



West Hants Regional Municipality

RESPONSE TO THE 2025 PROVINCE-WIDE DROUGHT

Presenters:

Mayor Abraham Zebian
mayor.zebian@westhants.ca

Chief Administrative Officer, Mark Phillips
mphillips@westhants.ca

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One Hot Summer

- In 2025, Nova Scotia experienced an extreme drought, with far less rainfall than normal, putting serious pressure on both municipal water systems and private wells across the province.
- West Hants was also affected by these conditions, and by mid-summer many households, particularly those relying on dug wells, were experiencing critically low water levels or dry wells. Within weeks, the Municipality escalated its response from voluntary conservation measures to mandatory water restrictions.



Timelines

- Drought Period – August 5th to November 21st (approx. 3 months)
- Voluntary Water Conservation Notice – August 5th (x 3 Utilities)
- Mandatory Water Conservation Order – Sept 4th to Nov 4th (x 3 Utilities)
- Community Water Give Away Program – August 17th to November 21st
- Homelessness Water Supports – August 15th to December 1st
- Source Water Field Work – September to December
- Bulk Water Hauler Services – Year round
- Secondary Water Supply (“Make It Rain”) – October to December
- Integrated Resource Plan – October
- Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Expansion – November
- WHRM Water Relief Policy – December



What did we do? (Water Utility Related)

All three (3) of our watersheds began exhibiting clear signs of stress as a result of the prolonged drought conditions.

1. Windsor and Three Mile Plains = # of customers = 2,634
 2. Falmouth - # of customers = 981
 3. Hantsport - # of customers = 620
 4. TOTAL CUSTOMERS = 4,235
- Effective August 5, 2025, we proactively initiated a voluntary water conservation effort across all service areas to help reduce demand and protect available resources.
 - Concurrently, staff intensified leak detection efforts, with particular focus on the Falmouth Water Utility, to identify and repair any concealed leaks that may have been placing additional strain on the system.



West Hants Regional Munic... ⋮ ✕

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Water Conservation Advisory for WHRM

Due to ongoing dry weather conditions, some of our watersheds are in very low conditions. The Municipality is encouraging residents and businesses to use conservation measures in daily water consumption.

Some conservation measures you can take include:

- eliminate lawn watering and other outside water uses
- avoid washing cars
- fix leaks promptly to avoid water waste
- decrease shower durations
- only run dish washers and washing machines when they are full

At this time, this is an advisory for voluntary conservation. However, we are taking proactive steps to avoid a potentially critical situation. Your cooperation is strongly encouraged and greatly appreciated.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact our
Public Works Admin, Karrie, kritchie@westhants.ca
or by calling 902-798-8391, Ext. 125.



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What did we do?

- With no significant rainfall or improvement in drought conditions, West Hants implemented mandatory water conservation measures effective September 4, 2025, to help protect and preserve the community's water supply.
- Restricted hours of operations for bulk water haulers and posted notices to the general public regarding water consumption.



Mandatory Water Restriction Order

Due to ongoing drought conditions, significantly reduced levels in our watersheds, and a long-range forecast indicating no substantial precipitation, West Hants Regional Municipality is implementing a mandatory water restriction order effective immediately for residents on municipal water services.

Under this order, outdoor water uses are prohibited, including:

- lawn/flower watering and use of sprinklers
- bathing/washing livestock and pets
- washing driveways, sidewalks, houses, vehicles (including RV's, ATV's, bikes, etc.)
- filling swimming pools or hot tubs

Anyone found to be in violation of these restrictions may be subject to suspension of their water services, in accordance with the Water Conservation Directives in the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board Orders for West Hants.

For approved and authorized water haulers: effective September 6th, hours for the 5984 Trunk 14 TMP bulk water station will be restricted to 9am-5pm daily.

We appreciate your cooperation, these measures will remain in place until further notice.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Environmental Technologist at kmccarthy@westhants.ca or by calling 902-798-8391 ext. 209



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Bulk Water Notice - Update



For approved and authorized water haulers, please go to 5984 Trunk 14 TMP next to Brooklyn Fire Station 2 (across from Underwood Rd.).

