

# YOUR OWN HYDRANT SURVEY

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By Jonathon Barnes

One of the most important tools and data collection in locating leaks and conserving water in a system, is doing a hydrant survey. It will show you the noise throughout your whole system and point you in the direction of consistent issues and even some new ones. Documenting is key.

To start: get a map of your system and take your listening device around to every hydrant and listen to the nut at the top of the hydrant. When listening, if your device is adjustable, make sure to have it set to the same parameters when you visit every hydrant. Sometimes even getting in and out of a vehicle can move dials or press buttons that will alter your listening capabilities or even the overall volume. So be sure to check it every time you listen to a hydrant. You may find some hydrants making a lot of noise and you will want to stop and locate that noise right then. Document the noise level and location of the hydrant or just notate it on your map and move on! Listen to every hydrant first.

Once you've done that, you need to take that noise level data back to the map and start planning your route of locating the issue in the area around the loudest hydrants. You need to locate your lines and be aware of where they run in order to locate the possible main leak or your services to listen to them. In most cases, the first thing to do on any screaming hydrant is to close the guard valve in front of the hydrant to verify if it is the hydrant leaking or further down the main. A lot of times if you have mapped properly, you can see possible issues when you have one particularly loud hydrant and a couple down the line that are not as loud, indicating the

noise is closer to the loudest hydrant. Visually giving you an area to start with. The mapped-out survey itself will give you the points of interest on which you should focus your attention. Whether it is isolating a line to check if the noise goes away and verify the issue on that line or, listening to every service near the area of the loud noise. Hydrant surveys are a great way to find service leaks or a corporation leak where the main and service line start.

Using this hydrant survey to strategically plan your assessment of priority projects is ideal as you get to see and hear where the issues are and a bird's eye view of the area to look at. The whole idea with a hydrant survey is to keep it and keep making moves towards finding those leaks and conserving the water for our systems and our communities. I implore any of you who have a listening device or a neighboring community who has one, ask to borrow theirs and conduct a system hydrant survey. It's simple and gives you an excellent set of data to work from that is easily done in-house and can save you a bundle in water conservation, and we all know that adds up to \$\$\$. Feel free to contact me at [barnes@nyruralwater.org](mailto:barnes@nyruralwater.org) if you would like training on conducting a survey. As we are all here to help each other.



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