



Safe, reliable potable water and fire water are vital to any community. Potable water is crucial for the health and well-being of residents, preventing waterborne diseases and supporting daily needs like drinking, cooking, and sanitation. Water for fire fighting (WFF) is essential for effective firefighting, protecting lives, properties, and infrastructure from fire hazards. Together, these resources ensure public health and safety, enhance property values, and contribute to the overall quality of life and sustainable development of the community.

At Mill Bay Waterworks District (MBWD), our mission is to provide a clean, reliable source of drinking water and WFF that our residents can trust. We are committed to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of our community by maintaining the highest standards in water quality and infrastructure. Our dedicated team works tirelessly to protect and manage our water resources, delivering exceptional service and peace of mind to every household in Mill Bay.

### **For your information**

The Board of Trustees has decided to change the scheduled monthly Trustee meeting time from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm. This change is to enable more of you to attend. We encourage you to come to the meetings, participate, and stay informed about the matters affecting our community. Your involvement is important to us, and we look forward to your contributions and insights.

Our monthly Trustee meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:00 pm at the Mill Bay Community Hall, with the exception of our June meeting which will be held Monday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. *Check our website for schedule changes.*

## **Community Engagement**

In addition to the scheduled time change for monthly Trustee meetings, we'll be adding the following to our MBWD website home page:

- Maps that illustrate the aquifers we draw our water resources from, as well as information on the location, size and status of proposed developments that will affect our waterworks system.
- Our Trustee bi-monthly newsletter (we will continue with our regular bi-monthly newsletter that is mailed with our bi-monthly utility billing. This newsletter is also on our website).
- A discussion forum for community members to ask questions, add comments, and engage with each other.

We will attempt to add a Trustee newsletter to our bi-monthly mailout for future news. Please contact us to add suggestions for additional information that you would like to have added. [manager@millbaywater.ca](mailto:manager@millbaywater.ca)

## **Trustee and Employee Indoctrination and Orientation**

We've initiated a process to provide both operational and organizational orientation of MBWD for Employees and Trustees for them to understand the water system, practices, policies, and procedures of MBWD.

## **Conversion to the Regional Municipality**

We've reached out to the Provincial Government to begin discussions regarding a possible conversion to the CVRD. The purpose of this exercise is to investigate the pros and cons of conversion.

We will update the community as we learn more.

## **Legal Representation**

We have engaged the services of Lawson Lundell LLP. to provide legal counsel as we navigate forward through the challenges of expansion from multiple developments and possible conversion to the CVRD.

## **Contracts**

We are reviewing all vendor contract agreements to ensure MBWD follows the Canadian Free Trade Agreements, and we are issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) where required.

## **Practices, Policies and Procedures**

We have updated our MBWD emergency response plan (ERP) and are in the process of reviewing and instituting all necessary processes, procedures, and policies, including our health, safety, security and environmental (HSSE) program.

## **Engineering and Asset Condition**

1. Associated Engineering, our current engineering provider, are currently working on two very important project scopes of work for MBWD.
  - a. The study and report for MBWD asset condition assessment and our engineering standards requirements, which is expected to be completed this summer.
  - b. Continue to work with multiple developers and their engineers to provide feasibility studies regarding the infrastructure requirements for future development projects.
2. There has been much speculation in recent years regarding the condition of the asbestos cement pipe (AC) in the MBWD system which ranged from health risks to lack of WFF protection, and a theory that the piping could suffer catastrophic collapse. There is no evidence to support any of these unfounded opinions or theories at this time.

The testing for asbestos fibers in water system samples is a leading indicator of the condition of AC pipe. Recent tests conducted by our laboratory provider, from the multiple water samples taken from several locations in our system, have shown no evidence of the presence of asbestos fibers, which indicates our AC piping is in good condition and presents no risk to our water system's immediate or intermediate future.

We welcome the recent laboratory results as very good news, as the proposed project to replace AC water main piping would have cost our ratepayers several million dollars and would have caused serious disruption to the community of Mill Bay. With this question answered, we are now in a position to plan for the years to come with continued monitoring and fiscal budgeting. There are still

plans to test specific sections of asbestos cement pipe to confirm structural integrity.