The Falmouth (Station Lane) bulk water station is closed until further notice.
The alternate location at 54 Park Drive is now closed.

Please do not use bulk water to refill your ground well

-  **Contamination:** adding outside water could introduce contaminants to the well
-  **Ineffective:** added water may quickly drain away or be absorbed by surrounding soil before increasing water levels
-  **Structural damage:** adding large volumes of water quickly can cause erosion and lead to collapse of well walls

Instead, consider buying storage tanks to safely store bulk water for your needs.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact our
Public Works Admin, Karrie, kritchier@westhants.ca
or by calling 902-798-8391, Ext. 125.

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Bottled Water Program Activation

In response to escalating water shortages and alongside the conservation measures, West Hants launched an emergency potable water program on August 17, 2025, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management, to support residents affected by the drought.

Drinking Water Available for Rural West Hants Residents

Due to the ongoing drought, many rural residents in West Hants are experiencing low or dry wells. In response, West Hants Regional Municipality (WHRM) has secured 160 4-litre bottles of drinking water for immediate distribution, with an additional five pallets (960 jugs) ordered and expected to arrive on Monday.

To support affected households, WHRM will be distributing two 4-litre bottles of water per household on Sunday, August 17, while supplies last.

PICK-UP DETAILS:

- **Location:** 76 Morison Drive, Windsor
- **Time:** 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- **First-come, first-served**
- **Contact (Sunday only):** 902-798-1708

Please bring a piece of photo ID that shows your civic address to confirm residency.

We recognize this is not ideal, but with limited supply, our goal is to assist as many residents as possible with drinking water while we work on other solutions.

Stay updated by following our WHRM and EMO Facebook pages and visiting the WHRM website.

www.westhants.ca



Mobilization and Collaboration

Drought Response Overview

- Strong collaboration across staff, volunteers, and community organizations
- Coordinated regional water pickup and distribution
- Rapid mobilization to meet urgent community needs

Staffing & Volunteer Support

- More than 20 municipal staff deployed across four regional locations
- Dedicated volunteer teams assigned to each site
- Pickup schedules coordinated locally
- Over 15 community members mobilized to ensure consistent service coverage



Distribution

- Note: During the first two days of distribution, West Hants supplied 854 four-litre bottles of water. By the end of August, a total of 10,256 four-litre bottles had been distributed throughout the region.

Distribution Locations

1. The WHRM Municipal Office (Windsor)
2. Brooklyn Area
 - BFD Fire Station and Scotian Gold Country Store
3. Vaughan / Martock Area
 - SWH Fire Station
4. Summerville
 - Summerville Fire Station



WHRM's Actions During Drought Conditions

Initially, distribution was organized internally by West Hants staff, with a focus on rural areas where private wells had been hardest hit. As drought conditions persisted, the distribution program expanded to meet growing demand.

By the end of September and into early October, West Hants was supplying an average of 850 four-litre bottles of water per day to the Brooklyn distribution location alone.

West Hants Water Delivery Update

Our trucks are loaded and have headed out this morning to support residents. Yesterday, staff delivered 770 4L jugs of water in four locations in West Hants.



Daily distribution is confirmed until Friday, August 22.

Water is available for pickup at the following locations:

- Southwest Hants Fire Station - 1884 Hwy 14, Vaughan
- Brooklyn Civic Centre - 995 Hwy 215, Newport (Brooklyn)
- Summerville Fire Station - 59 Summerville Wharf Rd.
- WHRM Municipal Office - 76 Morison Drive, Windsor
- Pickup Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily

Allocation Guidelines:

- Daily Allocation: 4L per person, per day
- Maximum per Household: 16L per day (based on 4 members max)

Please have an ID showing your civic address to confirm residency. Thank you for your cooperation as we continue to support our residents.

