

As your Water Superintendent, I wanted to reach out and answer some of the questions that involve the Watering Ban.

Why is there a water ban every year? I'm sick of it!

The Foxborough Water Department is governed by our Water Management Act Permits. From our permit, "Foxborough shall implement and enforce the required restrictions starting no later than May 1, 2009, and shall document its compliance with limits on nonessential outdoor water use annually in its ASR (Annual Statistical Report) for 2009, and each year thereafter."

Every year, we are required by permit to put on water restrictions. This year was different. The water levels in storage tanks dropped to such a level that more severe restrictions were needed to ensure that there would be water for essential uses, such as drinking and fire protection.

Fire Protection? I don't believe it.

One of the main reasons for the non-essential outdoor water use restriction was to ensure that there was enough water for fire protection. To meet the requirements of the Insurance Services Office (ISO), there must be sufficient volume in storage, at an elevation sufficient to maintain a minimum pressure at the highest fire hydrant in the system. That requirement relates to a level of 21 feet in the Hill Street tank. From June 18 to June 22, the level fluctuated from 19 to 22 feet. On June 21 the watering ban was elevated. After just one night of excessive watering, the tank can drop about five feet, which would be well below the safety level.

What do you mean, mailings 'take a while'?

The length of time it takes to send a bulk mail notice and have it in your hand is about two weeks. This covers production time at the printer, and activities that take place at the post office prior to the counted and sorted trays of notices being delivered to each postal route. In the time it takes to make and deliver a notice, the level of restriction could well have changed, and the notices would be obsolete. While the time delay is the main reason for not mailing notices, the cost of \$1,600 per mailing is also a factor.

Is that why the water restrictions in the mailed Consumer Confidence Report were wrong?

Yes. The Consumer Confidence Report had to be to the printer by June 15 in order to be delivered by June 30, which is a MassDEP deadline. The water restriction was elevated to No Non-Essential Outdoor Water Use on June 21st. At that late date, it was just not possible to make a change and have the notice delivered by the deadline. Future Consumer Confidence Reports will refer readers to the Water Department website for the current level of restriction, in order to prevent this problem from reoccurring in the future.

This is a communication fail. A reverse 911 call was warranted.

The Water Department used all avenues of communication to which it had access, including the sign on the common, Water Department and Town websites, cable access, Facebook and Twitter. Unfortunately, the Water Department does not currently have access to a Town wide reverse 911 System. The Town of Foxborough will have one in the future. The Department also strives to use the Foxboro Reporter for communication, but that, too, has time constraints. That is also why the first contact the Water Department has with someone watering is simply a warning. This serves as a way of notifying homeowners that are unaware of the new change.

What is the 65 gallons per day? I pay for it. I will do what I want.

Contained in The Water Management Act Permit is this requirement: “Foxborough’s performance standard for residential gallons per capita day (RGPCD) is 65 or less. Foxborough shall be in compliance with the RGPCD performance standard by December 31, 2010, and each year thereafter.”

If the Foxborough Water System does not meet this performance standard, MassDEP imposes stricter watering restrictions, and additional water conservation measures.

When will the new wells be ready?

The new wells will be ready about August of 2019. They have been permitted as part of the new Water Treatment Plant off of Chestnut Street, which is expected to be completed by the end of June 2020.

There have been numerous discussions with MassDEP about utilizing these wells prior to the completion of the treatment plant. At this time, the new wells would only be allowed to be used if the Foxborough Water Department makes a “Declaration of Water Supply Emergency”. The problem with that is that the first requirement of a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency would be an all-out water ban.

There are numerous factors involved in maintaining the water system. The department does not like restricting or eliminating your ability to water, but maintaining public safety and remaining compliant with State Regulations is vital. It also must be said that the residents of Foxborough have been impressive in following these new restrictions. Since the enforcement of the new watering restrictions, tank levels are being restored to acceptable levels. Thank you all.

Effective July 2, 2018, we are now permitting watering with hand-held hoses, before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. (In other words, no watering with hand-held hoses allowed between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.). Please continue to conserve as much as possible, so that we will not have to revert to the complete ban. There is still a full ban on sprinklers.