

To report concerning activities in our
Drinking Water Supply Areas

Call 902 420-9287

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Volume 2—Issue 1

Source Water Protection Newsletter

This is the second annual *Source Water Protection Newsletter*, created by Halifax Water to improve awareness and communications between Halifax Water customers and stakeholders about water supply-related news.

This newsletter is part of Halifax Water's ongoing commitment to keeping residents, customers and stakeholders informed about source water protection initiatives, watershed management activities and water supply-related news across the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

To learn more about Halifax Water's source water protection program and water supply areas, please visit our website. If you missed the previous issue, it is available here: https://halifaxwater.ca/sites/default/files/2025-02/SWP_Newsletter_Issue%231_finalversion_29012025%20%28002%29.pdf.

2025 Water Use Restrictions

For the second year in a row, Lake Major experienced an extended dry period—from July to November 2025.



This dry period caused water levels to drop below the lowest levels reached the year before, prompting Halifax Water to temporarily impose voluntary restrictions about four months earlier than the year before.

On August 5, 2025, Halifax Water asked all customers in HRM to voluntarily conserve water use until further notice. This was targeted primarily to customers served by Lake Major, including Dartmouth, Burnside, Cole Harbour, Westphal, North Preston, and Eastern Passage communities, and those served by the J.D. Kline system including Halifax, Bedford, Sackville, Fall River, Waverley and Timberlea. Despite this effort, levels continued to drop.

On September 10, mandatory restrictions were imposed for Lake Major customers, prohibiting activities such as watering lawns, washing vehicles, filling pools and watering golf courses. J.D. Kline customers were asked to continue to voluntarily restrict their water use. By October 4, Halifax Water saw an overall reduction of water consumption of 9%.

To learn more about Halifax Water's
Source Water Protection Program
please visit

halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas

Summer 2026 Edition

Once rainfall returned lake levels to safe operating levels, the mandatory restrictions were lifted on November 12, 2025. Until water levels returned to normal, Lake Major and J.D. Kline customers were asked to continue to voluntarily restrict their water use. Public health and safety were never at risk during the restrictions. Halifax Water wishes to thank everyone who conserved water during this challenging time.



With measurable snow pack and the rainy cool spring this year, both water supplies reached spill levels this spring. To help avoid future restrictions, it is good practice to conserve water. For conservation tips please visit [Reducing Your Water & Wastewater Use | Halifax Water](#).

Drought Measures and Solutions

ECOLOGICAL MAINTENANCE FLOW (EMF)

Despite the mandatory water conservation measures (described on the first page) to help decrease customer demand on the Lake Major water supply, further measures were needed to stem the effects of the persistent drought conditions experienced in the fall of 2025. Halifax Water applied for a variance to Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC) and DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada) to reduce the ecological maintenance flow (EMF) at the Lake Major Dam until lake levels returned to safe operating levels.

The EMF is a rate determined by DFO to ensure the riverine system has adequate water flow through the Lake Major dam to sustain the health of the system and the fisheries dependent on it.

Permission was granted to reduce the EMF on August 16th, where that rate remained until November 27 2025, once rainfall had restored Lake Major water levels to normal operating levels.

Despite EMF flow reductions **and** mandatory water conservation measures, lake levels continued to drop during this significant dry period.

EAST LAKE SUPPLEMENTAL

To further help slow the decline in Lake Major water levels, Halifax Water obtained a watercourse alteration approval from NSECC, supported by DFO, to pump water from East Lake into East Lake Brook, which flows into Lake Major.

Pumping occurred for 10 hours per day from October 30th to November 12th, when rainfall eliminated the need for continued pumping.

These measures allowed Halifax Water to avoid further measures, which might have included implementing the more intrusive Lake Major Water Shortage Program involving pumping deeper lake water into a holding area near the water supply intake pipe.

During both the EMF reduction and East Lake pumping operations, Halifax Water retained an environmental consulting firm to implement a DFO-approved fish monitoring and rescue plan. Water levels and water quality were continuously monitored to minimize downstream impacts.

Halifax Water also updated the Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board and engaged the NSECC Protected Areas Branch (the landowner where East Lake pumping operations occurred) through the course of the operations.

All activities complied with the terms of Halifax Water's License to Operate within the Waverley–Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area, the *Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations*, and the watercourse alteration approval.



Halifax Water staff preparing to pump water from East Lake.

Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations Update

Updated Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations

The **Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations** were approved by the Minister of Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Timothy Halman, on July 22, 2025, effective immediately. The new Regulations are found at <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/envpwalmwr.htm#text>.

Public Review Process

In July 2022 Halifax Water initiated the Regulations review process in response to a letter from the North Preston Ratepayers Association, which highlighted some inconsistencies in the Regulations. The Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board supported the review process.