Stay updated by following our WHRM and EMO Facebook pages and visiting the WHRM website: www.westhants.ca

Transition to Voucher-Based Support

- Initial uptake was modest but grew significantly as drought conditions worsened and awareness increased.
- The program began with summer staff distributing bottled water across rural communities and from the Municipal Office at 76 Morison Drive. As staffing levels changed, it shifted to a collaborative model, with municipal staff supplying bulk water to Volunteer Fire Departments and Fire Auxiliaries, who sustained local distribution, while a voucher program was initiated at the municipal office.
- By November, the program shifted to a voucher-only system, allowing residents to pick up vouchers at 76 Morison Drive and redeem them for 4-litre bottled water at Sobeys in Windsor.
- Sobeys was selected as the primary retail partner due to their capacity to acquire and store the large quantities of water, ensuring program sustainability and reliable access for rural households reliant on wells.

 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00001 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00002 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00003 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00004 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00005 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00006 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>
 	<p>West Hants Regional Municipality P.O. Box 3000, Windsor, NS, B0N 2T0 Expires: November 28, 2025</p>	<p>GOOD FOR ONE (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER AT: SOBEYS 50 EMPIRE LANE FORT EDWARD MALL WINDSOR NS B0N 2T0</p> <p>***** PHYSICAL COUPON MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STORE TO REDEEM *****</p>	<p>Expires: November 28, 2025 Coupon: #2025-00007 (1) 4L BOTTLE OF WATER</p>



Overall Assessment

- WHRM's response was both necessary and timely; however, it highlighted significant logistical, financial, equity, and sustainability challenges.
- In the end over \$200,000 was spent on the bottled water program, delivering approximately 95,250 four-litre bottles of water to residents of West Hants.
- It emphasized the need to formalize emergency water relief policies and invest in long-term water security and climate adaptation strategies.
- Emergency Water Relief During Droughts Policy – December 2026
- **Key Staff – Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk**



In December 2025, after assessing the full impacts of the drought and stabilizing operations, the Municipality formalized its response by adopting the **Emergency Water Relief During Droughts Policy (RCOGE-004.00)** to guide future emergency water support efforts.





Emergency Management
Office of the Minister

Suite 601-1871 Upper Water Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 1S8 · Telephone 902-476-7396 · Minister.EmergencyManagement@novascotia.ca

December 15, 2025

To: Municipalities across Nova Scotia

Subject: End of the Bottled Water Reimbursement Program

Dear municipal leaders,

We wish to inform you that the Department of Emergency Management will be winding down the bottled water reimbursement program at the end of this calendar year, December 31, 2025. As water levels across the province have been restored, the program's original purpose has been fulfilled.

This program was launched in response to the extreme drought our province faced this summer, which left many residents with dry wells. To help affected communities, we initiated a temporary program to reimburse municipalities for bottled water provided to residents whose wells had gone dry. The program was not intended for well refilling, but rather to ensure access to safe drinking water during this emergency.

Drought is now a predictable and expected issue in Nova Scotia, and as such, no longer an emergency. The Department of Emergency Management is shifting away from an emergency response to this issue, and government is moving toward a long-term and coordinated approach to managing drought.

We appreciate your efforts in supporting resident during this challenging time.

Please ensure that any outstanding reimbursement claims are submitted by January 31, 2026, so they can be processed before the program concludes.

If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact:
Ryan Doherty Ryan.Doherty@novascotia.ca and Joanna Forgeron Joanna.forgeron@novascotia.ca.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the safety and wellbeing of your communities.

Sincerely,

Kim Masland
Minister, Department of Emergency Management

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Back to the Water Utility

- Voluntary and Mandatory Water Conservation Notices and bulk water hauler oversight..... continued



Managing Bulk Water Haulers / Fill Stations

- 2 of 3 water systems have bulk water hauling fill stations (Falmouth and Three Mile Plains) .



Managing Bulk Water Haulers / Fill Stations

Pre- Drought Program Existed - Rules For Approved Water Haulers

- Upon satisfactory inspection a permit will be issued to be displayed on the vehicle, preferably on the back of the tank. PERMIT IS NOT TRANSFERABLE
- Vehicles require Cam-lock adapter, Rigid piping permanently attached to vehicle and an air gap twice the diameter of the pipe. Tank must be designated for hauling water only and have a fixed air gap of 2x the pipe diameter.
- Any chemical addition by the water hauler must be done after the tank has been filled & not at the bulk water station site.
- Report lost activation Key Fob(s) It may take up to 48 hours to replace Key Fob. Fobs will not be replaced on weekends or holidays.



