



Coquitlam Lake water purchase mulled

Metro Vancouver may have to purchase additional water from the Coquitlam Lake reservoir to bump up supplies, which are quickly dwindling

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Water from the Coquitlam Reservoir supplies approximately one-third of the drinking water in Metro Vancouver. Metro Vancouver has asked BC Hydro for additional water should it become necessary over the summer. Photograph By Metro Vancouver

Metro officials are urging residents to take whatever additional steps they can to help conserve water.

"We have never had a May and June this dry," Metro utilities committee chair Darrell Mussatto said. "It's important we use our water wisely."

Last week, Metro Vancouver imposed stage 2 water restrictions to reduce water consumption.

The tougher restrictions mean only once a week sprinkling of lawns is allowed — Mondays from 4-9 a.m. for even numbered houses, and Thursday mornings for odd-numbered addresses.

Hand watering of flowers, vegetable gardens and trees is still allowed. Also, houses with permits for water when applying nematodes to get rid of chafer beetles can still go ahead and water as required for the application to be successful.

Rules went into effect July 6, with bylaw officers will issue warnings first, then \$250 fines, if necessary.

Mussatto said the measures are supposed to keep water flowing to the region, even if there is no rain until the fall, which is unlikely. Metro has also asked BC Hydro for an extra 68 billion litres of water from the Coquitlam Lake reservoir if it becomes necessary, for which it would pay about \$600,000, Mussatto said.

That's about \$10. per million litres or about 1 cent per cubic metre

"They've said they would be able to supply us most, but not all of that water, because they have power and fisheries requirements, as well," he explained.

The stored water supply in the regional district's reservoirs is down to 75 per cent of their capacity as of July 5.

That number has declined rapidly to record low levels for this time of year as a result of weeks of hot, dry weather and the quick melt of a meagre snowpack.

"We're really into uncharted territory when were outside that normal range," said Tim Jervis, Metro Vancouver's water services general manager.