

September Church Ranches Water Report

We've received questions from residents regarding the low lake levels. As we transition from summer to fall we need to winterize our lake system. In order for our parks manager Barry to manage this process the lake levels must be at a relatively low level; this is done every year around this time. Barry is closely monitoring the lake level and we will only buy water this late in the season if the levels become too low for the winterization process. Purchasing water is very expensive.

We are planning to shut down the lake system around [Thanksgiving](#) this year, meaning the stream will stop flowing permanently at this time. Please note that the stream is occasionally turned off for short periods throughout the year if we need to equalize the lake levels; this allows for a gravity feed of water from Cheyenne Lake down to Cody Lake. We realize that water levels in the canal are very low at present, however as noted above, it does not make sense to purchase more water at this time, especially given the high cost to do so, when we will have to flush it out in a few weeks.

Some residents have suggested providing water to the Bearspaw Golf Course as a way of bringing fresh water into our system. Recently the Bearspaw GC built a pipeline to the RVWater COOP and they are now able to buy water directly from the COOP and get it much quicker than going through us. For the HOA to sell water to the GC, we would need to install a valve and meter to measure flow, apply for a provincial water licence (needed to sell water in Alberta) and convince the GC to buy water from us rather than from the COOP. The HOA has been working with the GC on this as part of a water management plan, but we are not close to being able to move water through the system as freely as we once did.

Aeration will cease around freeze-up. The aeration system was put in place to increase the health of our lakes; one benefit of aeration is reducing lake algae. Our lakes were also treated for algae in July as part of our annual maintenance program. The size and number of fish present, and the continuing positive results from our water testing program, assure us the lake water quality is very safe. Remember, some algae is necessary for a healthy ecology!

In discussion with our lake expert at Smoky Trout Farm, we've learned many lakes in the Calgary area have seen an increase in green algae. The reason for this increase is unknown, the Lakes committee will consider a full chemical analysis that will guide our 2023 treatment plans. It's worth mentioning that the invasive carp fish, who are bottom feeders and disturb lake sediment, are one of the biggest reasons our lakes are not as clear as they once were. This is why carp are the only fish you can keep from our lakes! Trout are catch and release.

Maintaining our lakes in a healthy and safe manner is a big priority for the CRHA Board, and we hire experts in this field for advice and assistance. Managing healthy lakes and maintaining a functioning lake system is a fascinating, but complex and constantly evolving project. If you have

expertise in this area, and would like to help, please reach out and volunteer to join our Water Committee. We'd love your assistance.

We hope this explains the current low water levels and some of our seasonal lake operations. Enjoy the lovely late summer weather!