Managing Bulk Water Haulers / Fill Stations

Regulated fees and costs for bulk water

- Initial Set-Up \$60.00
(per vehicle) Includes account set-up, first annual vehicle inspection and initial KEY FOB
- Annual Inspection \$50.00
- Replacement KEY FOB \$25.00
- Bulk Water Rate \$9.24/m³ (220 gallons), effective April 1, 2026. Minimum purchase of \$40.00
- The Municipality reserves the right to revoke any permits if these guidelines are not followed. These guidelines do not supersede or replace the Nova Scotia Environment's "Portable Water Hauler Guidelines"



Managing Bulk Water Haulers / Fill Stations

Managing Bulk Water Stations that service areas of the WHRM (rural areas) not within the utility boundaries or for areas not designed to be serviced by the utility (s).

Decision Making Factors

- In August and September of the drought bulk water haulers / fill stations accounted for only approximately 5% of the treated water flows for those periods.
 - Water Hauler % Use of Combined Metered Flows
 - 2025 1.98%
- Hours of operation / access was limited during the drought.
- All water utilities were consolidated prior to the drought.
- WHRM is a consolidated municipality.
- A regional perspective influenced operational and political decision making.



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
WATER UTILITY - CONSUMPTION REPORT - JANUARY 31, 2026

NOTE: These reports are prepared monthly basis. Customer meters are read quarterly, the reports will have limited data until the quarterly meter data is available.

Community	2024-2025		2025-2026				TOTAL CONSUMPTION ¹
	TOTAL CONSUMPTION	Average per Quarter	Q1 - Jul	Q2 - Oct	Q3 - Jan	Q4 - Apr	
West Hants							
TMP (incl. Wentworth)	33,378,652	8,344,663	8,836,285	9,797,674	9,192,114	1,980	27,828,053
Hantsport	22,776,473	5,694,118	5,942,462	7,408,776	5,363,284	8,139	18,722,660
Falmouth	34,648,303	8,662,076	8,889,388	10,748,566	7,468,608	22,877	27,129,438
TOTAL BY QUARTER	90,803,428	22,700,857	23,668,135	27,955,016	22,024,006	32,995	73,680,152

¹Note all figures are shown in imperial gallons.

Community	2024-2025		2025-2026				TOTAL CONSUMPTION ¹
	TOTAL CONSUMPTION	Average per Quarter	Q1 - Jul	Q2 - Oct	Q3 - Jan	Q4 - Apr	
Windsor	91,427,806	22,856,951	23,472,700	27,582,801	24,222,703	37,835	75,316,039
<i>Bulk Master Meters (BMM)</i>							
WH Dill Road	9,990,992	2,497,748	2,340,470	2,155,696	2,578,037	-	7,074,203
WH TMP 5 Back Rd	45,760,370	11,440,093	12,154,607	15,747,581	15,689,729	-	43,591,917
WH Underwood Rd	30,725,710	7,681,428	8,534,797	9,876,608	13,110,152	-	31,521,558
WH Wentworth Rd	906,713	226,678	277,161	249,005	219,089	-	745,255
SUBTOTAL	87,383,784	21,845,946	23,307,035	28,028,890	31,597,007	-	82,932,932
TOTAL BY QUARTER	178,811,590	44,702,897	46,779,736	55,611,691	55,819,710	37,835	158,248,972

¹Note all figures are shown in imperial gallons.

SUBTOTAL (BMM - TMP)	55,104,879
LESS: AUTHORIZED AND ACCOUNTED FOR NON-REVENUE WATER ³	4,148,472
VARIANCE BETWEEN TMP AND BULK MASTER METERS ²	<u>50,956,407</u>
% OF VARIANCE FROM TOTAL BULK CONSUMPTION	<u>61.4%</u>

²The variance for imp. gallons is attributed to leakage, system flushing, fire hydrants, unauthorized usage, inaccurate meter reads, and old meter equipment, etc.

