

Watts & Drops

Newsletter of the Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments

December 2018

LELD Protected System from Squirrel Boom

The 2018 squirrel population boom might have caused more power outages this year had it not been for LELD's proactive maintenance.

Squirrels were already the leading cause of power outages in town, even before the 2018 boom. Starting in 2015, LELD crews have been actively installing squirrel guards in the electrical system to prevent the critters from touching live wires. As this year comes to a close, the number of outages attributed to squirrels was 13, half the number of 2017.



New Electric Vehicle Charging Station Added

LELD installed its 4th electric vehicle charging station at the Reuben Hoar Library on Shattuck Street in Littleton. The other charging stations are at LELWD's main office, 39 Ayer Road, and two at Acton Toyota on Great Road.

Littleton and Boxborough residents can charge for free by registering their electric vehicle with LELWD's Green Rewards Program, which offers discounts and rebates on products that save energy and water. Other EV owners may use the chargers for 12 cents per kilowatt hour and a parking fee of \$2 per hour that starts 30 minutes after the vehicle is fully charged.

For more information on the charging stations and to register an EV, visit lelwd.com's Green Rewards page or call 978-540-2222.

LWD Files with Supreme Judicial Court As Next Step to Use Nagog Pond

The Littleton Water Department has taken the next step toward using Nagog Pond as a water source. It has requested the state Supreme Judicial Court initiate the process to calculate the value of "water damages," if any, due to Concord when Littleton commences using Nagog Pond as a water source.

An 1884 state law preserved the rights of Littleton and Acton to future use of Nagog Pond, which is split equally by the town border, while allowing Concord to use the water until such time as it was needed by the other towns. The 1884 act states that Littleton must compensate Concord for "water damages" in connection with using Nagog Pond as a water supply. In addition, the Acts of 1911 granted Littleton the right to supply itself with water, including through the taking and holding of waters and water rights "within the limits of the town."

"Upon completion of the procedures set forth in the 1884 Act, Littleton will be entitled to take from Nagog Pond the full amount of water that is necessary for the needs of its residents and businesses," states LWD's filing with the SJC, the state's highest court.

Beginning last February, LWD officials attempted to reach an agreement with Concord, but after a handful of negotiating sessions, Concord officials declined to participate further. The 1884 Act established a process for the SJC to appoint three independent commissioners to determine if there are "water damages" and calculate the value.

"In times of increasing water scarcity and a growing population, Littleton now

needs to identify and develop new water supplies and intends to take and hold at least a part of Nagog Pond's waters toward that purpose," according to LWD's filing with the SJC. "Concord, meanwhile, has developed alternative water supply sources over the last century. It now also has emergency water capacity available to it from neighboring Acton and Bedford (the latter connected to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority) in times of true need."

The LWD filing, prepared by the law firm Miyares and Harrington, LLP, states the Legislature "explicitly limited those 'water damages' to only damages in a just and proportionate amount of whatever Concord had previously paid to 'any persons or corporations for the taking of water rights from [Nagog Pond] or the outlet thereof ...'"

The filing further states the Legislature "declined to require the payment of any additional 'water damages' or 'damages' in any other form to Concord should Littleton or Acton, or both, choose to exercise their superior water supply rights."

Littleton serves 2,989 residential customers and 498 commercial customers from six groundwater wells. Since 2010, Littleton's average daily withdrawals for public water supply in any given year have been as high as 1.23 million gallons per day, with the maximum on a single day of 2.12 mgd. By 2040, the maximum daily demand could reach 2.54 mgd.

For the latest information on LWD's Nagog Pond project and to read the court filings and related exhibits, visit lelwd.com and follow the Water Department tab to the Nagog Pond Updates page.

Visit www.LELWD.com to learn more about us. Like LELWD on 

State Recognizes Littleton, Westford Plan to Restore Stony Brook

An initiative of the LWD has been designated a priority project by the Commonwealth, making it eligible for grant money and technical services.

LWD, working with the Westford water department, has developed a plan to improve the streamflow through the 38-square-mile Stony Brook watershed. The priority



Timing the release of water from dams and other impediments, including the outflow pipe at Spectacle Pond, is part of a plan to improve streamflow through the 38-mile Stony Brook watershed to better mimic natural conditions.

project designation is given by the state's Department of Fish and Game to projects that restore healthy habitat while also helping communities prevent storm damage, address aging infrastructure, and improve outdoor recreation.

The streamflow restoration plan will coordinate release of water from dams and impediments on Stony Brook to better mimic natural conditions as it meanders from Littleton to Westford, and on into Chelmsford and the Merrimack River.

Littleton and Westford, working with Geosyntec Consultants, have worked with the dam owners in a cooperative and collaborative effort.

Benefits of the project will include:

- Improvements to the recharge of the aquifer that serves Littleton and Westford public water supplies.
- Restoration of a more natural streamflow in areas of the watershed that are considered critical for rare species.
- Assistance with flood control during wet periods and increased flows during droughts.