

Frequently Asked Questions

Water Supply and Watershed Management

October 1, 2018

Q1: What is the Town doing to ensure Ladysmith has a sustainable water supply, now and into the future?

- The Town of Ladysmith obtains its water from two sources -- Holland Lake and Stocking Lake. Summer is when we use the most water, receive the least amount of rainfall, and have the least amount of water in our reservoirs. While climate change is resulting in hotter, dryer summers, it is also creating frequent heavy rainfalls during our winter months.
- Our ability to capture winter rainfall and snowmelt in our watersheds for summer use is limited by the capacity of our reservoirs. As such, the Town of Ladysmith is seeking federal funding in the form of an infrastructure grant to expand our Holland Lake reservoir to significantly increase the Town's ability to capture and store water. This is an opportunity that will allow the Town to protect its future and continue on our path of thoughtful and responsible growth.
- The proposed project involves expanding the storage capacity within the existing Holland Lake impoundment reservoir by raising the two existing dams and dredging portions of the existing lake bottom.
- The project will nearly double the Town's water storage capacity, ensuring Ladysmith, Stz'uminus First Nation and the Diamond Improvement District all have a sufficient drinking water supply for decades to come, even when the potential impacts of climate change are taken into consideration.

Q2: If we are all supposed to limit our water use, shouldn't Council also limit development and population growth?

- Our water supply system currently has the capacity to provide quality drinking water to a significantly increased population.
- That said, vibrant and resilient communities are dependent on smart growth – development that is carefully and thoughtfully planned allows the burden of new infrastructure, such as water filtration and waste water treatment facilities, to be spread among a larger taxpayer base while ensuring that consumption of resources, including water, is done so in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Q3: Will the Town's new water filtration plant to be built next year address water supply issues?

- In keeping with our Sustainability Vision, the new facility will be a piece of modern infrastructure that will help us meet both our current and future needs for clean, safe and reliable drinking water.
- As well as improving the quality of our drinking water, the new facility will also allow us to improve the reliability of our drinking water supply. We will be able to draw water from both Holland and Stocking Lakes, even during high turbidity periods (generally in winter) thus enabling us to better manage our water sources year round.

Q4: If water conservation is so important, why do Town staff continue to water playing fields during summer water restrictions?

- Playing fields are often built on a sand base for better drainage; however, turf grown on a sand base can die if not watered. Due to the high replacement costs of playing fields, the Town believes it is a poor use of public funds to allow playing fields to die because of lack of watering. That said, we irrigate our fields and gardens overnight, which we know is the most efficient and effective time to water.

Q5: What else is the Town doing to save water?

- Over the past few years we have:
 - Installed a holding tank at the Transfer Beach water spray park to re-use water for irrigation and park toilets
 - Switched to ozone at the public swimming pool so water is changed less frequently
 - Installed a computerized optimal irrigation system where everything is programmed, controlled and monitored centrally.
- Although we do have certain community assets to maintain that need more or more frequent watering, the Town should be leading by example. We encourage you to let us know when you think we could be doing a better job of conserving water. We're all in this together.