



*In a continuing effort to provide information to our users, here is the latest newsletter. Please let us know what we can do to improve it.*

### **SPRING FLUSHING**

MBWD has completed our spring flushing over the past two weeks. If you experience any water that is discoloured, we would like to assure you the water is safe to drink and use. We posted the locations affected on our website; we also post instructions on how to eliminate the discoloured water if you are experiencing this.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

MBWD Board of Trustees, adhering to Bylaw No. 308 (Water Tolls and Other Charges 2025), took action to collect overdue accounts in September of 2025. When this bylaw was created MBWD had 41 accounts that were overdue anywhere from 4 months to 5+ years. The total of outstanding utility accounts was \$41,927.27. We were able to work with customers to set up payment plans and have reduced the amount owing by half. MBWD will be sending letters out again for all accounts with amounts owing over 90 days at the end of this month. The Bylaw was designed to ensure those who's accounts are current, are not carrying the burden for those in arrears. It's simply a matter of fairness.

MBWD would like to remind our customers that when they pay their parcel tax for 2026, please ensure that you are using your roll number as your identification number and you pick Mill Bay Waterworks District as the payee, not BC Rural Property Tax or Cowichan Valley Regional District. We have noticed an increase in payments being sent to the wrong organization. Please call our office if you require any assistance.

MBWD is actively planning for the health and longevity of our water system. We are working with our engineers to update our strategic plan to reflect current costs for infrastructure replacements. MBWD is taking all revenue sources into consideration when budgeting for these capital projects and a source of revenue that is being discussed is the Capital Expenditure Charge (CEC) which is paid by developers. This has not been updated since 2019 and is top priority for the upcoming strategic planning session.

## **OPERATIONS**

As recently reported by our hydrogeologist, Western Water Associates Ltd (WWAL), our engineering team, and our MBWD Operations Manager, our water system including the health of our aquifers and mechanical fitness of our facilities is in a stable state and fully capable of supplying safe and sustainable service to the community. There have been no major line breaks or service disruptions since the last report.

Access to weekly bacteriological sampling is available on our website and our annual metals and total organic carbon (TOC) scans will also be available on the website. The quarterly disinfection byproduct sample results will be available to the public as well.

Some upgrades that have been completed recently are the installation of variable frequency drives (VFD's) which ensure smooth motor starts and stops, for installation on Wells 783, 1386, and the turbine transfer pumps at Deloume Station. Installation of these units ensure efficient flow and pressure control, minimize stress on the equipment, prolong lifespan, and minimize maintenance costs.

## **PROJECTS**

### **Residential Smart Meters**

As of March 31, 2026 MBWD operations team has installed 812 smart meters. We are anticipating this project to be completed by the end of summer.

The advent of this new technology has proven beneficial to MBWD, our customers, and the environment as our early reporting indicates that approximately 27% of our homeowners are realizing water leaks that would have otherwise continued unknown. As of March 30 there are 39 small leaks outstanding, since September 1, 2025 there have been 213 accounts with leaks noted by the smart meter program. MBWD would like customers to note that the smart meters are more sensitive to leaks compared to the previous meters, as they go to a 4<sup>th</sup> decimal place which can detect smaller leaks such as a toilet or faucet running more accurately. The majority of the leaks detected have been minor leaks.

MBWD invites customers who have had the smart meter installed to download the “Eye On Water” app. Currently 262 customers are using the Eye on Water App. This will allow you to view your water consumption and be notified directly of any water leaks. If you require assistance in signing up for the app., please contact the office for assistance.

It is the responsibility of every homeowner to provide access to MBWD shut-off valves and meters. We have encountered several meters that have been concreted in place and some that are too deep to access. These situations must be addressed and rectified.

Please check your meter box access to ensure that MBWD employees have reasonable access. As a reminder to all customers, MBWD is responsible for District infrastructure up to and including the water meter. Customers are responsible for all water components beyond the water meter.