3. We are currently working toward the implementation of a structured asset management program for MBWD assets, including continuous monitoring and maintenance of our fire hydrants, valves, reservoirs, and well pumps.

### **MBWD Operations**

Many questions have been asked regarding our water resources. The following should provide insight into the current state of affairs as they're known today.

Water supplying the community of Mill Bay. MBWD water is drawn from 3 underground natural water aquifers as illustrated on the map on our MBWD website homepage. MBWD currently has 12 wells of varying states of robustness, that produce water which is piped to and stored in 3 reservoirs. The water is treated as required at various locations prior to storage in the reservoirs then distributed to our users.

1. Aquifer 203 is a Bedrock Aquifer
2. Aquifer 206 is an Overburden Aquifer
3. Aquifer 208 is a Bedrock Aquifer

These aquifers have unique characteristics in location, size, and depth. All three aquifers are also subject to various degrees of vulnerability to stress, meaning, they refill at different rates, depending on the speed and quantity of water taken from them, and the time of year.

MBWD is currently operating in a state of slight deficit in water production, which means we are using more than we make. In the short term, we manage this shortfall with our reservoir storage and when necessary, water restrictions.

MBWD has, in addition to our 12 producing wells, one new MBWD well and 4 new wells drilled by developers. The 5 new wells were recently approved by the province through the issuance of 4 water licenses. The commissioning of these new wells is subject to the implementation of a "monitoring plan" designed to continuously assess the ability of our water sources to support current/expanded demand. This plan is being prepared by our hydrogeology engineers, Western Water Associates.

## **Development**

There are currently 10 developers who are involved in or interested in becoming involved in community expansion. The three larger projects currently in progress involve Stonebridge, Malahat Properties and Mill Springs Phases 16 and 17. The others, of no less importance are Ocean Terrace (water licence application is currently under review by the province), future Mill Springs Phases 18-20, a four-unit bare land Strata on Mill Bay Road, Partridge Road/Cowichan Housing, Marina Village, and Frayne Centre.

These developments are all in various stages of progress from lying dormant to final stages of approval. MBWD is in the process of identifying the pending development details on our website maps.

If and when all proposed developments are completed, the community of Mill Bay could realize a threefold increase in population.

One of the multiple hurdles for development to proceed, specific to MBWD, is the developers must supply potable and WFF services. The following are some of the steps that developers must complete prior to service connection to MBWD:

1. The need for the development to provide water supply.
  - a. This includes the requirement for the developer to apply for governmental permissions for the drilling of one or more wells, and a license to extract water from the aquifer in a phased manner as the water is needed.
  - b. The water drawn from the wells must be treated as per public health standards.
  - c. The developer must provide adequate water storage via reservoir where required to supply the development apart from existing MBWD reservoir storage, which is currently operating at a slight deficit.
  - d. The developer must engineer and install the required treatment and transmission infrastructure to connect to MBWD and the development community as per the requirements of MBWD engineering standards.

The exception to these requirements are 'Infill' developments, where MBWD may decide through payment of Capital Expenditure Charges (CEC's) to allow existing infrastructure to supply services when there is no impact to the existing system. CEC's collected go into a reserve account for future improvements to source water extraction. Example, CEC's are paying for the

development of the new well on Noowick Road which is being brought online to supplement the small deficit in our water system mentioned earlier.

The wells and aquifers will be continuously tested by our MBWD hydrogeologist to ensure there is no negative effect or undue stress on the aquifer or neighboring wells, including privately owned wells.

2. The developer is responsible for the engineering costs of the expanded service area of MBWD, and the feasibility study completed by MBWD prior to the start of the development.
3. Once installed and commissioned, the new potable and fire water system is turned over as the property of MBWD who is then responsible for the maintenance and distribution.

As mentioned above, MBWD will not allow expansion into or beyond our existing service area boundary prior to the developer satisfying all requirements, including the installation of adequate reservoir storage where required.

Please feel free to join us at our monthly Trustee meetings, and to view our website for information on our maps and newsletters, or to join community members for a discussion.

**MBWD Board of Trustees**