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# “THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

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June 2021

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT NORTH KINGSTOWN’S SPRINKLER ORDINANCE

Question: **WHY DOES NORTH KINGSTOWN RESTRICT LAWN WATERING DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS?**

Answer: North Kingstown water customers have at times during the summer used more water than our well pumps can provide. This reduces tank levels and available fire flow and pressure. The public health and safety implications of this include compromised ability to fight fires and potential for contamination of the water distribution system. Additionally, the RI Dept of Environmental Management (RIDEM) has indicated that North Kingstown’s withdrawals for water supply during these high usage summer months are a direct cause of stress to the rivers, streams, and wetlands in the community and have a negative effect on vital cold water fisheries.

Question: **HOW DOES THE SPRINKLER ORDINANCE WORK?**

Answer: The sprinkler ordinance is in effect through the months of July and August only, and requires that lawn watering, whether it be done with an in-ground system or a moveable hose and sprinkler, be done only twice a week. If your house or business is on the east side (Narragansett Bay side) of Route 1 then you may water on Mondays & Thursdays only, if you are located on the west side (Exeter side) of Route 1 then you may water on Tuesdays and Fridays. No watering is permitted during the hottest part of the day from 10AM to 2PM on any day.

Question: **WHAT ABOUT VEGETABLE AND FLOWER GARDENS?**

Answer: Vegetables and flower gardens may be hand-watered with a watering can or handheld hose on any day of the week, as long as it is not between 10AM and 2PM.

Question: **ARE THERE STILL WATERING RESTRICTIONS IN JUNE?**

Answer: No, water restrictions are now only in place in July and August. Odd-even watering restrictions, found across the nation to be ineffective and counterproductive, are no longer in force.

Question: **WHAT IF I PUT IN A NEW LAWN THIS SUMMER, CAN I WATER MORE FREQUENTLY?**

Answer: Short term exemptions to the ordinance will be issued at the Water Department on a case by case basis. In order for an exemption to be approved, your lawn installation must be of a critical emergency nature such as a required septic system replacement. Routine lawn and landscape upgrades should be accomplished in the Spring or Fall months, no exemptions will be issued for these.

Question: **WHY DON’T YOU JUST GET BIGGER PUMPS OR BETTER EQUIPMENT?**

Answer: Two reasons; firstly, each well is specifically designed at construction for a distinct range of withdrawal based upon the size of the well itself and the aquifer formation it is sited in. Substantially bigger pumps would not fit within the well casing and “better” equipment if it were to withdraw water beyond a critical threshold amount, could permanently damage the well formation. Secondly, higher withdrawals from wells would require a permit from RIDEM and the agency has clearly stated they would not support increased withdrawals because of the stress on the aquatic habitat in the area due to drinking water withdrawals.

Question: **THEN WHY HAVEN’T YOU DRILLED MORE WELLS?**

Answer: As stated above, new sources (wells) or increased withdrawals from existing sources require RIDEM permitting which will not be supported at this time. We are however, in conjunction with the RI Water Resources Board, actively pursuing future new source locations in the event that these circumstances change.

### **Watch out for your WaterSmart Mailing**

**NK Water is really excited to debut our new WaterSmart interactive program in June. Here you will be able to access your account, check your water use, pay your bills, view innovative watersaving videos, sign up for alerts, perform your own water audit and take a customized water survey that will help you and your family save money and our precious drinking water resource.**

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## Think Native and Natural

A few small changes in your lawn care practices can mean a healthier garden and less pollutants for our waters:

- Consider using organic fertilizers such as bone meal, blood meal, compost, or organic blends. No matter what product you use, though, be sure to follow the manufacturer’s directions for application rate and timing.
- Spread a thick layer of mulch in gardens (except for heat-loving veggies like tomatoes), around shrubs and under trees to reduce water evaporation from the soil. It also keeps the ground cooler, keeps plants happier, and inhibits weeds.
- Consider letting your lawn go dormant if there’s a drought. It will come back in the fall.
- Consider planting more native plants; these are plants that have adapted to the local geography, hydrology and climate of the area. As a result, they tend to need less care, require little or no irrigation or fertilizer, are resistant to local pests and disease, and provide habitat for native wildlife species.
- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension has published a Sustainable Plant List which is available at <https://web.uri.edu/rinativeplants/> . You also could visit the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society website (<http://www.riwps.org/>) for more information about natives.

## Watering Without Waste

Conserving water when you’re working outdoors can reduce the potential for contaminants to wind up in local waters. Here are a few ways to water without waste:

- Established lawns are happy with one inch of water per week, including rainfall. If you must water, water just once a week for a deep soaking.
- Adjust sprinklers so that they don’t water paved surfaces. In the event that it’s unavoidable, direct the flow of water toward your lawn or garden.
- Check the weather forecast, if you have automatic sprinklers be sure they aren’t programmed to come on in the rain.
- Don’t water in the heat of the day. Watering early in the morning or in the evening minimizes the water lost to evaporation.
- Consider using slow-watering techniques such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses. They are considerably more effective than sprinklers at getting the water where it’s supposed to be.

## For more information:

Visit the website: <http://www.ristormwatersolutions.org>

