

**September 20 membership meeting:** MIIWSS has scheduled a tour of the two CRD water systems treatment facilities for Skana Gate and Surfside (Wooddale) on Wednesday, September 20, from 2 p.m. to 4p.m., with Gary Hendren, CRD Local Services Coordinator and Murray McCallum, Waterworks Local Services Supervisor as our guides.

The membership should meet at the corner of Wooddale and Village Bay Rd, by the real estate office/ferry terminal no later than 1:45 p.m. We will go first to the Surfside facility, then to the Skana facility. We will meet after for Q&A over coffee at the Church House. If you wish to join us, please be sure your membership is current as we are not able to accommodate guests.

Many thanks to all who visited our Fall Fair booth to meet one on one with the three consultants, or share your concerns about water issues on our island.

The comments expressed this year showed far more overall concern for water issues, a definite focused attention on water consumption/conservation , and, we had loads of 'how to' questions. We will try, next year, to have our island technical people on hand throughout the day to help in any way we can, or offer some guidance as to where to look for assistance.

Well production comments ran the gamut from dry to artesian depending on island location, but the prolonged drought had that topic first on nearly everyone's list. For those who arrived after our supply of MB Labs well test kits disappeared, we will be restocked for our water workshop next spring. It is rewarding that so many islanders are starting to get the coliform, and base metals and mineral testing for their wells, and are keeping good records. (Note one of the benefits below under hydrofracturing). The Fair is always fun, and we appreciate the input and opinions. Thanks to all who offered their encouragement and the many who joined MIIWSS for the first time and/or signed on for the well mapping project.

By the time this hits the mailboxes, we should, with any luck, be nearing the end of the drought season. Please remember that it will take a fair bit of rain to saturate the ground, satisfy the vegetation, and percolate through to our aquifers. Depending on the soil make-up, it could be two years before the benefit of rainfall reaches the water table. So continue to be gentle with your well, private or system, and monitor your consumption in general for while yet.

**Well Hydrofracturing:** A topic for thought and discussion

The growing practice of hydrofracturing of wells in an attempt to increase production is coming under closer scrutiny. MIIWSS recently sent a letter to the Ministry of Environment requesting that the practice cease on the Gulf Islands.

For those who are hearing the word for the first time, when a drilled well is hydrofractured, one method used is the placing of a seal above and below the productive area of the well . High pressure water is injected through a pipe to expand/clear/fracture the veins and aquifers. The expectations/hopes would be that the well production will increase. There are no requirements for distances from the ocean or neighbouring wells, no bonds required to cover aquifer damage, no required recording with, or permission from any Ministry, or notification of neighbours or siting of their wells.

The danger of opening up the aquifer to salt water intrusion, ruining that particular well, a neighbours well, or, possibly, the aquifer upon which an entire community may depend, makes the practice of hydrofracturing a questionable practice at best. If flow is redirected or increased, the subject well may benefit, but the neighbours well may have reduced production, no production, or a higher salinity count.

The practice originated in the oil drilling business, and its popularity in the water well drilling industry has grown over the past few years. With ever increasing pressures of population growth, leading to ever increasing demand for water on stressed aquifers, the practice becomes very dangerous for our supply of potable water.

While it could be said that an owner of a damaged well may take the driller, or original well owner to court, unless one has very detailed and well kept records of his/her well spanning years of production,

with quality, quantity, and production details, there is no paper trail to prove damage. Given that we are situated on rocks surrounded by salt water, drilling more and more wells, it is hardly a gamble we think we should be taking in the Gulf Islands. `

**MIIWSS moving forward.**

The response to the well mapping project has been very rewarding and we will begin mapping by GPS and testing for conductivity in October. Since the well must be drawing at the time, we will contact each owner for a convenient appointment.

The BCWWA Leak Detection Course for Saturday, September 30 at the Ag Hall has room for anyone wishing to enroll. The course will credit .6 CEUs for operator certification maintenance.

Mark Sunday, November 19, 1p.m. at the Ag Hall ,on your calendar for Barry Boettger, BC Drinking Water Officer ( one of four in BC) speaking at a membership meeting on legislation as it affects private well owners and organized systems. Barry has many, many years of experience in government and its relation to the water industry, and is an entertaining, excellent and informative speaker. We will relax over pre-holiday season pleasantries while Barry answers our questions.

Saturday, April 28, 2007, 3rd Annual SGI Water Workshop plans are well underway. To date we have suppliers, speakers from the insurance industry as they relate to the changes for water purveyors ,(this huge expense affects the taxes of each homeowner in organized systems), water filtration and treatment, conservation devices and low flush toilet construction differences, and the Ministry of the Environment on well sealing and groundwater legislation. MoE would also be the government arm that deals with well hydrofracturing legislation. Details will be published as speakers are added to the agenda, so mark the date on your calendar.

Memberships in MIIWSS are available for \$5.00 by contacting Mary Cooper, or Diane Plucinak.

Mary Cooper, Vice Chair,  
MIIWSS Program Director