's Ventures	Kelowna
123. Hardy Falls Regional Park	Kelowna

124.	Rockyview Improvement District	Cranbrook
125.	Rolling Hills Waterworks District	Okanagan Falls
126.	Royalwood Small Water System	Sardis
127.	Rumming Road Water Society	Lantzville
128.	Rykert Irrigation District	Creston
129.	Sandy Creek/Granite Road WUC	Nelson
130.	Sasquatch Springs RV Resort	Harrison Hot Springs
131.	Shames Mountain Ski Corp.	Terrace
132.	Sheringham Water Works	Shirley
133.	Silver Lake Forestry Camp	Kelowna
134.	Sinclair Mills WUC	Sinclair Mills
135.	Six Mile WUC	Nelson
136.	Slocan Park Improvement District	Slocan Park
137.	Sointula Waterworks District	Sointula
138.	Sorrento Place Holdings	Chilliwack
139.	Southbright WUC	Chilliwack
140.	South Canyon Improvement District	Canyon
141.	Southside WUC	Sicamous
142.	Spring Creek Estates	Lindell Beach
143.	St. Ives Waterworks	St. Ives
144.	St. Mary's Prairie Irrigation District	Cranbrook
145.	Stoner Water Users	Prince George
146.	Strata Corp. KAS 1803	Vernon
147.	Strata N42 Blaylock	Nelson
148.	Strata Plan 1306	Courtenay
149.	Summer Road rate Payers Assoc.	Hope
150.	Sundorn Holdings	Mission
151.	Sunnybrae Water System	Kamloops
152.	Sun Peaks Utilities	Sun Peaks
153.	Sunshine Estates Water Users Soc.	Nelson
154.	Taghill WUC	Nelson
155.	Teetzel Creek water Users Soc.	Creston
156.	The Enchanted Forest	Revelstoke
157.	The Owners Strata Plan N9	Invermere
158.	Thompson Drive Water Society	Clearwater
159.	Thompson-Nicola Regional District	Kamloops
160.	Thompson River Estates Utility	Savona
161.	Thunderbird WUC	Harrison Hot Springs
162.	Timberline Ranch	Maple Ridge
163.	Timber Springs Community Assoc.	Fairmont Hot Springs
164.	Tower Ridge Strata	Castlegar
165.	Traders Cove Waterworks District	Kelowna
166.	Trepanier Ditch WUC	Peachland
167.	Tukaluk Campground	Fauguier
168.	Valhalla Lakeside Resort	New Denver
169.	Van West Water Utility	Whistler

170.	Vaseaux Lake Improvement District	Oliver
171.	Waibler Spring	Fort St. James
172.	Water Lily Bay Resort	Terrace
173.	Watutco Enterprises	Black Creek
174.	West Grand Forks MHP	Abbotsford
175.	Whaletown Water Society	Whaletown
176.	Whispering pines MHP	Genelle
177.	Whonnock Community Well	Maple Ridge
178.	Williams Springs Waterworks District	Nanoose Bay
179.	Will-O-Bend Golf & RV	Jaffray
180.	Willow Burl Cabins	Valemount
181.	Wilmer Waterworks District	Invermere
182.	Wilson's Landing Utilities	Kelowna
183.	Woodbury Village Services Soc.	Kaslo
184.	Woodland Construction	Castlegar
185.	Woodlynn Improvement District	Powell River

Now that British Columbia is hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics people from all over the world are asking questions about Canada. Apparently the following questions were actually posted on an international tourism website. The answers are, of course, the product of someone's fertile imagination.

Q: Will I be able to see polar bears in the street? (USA)

A: Depends on how much you have been drinking.

Q: I want to walk from Vancouver to Toronto – can I follow the railroad tracks? (Sweden)

A: Sure, it's only four thousand miles. Take lots of water.

Q: Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Canada? (USA)

A: A-fri-ca is the big triangle shaped continent south of Europe. Ca-na-da is that big country to your north...oh forget it, sure, the hippo races are held every Tuesday night in Calgary. Come naked.

Q: Which direction is north in Canada? (USA)

A: Face South and then turn 180 degrees. Contact us when you get here and we'll give you the rest of the directions.

Q: Can you tell me the regions in British Columbia where the female population is smaller than the male population? (Italy)

A: Yes, gay nightclubs.

Q: Do you celebrate Thanksgiving in Canada? (USA)

A: Only at Thanksgiving.

Q: Are there supermarkets in Toronto and is milk available all year round? (Germany)

A: No, we are a peaceful country of Vegan hunter/gatherers. Milk is illegal.

Q: Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule? (USA)

A: Aus-tri-a is that quaint little country bordering Ger-man-y, which is.... Oh, forget it. Sure, the Vienna Boys' Choir plays every Tuesday night in Calgary right after the hippo races. Come naked.

Q: Will I be able to speak English most places I go? (USA)

A: Yes, but you'll have to learn it first.

Q: I have a question about a famous animal in Canada, but I forget its name. It's a kind of big horse with horns. (USA)

A: It's called a moose. They are tall and very violent, eating the brains of anyone who approaches them. You can scare them off by spraying yourself with human urine before you go out walking.