



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PROPOSED SPENCES BRIDGE WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE

It is our understanding that there are many questions and rumours circulating around the community regarding the petition and the proposed upgrade of the Spences Bridge water system. The questions that have been brought to our attention and our responses are provided below:

1. Q. Will the TNRD be installing water meters?
A. NO.

2. Q. If the TNRD will be installing water meters, will I have to pay \$800 for the meter like I have heard?
A. NO.

3. Q. Why can't we keep Murray Creek as our water supply?
A. The *British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act* (DWPA) and associated Regulations came into force in 2003. The Interior Health Authority (IHA) administers and enforces the Regulations and the Act in this region. One of the requirements of the DWPA is the eventual need for treatment by filtration of all surface water sources. Murray Creek is a surface water source and is susceptible to high turbidity levels particularly in the spring or after a heavy rainfall. As such, a treatment system will be required if it is continued to be used as a water source. The use of a groundwater source eliminates the need for a filtration system provided the groundwater quality meets all drinking water standards.

4. Q. Can't the Spences Bridge Water Board apply for the same funding as the TNRD?
A. No. Infrastructure funding under past and proposed funding programs must be applied for by an incorporated municipality or local government.

5. Q. Will I have to pay more money to have my house hooked up to the new system?
A. No. The standard TNRD hook-up fee of \$250 will be waived for existing users of the Spences Bridge water system.

2. Q. I think the costs of this project are going to balloon out of control. What can be done to assure me they are not going to?

A. Given the current economic boom in BC, there is no question the costs of construction are increasing and the longer we wait, the higher the costs will be. The costs for this project were estimated in 2002. When the grant application was filed in 2005 the factors of inflation and the potential for increasing construction costs were considered and the estimates increased. There is no guarantee that costs will not continue to rise; however, the budget for the project is limited to the approved grant amount of \$777,333 (2/3) and the required resident contribution to cover the remaining 1/3. **By law, the TNRD is not permitted to incur debt without public consent.** That is why the petition asks for authorization to borrow the balance of the required funds for the project.

7. Q. Why is the TNRD estimating such high costs? I think it shouldn't cost so much just to drill a well for instance.

A. The estimated costs are for the following infrastructure upgrades:

- A new reservoir;
- Distribution system improvements;
- A pipeline bridge crossing; and
- Development of a new well source.

The estimated well development costs of \$250,000 includes drilling of test well(s) and a production well, pump installation and pumphouse construction. A system in conjunction with the Cook's Ferry Band would eliminate the need for development of a new well source, as they have already found a reliable groundwater source capable of meeting the needs of the entire Spences Bridge community.

8. Q. I think that if the TNRD takes over the water system, it is just the beginning. I think they are going to force Spences Bridge into getting sewers and curbs and all sorts of things the town doesn't need or want. What about this?

A. The TNRD is involved in the process of assuming responsibility for the Spences Bridge water system because the Spences Bridge Water Board asked us to. No other services such as sewers are considered, or would be forced upon the residents of Spences Bridge.

9. Q. If we turn this proposal down, there will be another grant available to us next year, won't there?

A. No. The government funding for this project (2/3 of the estimated cost) was approved in November 2005 through the BC Community Water Improvement Program (BCCWIP), a provincially funded initiative. The claim period for the funds is five years; however, the deadline for submission of claims is March 31, 2010. After this date the granted funds will no longer be available. The deadline for applying to the BCCWIP was February 28, 2005. Currently there is no other federal or provincial infrastructure funding program in place. *which project*



10. Q.
A.

Why can't we just leave things the way they are?

There are many reasons changes to the Spences Bridge water system are required. The *British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act (DWPA)* has imposed regulations on the need for treatment of surface water sources to protect human health, and the need for a certified operator to maintain the system. In addition, the costs of liability insurance are increasing, and the distribution system requires upgrading to meet current standards.

11. Q.
A.

Why can't we just improve the Murray Creek water system?

The continued use of Murray Creek will require construction of a filtration system, and the capital and associated maintenance costs would make the existing system expensive. The development of a groundwater source is a less expensive option. In addition, the Cook's Ferry Band has already found a reliable groundwater source that has the capacity to meet the needs of the entire community and the opportunity exists to work in conjunction with them (and have access to additional federal funding, if needed) to construct one system to serve the entire community, and take advantage of the potential cost savings one system may present.

12. Q.

If we partner with Cook's Ferry Band, what's to keep them from shutting off our water? Or charging us more for water every year?

A. The system will be controlled by the TNRD, therefore connection and tolls will be controlled by the TNRD.

13. Q.

Our current system has 'dead ends' where the pipes do not complete a circuit. This leads to poor pressure and other problems. Will these be fixed?

A. A detailed assessment and system design will be completed prior to construction and any system deficiencies such as "dead-ends" will be addressed.

14. Q.

Will our water quality be better than it has been? Will we have good, clean drinking water all year round?

A. Whether a combined system in conjunction with the Cook's Ferry Band will be constructed or if an independent groundwater well is developed, the water supply will likely be a groundwater source. The use of groundwater will improve quality by utilizing a water source that is not susceptible to high turbidity levels in the spring, as is surface water. If the continued use of Murray Creek is the only option available for a source of water, a water filtration system would be required which would also result in improved water quality year-round.