

Stonebridge

Well Water Czar Procedures

By

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January, 2013

Note: I accept no responsibility for any of the information provided.

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1.General

The quality of the well water in Stonebridge is critical to both the use and value of our properties. If you have no water or the water flow is unreliable or there is a leak somewhere in the system, this is a major issue for all cabins impacted.

I understand that most water wells in Stonebridge are shared wells. This means that more than one cabin uses the same well water. In our case, seven cabins share the same water well.

With cabin ownership changes, new owners may know very little about their water source.

- Where is the well?
- How deep is the well?
- How many gallons per minute does the well provide?
- Has the well even run dry?
- Where are the pipes that carry the water to each cabin?
- Where are the valves that control the flow of water in each segment of the pipe system?
- Where is the electrical meter that is used by Blue Ridge Electric to charge for electricity used for the well pump?
- How much does it cost per cabin per month for electricity to run the well water pump?
- How do we know if the electrical usage is up and when to be worried about a possible water leak?

So, why did I put this information together? I think it would be beneficial for all Stonebridge owners to better understand their well water characteristics. This also may be of great value to those who have the “Well Water Czar” **volunteer** role for their well. Note ~ there is no intent on my part for the Stonebridge POA to take on any role associated with well water.

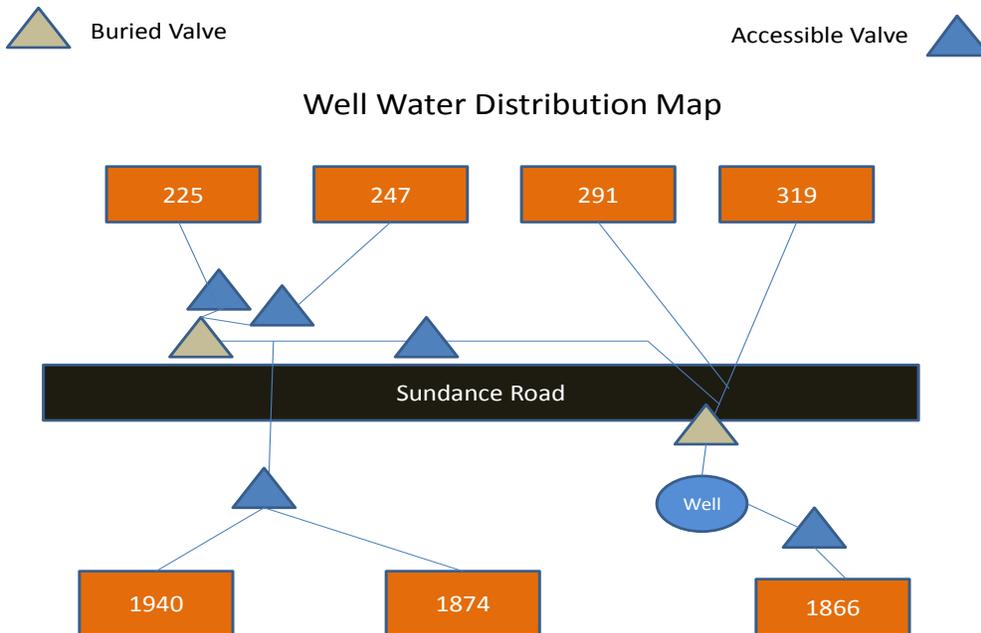
2. Who is Responsible for Your Well Water?

It would seem reasonable that each cabin owner take one or two year time frame as the **volunteer** responsible for looking after your well. We are calling this person the “Well Water Czar”. In our case, that would mean that each cabin owner would be the Well Water Czar once every seven (or fourteen years), as we have seven cabins sharing the same well. This is only a suggestion as other factors may limit participation of some of the cabin owners.

3. Well Water Czar Responsibilities

The **volunteer** Well Water Czar is the single point of contact for well water questions and issues. Since this is a **volunteer** position, there are no authorized responsibilities of the position.

