

POLICY

W-13

NICHOLSON AQUIFER WATER QUALITY POLICY

Preamble

The Nicholson Aquifer is a source of water for approximately 350 residents in the unincorporated community of Nicholson, which includes the Nicholson Elementary School. The property owners in the area use on-site septic systems to dispose of their liquid waste and use private groundwater wells to obtain their water. Between 2005 and 2013, the CSRD carried out water quality monitoring of the Nicholson Aquifer due to septic influences detected in the water. The CSRD held a number of community meetings and provided mail out information of the monitoring program to advise property owners that septic influences were detected in their water.

The CSRD has historically funded the Nicholson Aquifer water quality monitoring program through the special project fund. In 2014, the CSRD advised property owners that in order to continue the monitoring program, or to put in place any mitigation measures, property owners would have to informally petition the CSRD to establish a local service for that purpose. Property owners did not express interest in establishing a service and, in 2014, the CSRD discontinued the monitoring program.

In 2017, the Nicholson Elementary School was placed on a Do Not Use order by the health authority. In 2019, Interior Health requested and contributed to financing two additional sample tests of the Nicholson Aquifer. To date property owners within the Nicholson Aquifer have not initiated an informal petition to request a service be established to mitigate groundwater quality or to monitor water quality.

Policy

The CSRD will undertake the following steps to mitigate the effects of the deteriorating water quality in the Nicholson Aquifer:

1. Groundwater quality monitoring in the Nicholson Aquifer will not be funded through the special project fund beyond December 31, 2019. Groundwater quality monitoring will only be carried out as a service, with an establishing bylaw, paid for by the benefitting property owners within the service area.
2. The CSRD has advised the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health of its concerns with the Nicholson Aquifer water quality and has requested that the province undertake water quality monitoring in this area.
3. The CSRD has advised the Medical Health Officer of its concerns with the Nicholson Aquifer water quality and has requested that the Medical Health Officer consider if the situation constitutes a health hazard or an impediment to public health.
4. The CSRD will publish the historical results of the monitoring on its website and will inform the property owners who rely on the Nicholson Aquifer of this resource.

5. The CSRD will undertake a feasibility study to identify the costs associated with establishment of a community water system for the Nicholson community. Upon completion, the results of the study will be shared with the community.
6. The CSRD will proceed with an application for senior level capital grant funding to establish the service of community water system upon receipt of an informal petition from property owners representing at least 60% of the community. Upon approval of senior grant funds, the CSRD will proceed with a formal assent of the electors.
7. The CSRD will proceed with formal assent of the electors to establish the service of Nicholson Aquifer Water Quality Monitoring upon receipt of an informal petition from property owners representing at least 60% of the community.

AUGUST 15, 2019