



**By Deborah McDermott**  
**[dmcdermott@seacoastonline.com](mailto:dmcdermott@seacoastonline.com)**

Posted Mar. 31, 2015 at 6:59 PM

**YORK** — An annual rite of spring in the York Beach area – the opening of seasonal homes for the coming summer months – could be delayed this year into May, as York Water District employees deal with mounds of rock hard snow that’s impeding their work.

Workers are using acetylene torches in some cases to melt through the ice, a situation Superintendent Don Neumann said he hasn’t seen this late in the season in all the years he’s worked in the field.

“It’s the worst we’ve seen in many, many years,” he said. “With the hard winter we’ve had, there’s still a lot of frost in the ground and a lot of ice out there.”

York was particularly hard-hit this winter, with more than 100 inches of snow falling during the winter months. Several storms impacted York more than other coastal towns, a fact Neumann said may not be generally well known.

“People outside the region can’t imagine what we’re talking about. We got blanketed this year,” he said, adding record cold temperatures in March exacerbated the situation because snow hasn’t melted.

The York Water District has about 1,400 seasonal customers who fall into two broad groups – “snow birds” with year-round homes or seasonal home owners on regular water mains; and those mostly in houses behind Long Beach Avenue and the Nubble who get their water from an above-ground line.

Water District workers are having trouble reaching both kinds of customers, said Neumann.

The first group of customers call the Water District to schedule an appointment for water turn-on. In a typical year, it takes one worker a half hour to reinstall the water meter taken out in the fall and restore service. This year, it’s taking two workers a minimum of an hour to do the same work due to the deep snow and ice.

“They have to find the water shut off and then use a torch to melt the ice down into the ground to set the meter,” he said.

The second group, the truly summer residences, pose that challenge plus another – many of them are located on private dirt roads that have not been plowed all winter and remain buried under snow. The water district



maintains 10 miles of above-surface summer lines in York.

“Normally, we start April 6 so we can turn on the summer lines by Patriot’s Day. But we can’t start on the work until the snow is gone,” he said. As a result, the water district has delayed the summer line turn-on until May 4 this year.

“If we can get some serious melting and we can gain access, we plan to expedite the process,” he said.

Seacoastonline Link: <http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20150331/NEWS/150339757/0/SEARCH>