### **Smart Hydrant Caps report**

MBWD has received and deployed 5 Smart Fire Hydrant Caps. The Smart Caps have the ability to detect and pinpoint leaks in our asbestos concrete and metal sections of pipe and will provide instantaneous notification if and when any hydrant equipped with the Smart Cap is accessed with out MBWD knowledge. This initiative is part of our ongoing effort to monitor our facility infrastructure and for water conservation.

The initial deployment and monitoring process of these five (5) caps has not detected any anomalies as of this time in our system, and the District will continue on a rotating basis to ensure that all of our underground services are continuously monitored.

#### Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA)

All MBWD wells are connected and reporting properly with a fully automated system. The MBWD Board of Trustees agreed that this was a top priority to ensure that our operators have the proper information available. This technology is used to determine the cause and effect of system stress on our wells and their replenishment rates, which in turn, gives us some insight as to the state of our aquifers.

#### Other Highlights from 2025

- As required by our safety protocols MBWD purchased and utilized all equipment required for confined space entries (CSE) in 2025.
- All residential, commercial and institutional water meter locations have been inventoried and documented.
- Extensive work was put forward to clean up our detention pond on Boompond Rd, removing all of the broom and trees from the property. This not only helps with the aesthetic but can help prevent fire spreading.
- Deer Park and Noowick Reservoirs were cleaned and inspected by Ven-Tech Subsea services and will be cleaned and inspected again in 2 years on a rotational basis, that may be adjusted based on the determination of whether two years may have been too long in between cleanings/inspections or if they could've gone another year before cleaning inspecting. Both reservoirs were found to be in good health all around.
- Worked in coordination with Western Water on a pumping test for a potential new water sources located on Brentwood's B Field, other active water sources utilized by the district were greatly affected however and the path forward with the new, potential water source is unclear at this time.

#### Developments / Water Licenses

1. Limona's Lodgepole Road development has been approved for twelve lots to be developed on the West side of Lodgepole Road. Construction prep started at the beginning of the year for this subdivision.
2. Limona's Stonebridge Phase (1A) is expected to proceed later this year or beginning of 2027.
3. Mill Springs Village (phase 16&17) is expected to proceed later this year.
4. The Malahat Properties Ltd. development is expected to proceed later this year or early 2027.
5. The Purdy Group Marina Project has had no activity toward water application with MBWD.
  - a. The Purdy Group, as part of the Tri-Party group of Limona, Brentwood, and Purdy re-tested their B-Field well during the month of September 2025 and it was found that this well affected two of MBWD wells. Until further testing is completed this application is put on hold.
6. Ocean Terrace Project has had no activity toward water application toward MBWD but is expected to utilize Malahat First Nations water service rather than MBWD.

The Well Monitoring Plan (WMP) and Operations Plan application was approved by the Province. This process is a requirement under our water license application for the four new proposed wells supporting development. The wells involve one for Limona/Stonebridge, two for Mill Springs Village, and one for MBWD. As the WMP has been approved we are in the process of getting started on installing the equipment needed to conduct the testing when it is required.

#### MBWD Select Committee for Enhanced Fire Protection

This committee's mission is to increase the Mill Bay Fire Department's available water supply to protect the community from wildfire by providing continuous water input to our reservoirs for the sole purpose of firefighting capability and community evacuation if necessary.

In preparation for this and future fire seasons as well as the numerous power outages that Mill Bay experiences MBWD put to tender an RFP for back up generators in the fall of 2025. McDonald Electric was the successful applicant, and they began work on prepping and installing the generators at the end of 2025. All three generators have been installed and are waiting for final inspections before they will be activated. These generators will assist our wells in running in the event of a wildfire or power outage so that MBWD is able to provide water when it is most needed.

All future development projects will require back-up power supply for their wells to be included in MBWD infrastructure.

#### Decommissioning of Well 784

Well 784 was decommissioned on August 12, 2025.

Our Vancouver Island Health water officer has stated that she considers our water source, gravity fed infiltrator Well 784, to be a Groundwater at Risk of Pathogens (GARP) status water source and that determination requires either removal of that water sources from our operation or the addition of UV disinfection to the supply from this water source. MBWD has chosen the former of these two options.

Gary Orton, MBWD Board Chair