The public review process of the Regulations included informing stakeholders, Halifax Water customers and Lake Major watershed landowners about how they may provide feedback on updating the existing Regulations. Following the year-long public review process, the draft Regulation revisions were submitted to NSECC in July of 2023 for internal review. The Honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change approved the revisions on July 22, 2025.

To recap the Lake Major public engagement process please visit the webpage <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/LMWPWA>.

Upcoming Public Open Houses

Halifax Water has scheduled six (6) public open houses for late July 2026 to review the approved changes. A presentation will be provided at these open houses and the public will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback from both Halifax Water and the Department of Environment and Climate Change. The table below lists the upcoming public engagement meetings.

Halifax Water would like to take this time to thank everyone for their patience and for those who participate in the review process.

The last page of this newsletter highlights some of the most noticeable changes to the Regulations.



For answers to further questions, Halifax Water encourages the public to visit the Halifax Water's webpage <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas>, or contact Customer Care at **902-420-9287**.

Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations Public Open Houses

Community	Location	Address	Date	Time
North Preston	North Preston Community Centre	44 Simmonds Rd. North Preston, B2Z 1A3	Tuesday, July 28, 2026	2-4 pm & 6-8 pm
Cherry Brook	Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia	10 Cherry Brook Rd. Cherry Brook, B2Z 1A8	Wednesday, July 29, 2026	2-4 pm & 6-8 pm
Dartmouth	Fairbanks Centre	54 Locks Road, Dartmouth, B2X 2W7	Thursday, July 30, 2026	2-4 pm & 6-8 pm

To view the full version of the new Regulations please visit the weblink here:
<https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/envpwalmwr.htm>

Recreation Activity	Changes to <i>Lake Major Protected Water Area (PWA) Regulations</i> (with respect to Recreation)							
Lake	Major				Long			
Regulation Status	Old regs		New regs		Old regs		New regs	
Vessel restrictions —except authorized personnel (Boats, Canoes, Kayaks or other vessel)	✘	Boat motors restricted to 9.9 hp or less and carry ≤23 L of gasoline.	✘	No change.	✖	No boating allowed on Long Lake.	✘	New: Boating is allowed on Long Lake with the same restrictions as other waterways in <i>PWA</i> (see under L. Major).
Fishing	✘	No person shall fish from a vessel or from the shoreline or bank of Lake Major within one hundred (100) metres of the intake for the water supply.	✘	No change to fishing locations. New: A person must not use, possess or release any live or dead fish or fish parts for bait or species introductions for recreational fishing in the <i>PWA</i> .	✘	No person shall fish at any time from a vessel or along the shoreline or bank on Long Lake except beyond 100 m of the water supply intake.	✘	New: Fishing from a vessel or the shoreline is now permitted as per Lake Major regs. New: recreational fishing regulations applied to Lake Major apply to Long Lake as well.
Swimming bathing and washing restrictions	✘	Bathing and washing is prohibited in L. Major and its tributaries except within 800 m from the L. Major Dam. No person shall swim within 100 m of L. Major intake.	✘	(1) A person must not bathe or wash in any watercourse in the <i>PWA</i> . (3) A person must not swim in Lake Major, except within 800 m upstream from the Lake Major Dam.	✖	No swimming allowed in Long Lake.	✘	(1) A person must not bathe or wash in any watercourse in the <i>PWA</i> . (2) Except per (3) under L. Major, swimming is permitted in the <i>PWA</i> including Long Lake.
Dock, Wharf, Mooring or Boat Launch (except for authorized personnel)	✘	Requires NSECC approval.	✘	Added to <i>PWA</i> regs: No permanent dock, wharf or mooring or boat launch on any watercourse in the <i>PWA</i> is permitted. A temporary dock or wharf is permitted if approved before installation by Halifax Water and after notification to the Board.	✖	Requires NSECC approval.	✘	Added to <i>PWA</i> regs: No permanent dock, wharf, mooring or boat launch on any watercourse in the <i>PWA</i> is permitted. A temporary dock or wharf is permitted if approved before installation by Halifax Water and after notification to the Board.
NO Changes to <i>Lake Major Protected Water Area (PWA) Regulations</i> with respect to the following recreational activities:								
Off-highway vehicles (e.g., ATVs and Snowmobiles),	✖	No person shall at any time operate a vehicle, including an off-highway vehicle as defined in the Off-Highway Vehicles Act or any type of recreational vehicle, on or over Long Lake or Lake Major.						
Camp Fires	✘	No open fires from April 15 to October 15 inclusive, except barbecues and fireplaces designed for cooking or heating purposes. No open fires on lake ice.						
Hunting and Trapping	✘	Permitted as per Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations. Contact your local DNRR office for details at https://novascotia.ca/natr/staffdir/offices.asp .						
Trail Building or Littering	✖	Not permitted.						
To view the entire <i>Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations</i> legislation, effective July 22, 2025 please visit: https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/envpwalmwr.htm .						✖ = Prohibited ✘ = Restricted with conditions.		