



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, November 2024

Welcome to Water on Whidbey November 2024!

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association publishes this monthly newsletter to keep the community up to date with water news. The newsletter is sent to our email list and posted on our website to provide a single place to find this month's news and web content.

Please share this newsletter with your fellow water system board members, commissioners, operators, friends and neighbors, and anyone who drinks water! Encourage them to subscribe to receive it directly to their inbox along with invitations to member meetings and other events.

News from Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

SAVE THE DATE: December Quarterly Meeting (2024 Annual Meeting)

Our next Member Meeting will be on Thursday December 12, 2024 5 pm - 7 pm on ZOOM. All subscribers to this newsletter will receive the Zoom invitation to the meeting around the end of November. If someone forwarded this newsletter to you, consider subscribing here in order to receive the invitation.

December is our Annual Meeting and **we will have a full agenda featuring a Satellite Management Agency (SMA) discussion with representatives of the Office of Drinking Water and NW Natural Water Services.** We are looking for your input on this topic. **Please submit your questions and issues by email no later than December 9th to be part of the discussion.**

In addition, we will be asking for you to vote on the 2025 budget, director elections and would like your input on the 2025 meeting format (zoom vs in-person) along with a training topic. We hope to see you there. Mark it on your calendar!

RECAP: Group B Meetup

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Group B Water Rate survey as well as those of you who attended the Meetup on October 16, 2024. **About 20 members and guests discussed the results of the survey along with various topics such as sea water intrusion, reserve levels, Group B system planning and more.**

Sixteen water systems completed the survey (out of 115 emailed and 588 total in Island County). **The numbers are too low to be statistically meaningful, but the results show a median annual rate of \$400. Most systems are primarily charging a flat rate recovering operating costs. Even though most systems kept a reserve, few are basing it on potential replacement costs.** Follow the link to the Rate Survey Presentation for a full report on the results.

In addition, we heard from the manager of a 3-connection South Whidbey Group B water system who worked out an agreement with Meadow Lake Water Treatment enabling him to retire from self-management.

Julie Robinson (360-302-6996; jrobinson@erwow.org) of Evergreen Rural Water described some of the services she can offer. **Although her main focus is supporting Group A systems, she can include visits to or consultation with Group B systems time permitting.** She recommended the [WA DOH Publication 331-351b, Preventive Maintenance Program Guide for Small Public Water Systems Using Groundwater](#) as a helpful tool to Group B systems.

Aneta Hupfauer of Island County Public Health recommended the [DOH Publication 331-134, Small Water System Management Program Guide](#), and that Group B systems be vigilant in meter reading and **consider consolidation for long term benefits.**

See this [Group B Recap post](#) on the website for highlights and the [Minutes](#), [Rate Survey Presentation](#) or [Full Meeting Video](#) for all the details.

Open Board Position!

WIWSA has one board position open for election in December. **Have you considered applying to be a board member?** For 3 to 4 hours a month you can help promote quality water services within the Whidbey Island community. WIWSA is a focal point for information and training within the community and provides a forum that brings together water systems members with local and state agencies, and industry partners to work on issues together.

Please get in touch by [email](#) if you are interested or just would like to know more. Nominations for the open Director position will be solicited during the upcoming December Member Meeting.

Welcome New Members!

- Arcadia Community Water Association (Group A)
- Hingston Water System (Group B)
- Wildlife Haven Water Association (Group B)

Inviting Camano Island Water Systems and Representatives

Although WIWSA is an association of Whidbey Island water systems, most of WIWSA's focus is applicable across all of Island County. For that reason, **the WIWSA board would like to invite Camano Island water systems board members, service providers and representatives to sign up for the WIWSA newsletter, attend member meetings and consider joining WIWSA as associate members.** We have common issues across the county and hope you will find that WIWSA provides a great opportunity to work on those issues together.

Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program

Evergreen Rural Water offers a one-year QUEST program in addition to the full [Apprenticeship](#) program. **Through QUEST you can receive the training for Level 1 certification in Water Treatment and Water Distribution Management and you'd be eligible to apply for the WIWSA scholarship.** We are actively recruiting applicants for the 2025 Apprenticeship or QUEST program. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2025.

Local municipal and SMA employers are invited to sponsor applicants from their organizations, along with Group A water systems looking to certify back up operators.

We are still looking for help with outreach to employers and educational programs to recruit potential applicants. **If you're interested in assisting the board with this program please contact us by email.**

Billing—Unpaid Annual WIWSA Dues are Overdue

If you haven't paid the annual membership dues for this year, they are overdue. Please contact us by email at treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org at your earliest convenience. Thanks for your support!

PFAS News & Information

- [A PFAS Sandwich](#)

- [Stone, meet water](#)
- [Predictions of groundwater PFAS occurrence at drinking water supply depths in the United States](#)
- [EPA's drinking water limits for PFAS are under threat](#)
- [Island County PFAS information webpage](#)

News from our Partners

Island County

- Within the last month, **Island County hosted three stakeholder workshops to discuss the Climate Resiliency Sub Element for the Comprehensive Plan**. Stakeholders from a variety of organizations (including Randi Perry and John Lovie representing WIWSA) were invited to participate in the workshops on **Sea Level Rise, Changing Precipitation and Heat**. The county has posted recordings of all three workshops which you can view here:
 - [Sea Level Rise](#)
 - [Changing Precipitation](#)
 - [Heat](#)

You can still provide input by reviewing this recent post: [Climate Resiliency Sub Element – call for comments](#) and following the links to review current progress and to give feedback.

Department of Ecology

- There is now an online tool to apply for a water right. **Ecology announced a [Water Right Portal to submit a Water Right Application online](#)**. Eventually, all applications will be available: change application, seasonal change, reservoir, managed aquifer recharge, and aquifer storage and recovery. See the Ecology [announcement](#) for full details.
- **Water Year 2025**—The Washington State Water Supply Advisory Committee (WSAC) kicked off the new water year with a meeting on Oct.10. WSAC provides an important consultative and advisory role to Ecology for current and forecasted water supply conditions. The water year begins October 1 and goes through September 30. **The 2024 Water Year was warmer than normal statewide and drier than normal for most of the state.**
 - Statewide average temperatures for 2024 were about 1.3° F above normal.
 - Statewide average precipitation for 2024 was about 90% of normal.
 - Normal is the average of the last 30 years, 1991-2020.
 - Yakima Basin low water storage is concerning for potential impacts to water supply in 2025. Water storage is at the 6th lowest level since 1971. The Yakima Basin reservoirs were 11% full and 35% of average as of Oct. 1.

Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water

- The latest **ODW Newsletter** includes information on the Lead Service Line inventory, DWSRF Free Technical Assistance Program, Drinking Water Week Awards 2025, the MOU with Ecology and more.
- The **Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meetings** are a good way to keep in touch with current programs and the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) activities. The next DWAG meeting will be on December 2, 2024. You can view the agenda [here](#) and sign up for email notifications for all DWAG notices [here](#).

AWWA Webinars & PNW Training

<https://www.awwa.org/Events-Education/Webinars>

<https://www.pnws-awwa.org/training/training-opportunities/>

NRWA Webinars

<https://www.gotostage.com/channel/nrwawebinars>

RCAC Workshops

<https://www.events.rcac.org/rcac/Calendar.asp>

Do you have news you want to share?

If you have water news you'd like to share with the water drinkers of Whidbey Island, please send a message to mail@whidbeywatersystems.org

Subscribe!

Please subscribe to receive our emails including this monthly newsletter and quarterly meeting invitations.

Join!

We encourage water systems, private well owners, and companies serving water systems to become members of WIWSA. Please Apply Online or print out and mail in the Membership Application/Renewal/Update form to become a member.