



SMALL WATER USERS ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Small Water Users Association of BC was formed in 2003 in order to assist small systems throughout the province with advice and to represent their interests before government. Since 2003 many small systems that lacked adequate treatment or were faced with infrastructure or other issues have found ways to make the necessary improvements – this despite the continuing unwillingness of the provincial and federal governments to extend infrastructure grant programs beyond local government (municipalities and regional districts). Nevertheless, many small systems continue to struggle, and need somewhere to turn to for practical advice and assistance.

For a variety of reasons, including my advanced age, the Association may only be able to continue its services for a few more years. Consequently I have been working closely with Satwinder Paul (Program Coordinator, Water & Wastewater Technology) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), and with Interior Health to initiate a new 'Centre of Excellence for Small Water Systems'. The Centre would be based at TRU in Kamloops, and would offer a broad range of services to small systems, including technical expertise and support.

The draft proposal for the Centre of Excellence may be viewed in Appendix A. In order to proceed, the Centre will require seed funding from the provincial government. I am optimistic that this will be forthcoming sometime in 2017. Any comments/suggestions that any of you may have regarding the objectives and overall concept of the centre would be very welcome.

Denny Ross-Smith

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING COURSES (2016-2017)

British Columbia Water & Waste Association (www.bcwwa.org):

- Annual Conference & Trade Show, May 27-30, 2017, Victoria, BC. As in previous years there will be a one day Small Water Systems Symposium at a reduced rate, which includes entry to the large suppliers trade show. This is an excellent opportunity for small water systems on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands to attend this major conference.
- BCWWA also offers a number of free webinars and operator training courses – check their website.

MTS Maintenance Training Services (www.mtsinc.ca)

- MTS offers various operator training courses at its facility in Vernon, including quite a few specific to small water systems. MTS can also assist small systems with a variety of consulting services on such topics as hazard assessments, emergency response plan development, water meter implementation, etc.

Thompson Rivers University (www.truwater.ca)

- TRU offers a variety of operator training courses that may be of interest to small systems.

WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACT: NEW AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DIVERTING AND USING GROUNDWATER

The following information was provided by the BC Ministry of Environment. Further information on this subject may be found in Appendix B: “Licensing Groundwater Users”.

If you divert and use groundwater for any purpose other than “domestic purpose” as defined in the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA), you must now obtain a water authorization and pay water fees and rentals. Water authorizations can be either use approvals or water licences; however, use approvals can only be issued for diversion and use of water for up to 24 months. Visit FrontCounter BC to start your application. This change came into force with the WSA on February 29, 2016.

A domestic water use purpose is defined in Section 2 of the *Water Sustainability Act*, and generally applies to a well that provides water for a single private residence for household uses including watering a garden up to 1000m². This water use purpose does not include a well (or wells) that is operated and owned by one entity or person, and supplies water to others (including other households). Waterworks purpose as defined in Section 2 of the *Water Sustainability Act* is the carriage or supply of water by one person or entity for the use in British Columbia of another person or entity (including the supply of water to someone in a private residence). The diversion and use of groundwater for a waterworks purpose requires an authorization.

Not sure if you're a domestic or non-domestic user? Visit the [New Requirements for Groundwater Users](#) government webpage, read the [Groundwater Licensing brochure](#), or contact [Front Counter BC](#).

Note that there are benefits to submitting your application early. The [application fees for non-domestic groundwater use that existed when the WSA came into force on February 29, 2016 will be waived until March 1, 2017. Also, while existing groundwater users technically have three years \(ending March 1, 2019\) to submit their applications for an authorization, the annual water rentals for existing non-domestic groundwater users will be charged from February 29, 2016.](#)

Although the diversion and use of groundwater for domestic purposes does not require an authorization, the registration of these wells is recommended. Visit the [Well Records page](#) to see if your well has already been recorded in the database, or for an application to register the well. A well registration form should only be completed for wells that are diverting and using groundwater for domestic purposes.

[The province has developed a number of brochures \(available at http://gov.bc.ca/water\)](http://gov.bc.ca/water) on the changes brought in by the *Water Sustainability Act*, including:

- Water Sustainability Act Overview brochure
- Groundwater Licensing brochure
- Groundwater Protection Information for Well Owners brochure
- Groundwater Protection Information for Well Drillers and Well Pump Installers brochure
- Water Pricing brochure
- Dam Safety brochure

INTERIOR HEALTH AUTHORITY SMALL WATER TEAM

One new change to report: Jesse Bhatti has been transferred to the large system team, and Chris Russell is a new member of the small water team.

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Brian Gregory	Salmon Arm	250-883-4170	brian.gregory@interiorhealth.ca
Chris Russell	Vernon	250-549-6359	chris.ussell@interiorhealth.ca

BCWWA SMALL WATER SYSTEMS PILOT PROJECT

In our last newsletter we mentioned the BCWWA "Building Sustainable Small Water Systems Pilot Project. BCWWA has held one day workshops in various locations around the province, two of which (Nelson & Kamloops) we attended. Quite a few of our

members also attended. The workshops were free, were very well presented, and covered a wide range of topics specific to small water systems. Certified operators who attended were also eligible for 0.6 CEUs.

BCWWA, as part of this project, has also sponsored the preparation of a comprehensive draft reference guide entitled: “Taking Care of Our Small Water Systems”. Even if your water system has not attended one of these workshops you may possibly be able to obtain a copy of the guide from BCWWA.

BOIL WATER NOTICES AND WATER QUALITY ADVISORIES

We have previously reported very large numbers of boil water advisories, e.g. 725 in our December 3, 2015 newsletter. Members may wonder at the apparent significant decrease (to 527) in this newsletter. The reason is that we previously overlooked the fact that Interior Health’s website often lists multiple boil advisories for the same water system, and we had not taken that into account in past newsletters (our apology to Interior Health!). Nevertheless the totals are still very high.

<u>Health Authority</u>	<u>Boil Water Notices</u>	<u>Water Quality Advisories</u>
IHA - Kootenays	166	26
IHA – Okanagan	69	16
IHA – Thompson/Cariboo/ Shuswap	164	14
FHA	6	0
VCHA	39	0
NHA	50	1
VIHA	<u>33</u>	<u>0</u>
	527	57

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Our 55 affiliate members include equipment vendors, consulting engineering firms, water test laboratories, operator training services, reservoir cleaning & inspection services and others. We appreciate their support for our Association. Each affiliate member has a listing on our website with information about their products or services and we encourage you to take a look at what they have to offer. You are also welcome to give us a call if you are looking for a particular product or service, since we can usually save you time by directing you to the appropriate affiliate member(s) or other companies in your general area. We would like to welcome two new affiliate members:

Deltterra Engineering Ltd., Kelowna (water treatment design engineering, construction and maintenance)

The Water Guy, Cranbrook (Point of Entry treatment design, installation, training & maintenance).

