

NEWS RELEASE

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Nanaimo adopts region-wide watering restrictions framework

Goal to have all water systems within RDN area on the same classification system

Summary

City of Nanaimo Council gave the first three readings of a bylaw to change Nanaimo's watering restrictions to be coordinated with other water service providers within the Regional District of Nanaimo area. Following 2015's drought and elevated levels of watering restrictions in many parts of the region, including Nanaimo, it became apparent that differing definitions of watering restrictions created confusion when communicating with the public.

With a common framework across the entire region, customers within each water service area will have better clarity on watering restrictions. The framework provides a consistent definition for all water service providers. It is up to each provider to determine the appropriate level, based on the needs of the individual system. In addition, there will be a central website which will show each provider and the current restriction level so that the public and media will have a consistent, up-to-date location, to retrieve information.

Strategic Link: Water Conservation.

Key Points

- The proposed Watering Restriction Framework will allow common understanding across the entire region and provide greater clarity for residents
- While the definitions of Watering Restriction Stages will be consistent across the region, each water purveyor will determine the level specific to their needs
- Revisions to the Bylaw also provide clarity and certainty to businesses and residents around exemptions to watering restrictions

Quotes

"Creating consistent language and a common framework to communicate watering restriction stages to our residents and businesses will help everyone have greater clarity when it comes to outdoor water conservation. We are pleased to have worked together with many partners to bring this together."

Bill Sims
Manager, Water Resources
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- Stage 1 provides flexibility for less-stressed systems to still participate in the framework, and consists of night-time watering only. * Stage 2 limits use in an easy to understand and operationally sound way - commonly referred to 'Even & Odd Day watering '.
- Stage 3 requests further voluntary reductions prior to implementing a ban, enabling residents to choose where they cut back – the focus is on lawns, and providing an opportunity to defer a comprehensive ban. This approach was very effective in Nanaimo.
- Stage 4 bans non-essential water use – particularly automated sprinkling, vehicle washing and outdoor surface washing – when supplies are stressed and voluntary reductions beyond Stage 2 are not sufficiently decreasing demand.
- Vegetable watering and drip irrigation is exempt from restrictions. Exemptions for businesses which require water for operations, essential municipal playing fields and nurseries are also exempt, to minimize economic impact while conserving. This helps avoid challenges in applying the bylaw.

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