- Single point of contact
- Manage the electrical billing charges from Blue Ridge Electric
- Manage the daily e-mails from Blue Ridge Electric showing last fifteen days of usage. Look for unusual usage patterns that might indicate a problem with the well water system.
- Test the water once or twice a year for contaminants
- If needed, add bleach to the well water
- Communicate to the other owners about the well water status
- Make sure the well head pump area is clear of insects
- Make sure the well head pump area is properly insulated for the winter months
- Know the valve layouts from the well to all cabins (see below)



4. Shared Resource Consequences

In our case, there are seven cabins that share the same well water. If there are any issues with the well, including the piping to each of the cabins, this will impact all seven cabins.

One interesting question relates to the portion of the system on a cabin's property. Is any repair on a property the total responsibility of that owner or is this a shared responsibility? While there is likely a legal position which we did not investigate, we decided that a shared system equals a shared cost even if the problem is only on one cabin's property. Further, we decided that the demarcation point between equally shared and the total responsibility of the cabin's owner, is the pipe seal at the water intake valve right next to the cabin. If the problem is the water valve itself or anywhere inside the cabin, that is the total responsibility of the cabin owner.

We also decided that the hiring of a contractor to fix a problem on the property was the responsibility of that cabin owner. Once the problem is fixed, all cabin owners equally share in payment of the total cost to repair equally. It is important

to also understand that the property must be put back as part of the repair to the same condition as it was before the work started. This includes landscaping.

5. Contractors

While there may be others out there, these two individuals displayed great skill in repairing our well water system. There are:

- Jamie Woods – plumber
- Denton Hart – piping expert

We used these contractors twice in 2012. In the first case, there was a need for extensive investigation to isolate a problem that was indicated by monitoring the high electrical usage e-mail from Blue Ridge Electric. In particular, a number of new valves were installed to enable sections of the piping to be isolated.

In the second case, only Denton was hired to fix a leak on one property.

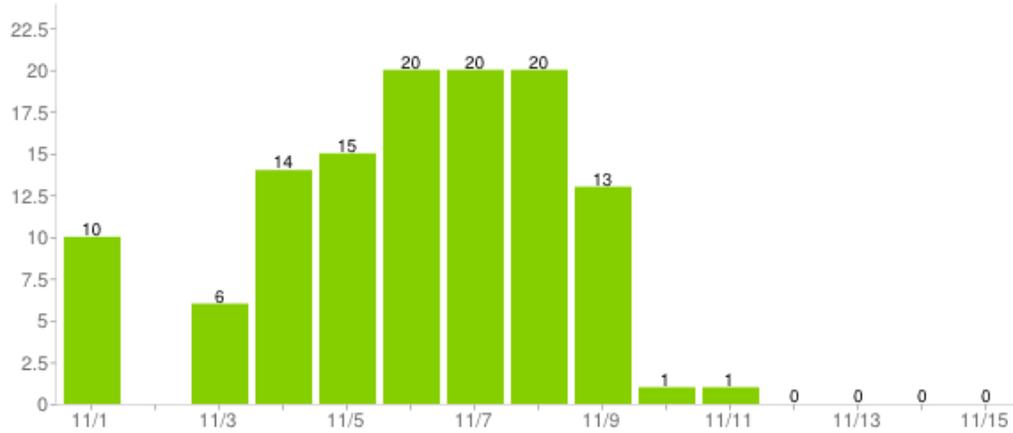
As examples, the total cost of the first effort was about \$2800 and the total cost of the second was about \$400. In each case the total cost was shared equally by all seven cabins.