³The authorized and accounted for non-revenue water is attributed to estimated loss from water main breaks in imp. gallons.

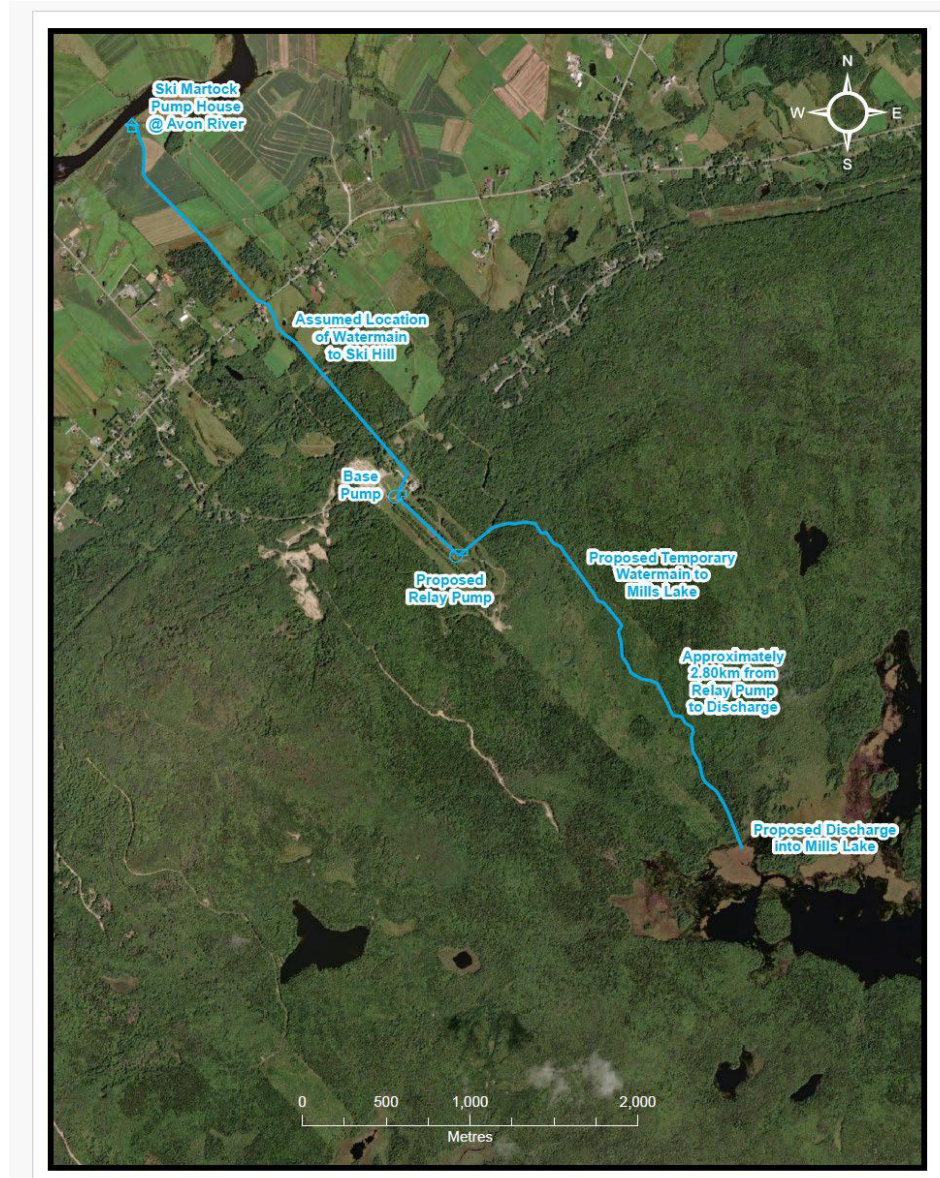


Secondary Water Source for Windsor TMP System “Operation Make It Rain”

