

Running dry

Dwindling water supply leaves Charlottetown well fields dry

- The Guardian (Charlottetown)
- 19 Oct 2015
- BY DRAKE LOWTHERS

When Gary Schneider thinks of Charlottetown's water consumption he thinks of the beaver.

Schneider is co-chair of the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island. There is only one real difference between Charlottetown's use of water and the beaver's, he said.

"Beavers will eat themselves out of house and home. But those beavers will just move onto another place, and that first place grows up again."

Charlottetown can't move to another place to draw its water from.

Charlottetown's water supply comes from three well fields: Union Road, Brackley and Suffolk.

Sarah Wheatley is the Watershed co-ordinator of the Winter River – Tracadie Bay Watershed Association.

"The Brackley branch is located in between two well fields. Coincidentally, that branch of the river runs dry most summers."

As Charlottetown grows as a city, its water consumption grows too. As a result, more sections of the watershed will run dry, which will lead to death and decay throughout the ecosystem, Wheatley said.

"Charlottetown uses approximately 18 million litres of water per day."

Craig Walker is manager of Charlottetown's water and sewer utility. The daily usage of water per Charlottetown resident is 305 litres, he said. That's nearly double the amount of water used by each European per day.

"Most people wouldn't have a feel for what they use. Over the years we've been able to stay at the status quo while servicing more residents."

The water and sewer utility has introduced the residential water meter program to try to manage water consumption in Charlottetown, Walker said.

"If you don't measure something it's hard to manage it."

The United Nation suggests daily water consumption for personal and domestic uses should be between 50 and 100 litres per person a day.

Schneider said you can't keep beating up systems forever.

"You lose organic matter, all kinds of structure and you have no seed sources left." Heating and will be done in six phases. The first phase got underway this

month with Bevan Bros. contacting residents in the downtown area to set up appointments. Approximately 50 meters have been installed since