



# THE water works

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## New Water Withdrawal Regulations and Watershed Protection Updates

Beginning in 2006, Maine's Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) began the process of establishing new rules on stream flows and lake levels. The primary reason for establishing these rules was to monitor water use in agriculture. Water suppliers in Maine sought exemption from the new water withdrawal standards, arguing that our extensive histories in protecting our supplies should warrant different regulation than that of agriculture. The legislature refused this argument and held firm that all water withdrawals would be regulated and minimum stream flows would be established.

To comply with these new rules, water suppliers have been tasked with providing documentation of historical pumping records, lake level data, water treatment capabilities and explanation of any planned expansions on record as of August 2008. BWD is well positioned to be the regional water supply with a modern treatment plant designed with the ability to expand. Nequasset Lake has a reported safe yield of well over five million gallons a day, even during drought conditions.

With the assistance of Wright Pierce Engineering of Topsham, BWD conducted a bathymetric survey to further document and confirm the safe yield of the lake, as well as to determine exactly how much water is available. The lake was last surveyed in the 1950's by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DF&W) using the best tools available at the time. The new survey used Global Positioning Satellites (GPS), a sonar based depth sounder and mapped the data using a Graphical Information System (GIS). Thousands of

depth readings were collected using the GPS and used in the GIS to create the new map of the terrain of the lake's bottom. The results were surprising as the new map shows the lake has a much wider deep channel than previously noted. A computer model is being used to calculate the volume and a safe yield of the lake based on the new information. This information will be reported to MDEP and used as criteria for setting BWD's future water withdrawal.



### 319 Updates and Other Watershed Protection Projects

BWD continues to work with Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (AVSWCD) and our stakeholders, a group of watershed landowners and other state agency representatives initially formed in 2005. This phase of the watershed protection grant is aimed at rectifying some of the sites where erosion was identified to be potentially threatening the long term health of the lake. A list of several sites in the watershed was formed and work began in July and will

continue next spring. We are currently in the process of making more landowners in the watershed aware that cost sharing and technical assistance is available for those with areas on their property that could contribute to diminished water quality.

Another current grant related project is the shoreline survey. A shoreline survey is conducted by a group of volunteers who identify problem areas from a boat on the lake. Similar to the watershed survey in 2006, the shoreline survey documents erosion sites

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from moderate to severe. In the spring, we plan to have a “yardscaping” workshop to fulfill one of the two required workshops for the 319 grant. A sample site will be selected and interested landowners will be shown more environmentally conscious methods to maintain lawns and gardens. The primary focus of these projects is to reach Nequasset Lake watershed property owners, but if you’re a BWD customer and would like more information, please feel free to contact us.

### Water Drops

- ◆ We would like to inform anyone who establishing a new account that an application for service must be completed. Whether you’re a new owner or a new tenant, we now charge a twenty dollar new service fee, which is due at the time of application. This fee covers various expenses associated with setting up a new account including but not limited to meter reading and final billing. Applications for service can be found on our website and are also available at the office.
- ◆ If you will ever have a problem with your water service line, winter is usually the time that it will happen. The line entering the house after BWD’s shut-off valve outside is a homeowner’s responsibility. It is important to make sure you do everything you can to protect your pipes from freezing during the winter months, because this can be expensive, not to mention messy.
- ◆ **Meter Testing:** We would like to remind our customers that you may receive a postcard in the mail requesting you to schedule a time when a crew member can enter your home to change your water meter. Meter changeouts are required by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. The process benefits our customers by ensuring that water usage is being monitored properly. An appointment generally takes about fifteen minutes total and can be scheduled at your convenience. **Please understand** that it is only necessary for you to contact us if you receive one of these postcards this year. BWD keeps records of the last time a customer’s meter was changed and schedules a small portion of to be changed each year.

The meter shown here has an arrow in the center left. This is the low flow indicator.



**NOTE:** on a standard meter, a low flow indicator moves when small amounts of water pass through the meter and can assist customers in detecting leaks. To find out if you have a leak, shut off all water on your property. If the flow indicator is still moving with water off, you have a leak. Toilets and faucets are among the most common sources of leaks.



*The Water Works* is published by Bath Water District. If you have any questions about an article or would like additional information, please contact us at:

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