

# Will ditches and water supply continue to clash?

If this summer taxes the city water supply like last summer did, the demand for a new water source is likely to intensify

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Charlottetown Mayor Clifford Lee seems determined to keep ditch infilling among his top priorities, even though there seems to be increasing pressure on the city to turn its attention — and its cash — to developing additional sources of water supply.

The question is, will he maintain this position if this pressure intensifies? Ditch infilling has been one of those routine municipal services provided by the capital city for years, but last year, a particularly dry spring and summer taxed the existing water source, and thrust the matter of water supply for the expanding capital city to the top of the agenda.

In spite of some councillors' suggestion that funds targeted for ditch infilling should be directed instead toward developing the city's new water source in the Milton area, the mayor is waiting for new federal infrastructure dollars for the project, which isn't likely to start until at least 2014. As well, he seems adamant about sticking to the city's commitment to provide ditch infilling for streets that haven't been serviced yet. Just last week in a story in The Guardian, the mayor pointed out residents in amalgamated areas of the city were promised an equal level of services back in 1995, and the city can't "abandon" citizens still waiting for ditch infilling "to concentrate on one specific project." It's commendable that the mayor wants to treat all residents equally, but ensuring an adequate supply of water for the city should hardly be regarded as "one specific project." All residents, all businesses would benefit equally from efforts to develop adequate water supply for the capital city.

It'll be interesting to see if this spring and summer will be as parched as last year, and, if so, whether it will further tax the city's existing water supply. If it does, the mayor should expect even more pressure from those urging the city to start work on the Milton area site.