- October 2025
- Council approval for funding to source secondary water supply from Avon River System to support the TMP and Windsor Water System
 - \$350,000
 - Water relayed through Martock Ski Hill Snow Making System from Avon River
 - Approximately 3kms of fusible HDPE (PVC) piping
 - 8 weeks to install
 - Usage Agreement with Ski Martock
 - DFO approval
 - Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change approval
 - Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board



Secondary Water Source for Windsor TMP System “Operation Make It Rain”



Secondary Water Source for Windsor TMP System "Operation Make It Rain"



Secondary Water Source for Windsor TMP System “Operation Make It Rain”



Water Utility Source Water Fieldwork

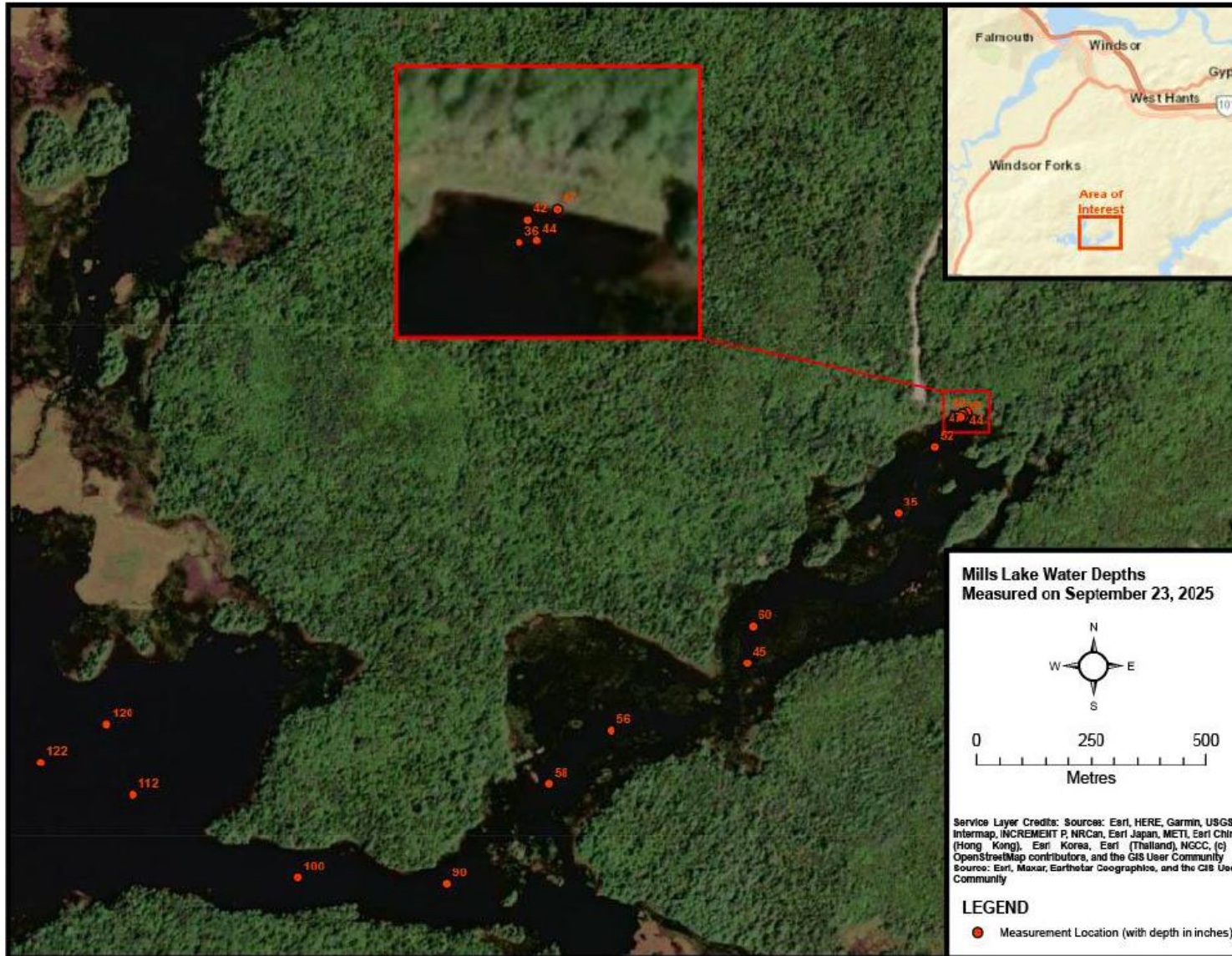


Areas Explored

- Dam Area
- Narrows
- Main Lake
- Floating Bog



Water Utility Source Water Fieldwork

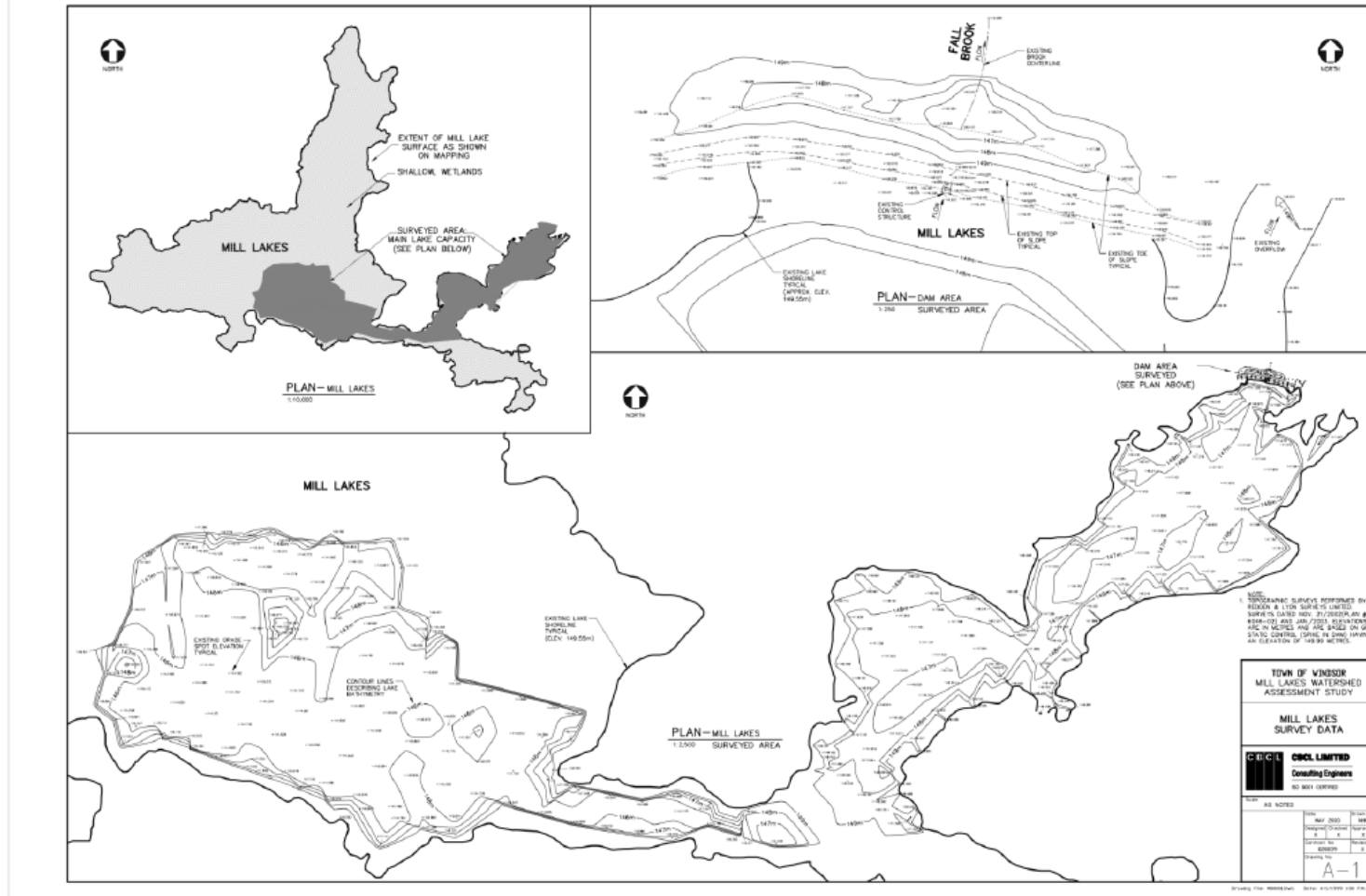


Measured Depths in Inches



Water Utility Source Water Fieldwork

2003 Survey



Water Utility Source Water Fieldwork



Drone Photos and Videos

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Water Utility Source Water Fieldwork



Drone Photos and Videos

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Thinking ahead ...

