

# Dennis Water District

Board of Water Commissioners

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Paul F. Prue, *Chairman*  
Charles F. Crowell  
Peter L. McDowell

## Main-Line News

[www.denniswater.org](http://www.denniswater.org)

Appointed by Water Commissioners

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David Larkowski, *Superintendent*  
Sheryl A McMahon, *Clerk & Treasurer*  
James Ritchie, *Asst. Superintendent*

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## District Proposes Drought Management Plan

The District is working on developing a Drought Management Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide the District with a tool for monitoring of potential drought conditions and develop standard operating procedures to respond to drought conditions.

In support of water management efforts, the District has developed this draft Plan in accordance with the standards set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. This Plan is intended to help the District in determining when drought conditions occur for the District's specific system and location. Drought management by the District compliments the efforts taken by the state on a regional level. Implementation of a drought plan customized to the District is necessary since the conditions and effects of drought are site specific.

Massachusetts is a relatively water rich state with regular precipitation and stable surface water and groundwater supplies. There are times when short and long term drought conditions can occur. These droughts can last for months or years. The state experienced a multi-year drought event from 1999 to 2002. The state issued a drought advisory in December 2001 and then a drought watch in March 2002. Cape Cod experienced below normal precipitation and groundwater levels during this period.

The goals of the drought management plan are to:

- ◆ Provide guidelines for monitoring of system specific drought related conditions;
- ◆ Establish benchmarks for normal and dry conditions;
- ◆ Provide guidelines for assessment of various system specific drought conditions;
- ◆ Develop standard operating procedures to respond to drought conditions.

Current conditions using the newly proposed District Plan have Dennis in a "Normal" condition. Groundwater levels as well as precipitation are above the 75 percentile of historic data.

Under Normal conditions customers have no restrictions and are asked to simply use common sense. *Remember the more you use the more you pay.*

### CREDIT CARDS ARE NOW ACCEPTED

Customers can now pay with MasterCard or Discover credit cards at the District office. Coming soon—Visa will be accepted through the website and at the office.



## EMERGENCY POWER PROJECT

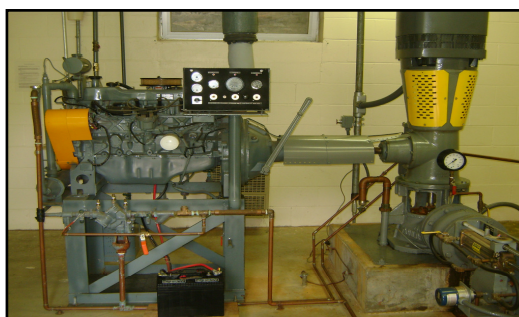
In early September 2010, District personnel mobilized emergency measures in anticipation of Hurricane Earl.

While making preparations, there was a realization that the District's emergency power generating capacity was not up to the test. Fortunately, Earl ended up going out to sea giving management an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive

assessment of the District's emergency equipment and response procedures. The analysis showed that the two new treatment plants could certainly manage full operation during power outages, it was the older pumping stations with older auxiliary engines that could not. There are conflicts between older and newer technologies used in the stations which cannot be synchronized. There is also a serious lack of adequate lighting, operational meters and safety equipment. Managing



100 kw Standby Generator—Station #21



Auxiliary engine — Station #19  
Run pump only—does not provide for lights  
or electronic equipment

emergency operations was labor intensive and fraught with otherwise avoidable risks.

At the Annual Meeting in April, voters approved the purchase of five standby generators. The new

generators will enable the District to provide water at 50% of pumping capacity and with the planned installation of two more next year, pumping capacity will be at 62%. The estimated cost of the first phase of the project is \$180,000 and the second phase at \$70,000.

This project is an important component of the District's Emergency Response Plan. There are any number of emergency situations that would necessitate the use of auxiliary power in order to provide water to the citizens and visitors of Dennis. This project increases our capacity to adequately and safely meet that need and is greatly appreciated.

# Help With Hydrants

When was the last time you noticed the closest fire hydrant to your property? Can it easily be seen or is it hidden by overgrowth? The District owns and maintains more than 1,600 hydrants. Most hydrants are easily seen and have good access. Maintaining accessibility and the aesthetic and mechanical condition of hydrants is an inexhaustible task. If there is a hydrant near your home or business, any assistance you can provide in making sure that it is clear of excess vegetation and landscape features would be greatly appreciated.

Most property owners do a nice job at landscaping and maintaining their property including fire hydrants in close proximity. Over time, some plantings or natural areas can begin to hide hydrants from view. We are asking customers to trim back these plantings so that area will be pleasing to them and to their neighbors, rather than have it done by District personnel. If you should feel comfortable assuming this task, a 'good rule of thumb' to use is if you can easily walk around the hydrant without stepping over or around plantings and that it is easily seen while driving down the road, then the fire hydrant is essentially visible and accessible.

All hydrants have a snow stake on them. If you notice that one is missing, please feel free to call the office or email a message through our website.



*Imagine trying to find this hydrant in a hurry?*

## Help With Hydrants Information and Guidelines

### DO

- ◆ Keep hydrants free of snow and ice.
- ◆ Keep hydrants free of overgrowth (grass, weeds, and ornamental plantings).
- ◆ Report any damaged or leaking hydrants to the Dennis Water District 508-398-3351.
- ◆ Report any vehicles blocking hydrants to the Dennis Police 508-394-1313.
- ◆ Report suspicious use of a hydrant to the Dennis Water District 508-398-3351.

### DO NOT

- ◆ Paint hydrants
- ◆ Alter or attempt to repair hydrants

**Thank you. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.**

## Wind Power Update

At the April 26, 2011, Annual District Meeting voters rejected three warrant articles that would have laid the foundation for considering the development of a wind energy project for the District and the Town of Dennis. One article sought permission to file for special legislation in order to generate renewable energy and to sell any excess power for the benefit of the District. Another article sought special legislation to build two turbines on protected water-district lands and another article sought authorization from the District to allow the Town of Dennis to build and operate its own turbine (one of the two to be authorized) on District property for its own municipal power needs.

The Board of Water Commissioners will likely revive its initiative over the next several months to develop a wind energy project for the benefit of the ratepayers and determine if placing the matter before the District voters once again is in order.

## METER TAMPERING No longer a minor offence

Last Fall, Governor Patrick signed into law a bill increasing the fine for meter tampering from \$100 to a fine equal to triple the amount of damages or \$1,000, whichever is greater. The law also provides for damages to include the value of any water used and the cost of labor and equipment for repairs or replacement.

Virtually all water meters installed by the District are sealed. Once the seal is broken it becomes evidence that the water meter has been tampered with or removed. The District relies on this as evidence in assessing meter tampering fines. Paragraph 5 of Section 2: Water Meters of the District's Rules and Regulations states:

***"No one other than authorized District personnel is permitted to remove the water meter. No part of the meter shall be tampered with – no nuts loosened, etc. Meter tampering is subject to fines, costs and penalties in accordance with Massachusetts General Law chapter 165, section 11, as amended."***

Customers are warned that the removal of a meter is a serious offence and the appropriate fines will be assessed for each case discovered. If you have removed the meter in the past, even though it may only be to winterize your property, it is considered illegal. Please contact the District office to schedule a seasonal removal and re-installation.

**Trivia Question:** In 1914, the fine for tampering with a water meter was set at \$100 and remained so for 96 years. What is the approximate purchasing power of that same \$100 when the law to increase it was passed in November 2010.

**Answer:** Approximately \$4.63 (+/-)