6. Annual Maintenance Requirements

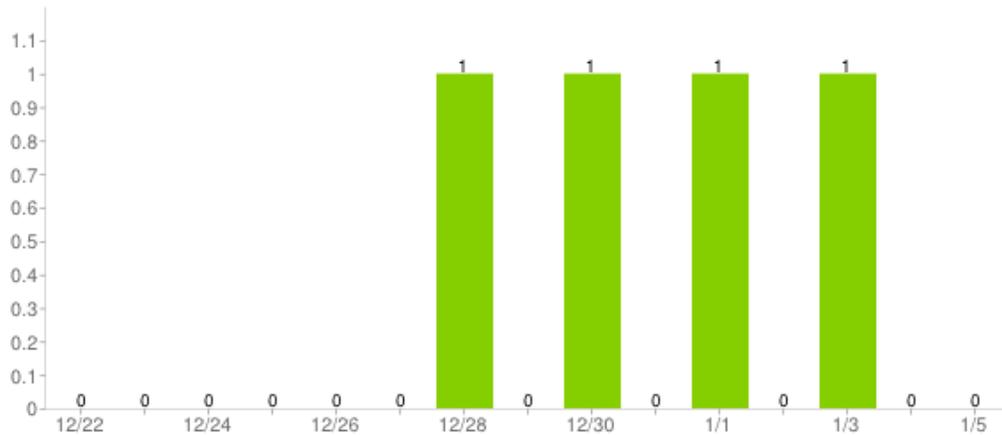
There are some normal and not unusual maintenance items to be performed during the year:

- Monitor the Blue Ridge electrical usage via the daily e-mail looking for unusual usage. Normal usage is around 1 KWH per day. When we had issues with leakage, the rate per day increased to about 20 KWH per day (see below images 1 & 2).
- Once or twice per year, have the water tested. If there are problems with the well water, the testing authority may advise the addition of bleach to the water at the well head. Notify cabin owners before adding the bleach.
 - **Water-testing**
 - Bacterial testing is normally done once or twice per year

- In Jefferson 336-246-2165. Bacterial test \$20.00 cash or check
- Check the well water head area for insects and proper levels of insulation every fall.



Above image shows daily electrical usage growing to 20 KWHs. This is very high and indicates a leak.



Above image shows a fairly normal electrical distribution of either 0 or 1 KWHs per day.

7. Blue Ridge Payment and Monitoring Options

Blue Ridge Electric has provided a meter dedicated to the well water pump. Make sure you know where this meter is located. In our case, it is located along side a meter dedicated to one of the cabins.

It is the responsibility of the well water Czar to pay the monthly electric bills. The recommended method is to pay in advance for one year and not have to manage monthly.

Also, set up a free daily e-mail showing the last 15 days of electric usage. This allows the Well Water Czar to look for unusual usage and address any problems quickly before the problems severely impact all cabin water usage.

8. Building a Fund for Unforeseen Major Maintenance

We decided to start building a reserve fund of monies to address future major maintenance requirements right up to drilling a new well.

With seven cabins we started small in 2012 with a payment from each cabin of \$50 per year. So, to date, our fund is only \$350 dollars. The Well Water Czar controls these funds. After ten years we will have \$3500 in our reserve fund.

Note that we chose to pay for these recent two maintenance issues by having each cabin pay their equal share. We did not use the reserve fund at all.

We also collected \$50 from each cabin to pay Blue Ridge Electric for electrical usage to run the pump. This translated to a cost of about \$4 per month for water to each cabin.

9. Your cabin water and drain procedures

It is very important to properly shut off your water and open your drain valves. This extends to any guests you may allow to use your cabin. There have been a number of cases where, upon departing, folks opened the drain valve and left the water on. This results in high water usage where the water goes into the cabin and then right out the drain. *The shared well water system therefore has low or*

no water pressure until the water valve is closed. **Please make sure that anyone using your cabin is aware of these procedures.**

10. Inside Your Cabin

It is important that you fix any water leaks inside your cabin. In particular, ensure your toilets do not leak. This may require changing the flapper valve, as an example.

Also, if you don't have one, consider adding a whole house filter with a clear outside so you can see the condition of the filter. These whole house filters can be purchased at local companies such as Lowe's or Wal-Mart. We had ours installed by a plumber. These filters remove small rust colored sand particles from the water.