Council Policy Adaptation In Response to Public Need

November 2025

RECOMMENDATION

...that Council endorse expanding the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program in the manner described in Attachment A to the staff report titled “Property Assessed Clean Energy Program Expansion: Adaptation Financing”, dated November 25, 2025, to Council, to include financing for residential climate change adaptation measures with the assistance of SwitchPACE CIC.

AND

...that Council approves allocating \$20,000, from the 2025-26 Climate Action Committee work plan budget, as part of an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for funding to complete a feasibility and design study to expand the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program for residential climate change adaptation measures.

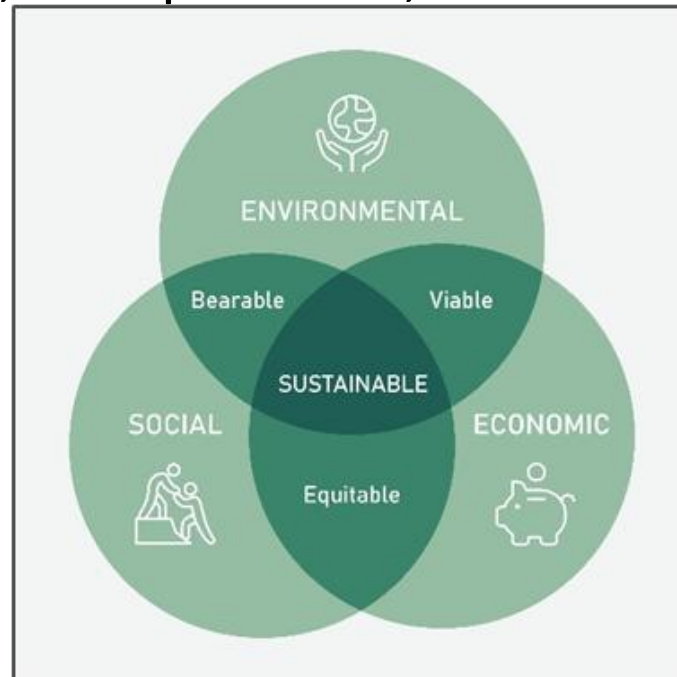


WHRM's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

October 2025 WHRM approved the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).

The IRP will provide a clear, data-driven 25-year roadmap for infrastructure planning and investment, supporting sustainable growth, regulatory compliance, and quality of life for WHRM residents.

It will focus primarily on water and wastewater systems, with additional consideration of stormwater, transportation, and asset management.



The IRP will enable WHRM to operate more strategically, sustainably, and efficiently — delivering better value to the community while making the most of limited resources. Some key benefits of the IRP include the following:



- Long-term Sustainability
- Improved Decision-Making
- Strategic Investment
- Transparency and Accountability
- Better Service Delivery
- Holistic Resource Management
- Enhanced Coordination
- Risk Management & Resilience
- Regulatory and Policy Compliance



In addition ...

West Hants Regional Municipality commissioned a new 5.5-million-liter Water Tower tank in January 2026.

It serves Three Mile Plains, Windsor, and non municipally serviced West Hants residents through water hauler stations.

- Improves service consistency and system reliability
- Increases storage compacity
- Enhances fire protection
- Positions the municipality for future growth and development



Thank you !

QUESTIONS?



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Presenters:

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Chief Administrative Officer, Mark Phillips

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