



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, January 2025

Happy New Year—Welcome to **Water on Whidbey** January 2025!

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.

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association News

SAVE THE DATE: March Quarterly Meeting

Our next Member Meeting will be on March 20, 2025, 5 pm to 7 pm. Tentatively we are looking at including some insurance topics on the agenda **including insurance requirements for water franchise holders as well as typical insurance coverage for Group A or B water systems.**

For water systems who are expecting to renew their franchise, part of the application is proof of insurance. There are 2 options that the County Risk Department will accept as proof. For larger systems a Certificate of Liability for \$1 million, listing Island County as Certificate Holder at the bottom. The other, for smaller systems such as 2 party wells or single service offsite sewer systems, a copy of their homeowners policy showing the amount of liability coverage that they have. This coverage is required to provide proof of insurance in case of leakage or repairs causing damage to the roads. We hope to have a deeper discussion at the meeting and address questions.

All subscribers to this newsletter will receive invitations and Zoom information for the meeting about 2 week prior to the meeting. If you are not currently on the email list, you can sign up [here](#).

UPDATE: December Quarterly Meeting (2024 Annual Meeting)

Last month we posted a brief recap and the video recording of December's annual meeting on our website [here](#). **We have recently updated that recap with the approved [minutes](#) with more detail on the SMA discussion.**

Welcome New Members!

- Fircrest (South), Group B
- Lone Lake Water Association, Group B
- Pioneer Protective Park Association, Group A
- Quail Trail Water Association, Group B
- Quigley Road Water Association, Group B
- Rhodena Beach Water District, Group A

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 is inviting 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 an associate member.** We

have common issues across the county and we expect you will find that WIWSA provides a great opportunity to work on those issues together.

Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program

The shortage of trained technical professionals is having more of an impact every day. See a [recent Seattle Time article](#) to read about this national problem. **To help with this locally, WIWSA has teamed with Evergreen Rural Water (ERWOW) to offer a scholarship to an applicant to Evergreen's one-year [QUEST](#) program or to the full two-year [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. 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 actively recruiting scholarship applicants for the 2025 Apprenticeship or QUEST program, and are 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.**

The deadline for the scholarship application is May 31, 2025. Visit the [Scholarship page](#) on the website for more information or to apply for the program.

Home Owner Association (HOA) Registrations

A reminder to HOAs to keep your state registration up to date. We've had reports of some associations not following their bylaws to keep current with the secretary of state registrations. They may be at risk of losing some of their legal authority to manage their water systems. **Visit the SOS page [here](#) to use the *Corporation Search* function if you want to check the status of your HOA's registration.**

Billing and Contact Information

If you have any changes to your Designated or Alternate Representatives or their contact information, please update your information with an email to treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org at your earliest convenience. Thanks for your support!

More News in January

- [EPA Adds Nine Additional PFAS to the Toxics Release Inventory](#)
- [West Plains faces PFAS water woes; local coalition seeks legislative help](#)
- [Changes proposed in Water System Management](#)
- [America's next water crisis? A lack of experienced workers](#)
- [Researchers find huge buried reservoir atop Oregon's Cascade Range](#)

News from our Partners

Island County

- Long Range Planning presented their [draft schedule](#) for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update to the Planning Commission at last week's meeting. **They are scheduled to have a draft of all elements of the Comp Plan available for public comment in May 2025.**
- Planning is also encouraging you to fill out to **fill out the [Environment and Planning Survey](#) created by Whidbey Environmental Action Network (WEAN)** to collect opinions from the community for county leaders. It's another opportunity to influence the priorities to reflect what you see as most important.
- **The [Drinking Water](#) webpage now has more information, guidance, and links to a variety of resources.** The new FAQ tab covers drinking water related questions on water quality, wells, and building permits. The new ICGeoMap tab has step-by-step instructions to help find water system, well, and seawater intrusion information on the County Map. There are links directly to DOH Sentry

for water quality and WFI reports, Ecology for accredited labs and water rights, and other agencies and organizations to consolidate the regulatory and non-regulatory drinking water resources. Please email DrinkingWater@islandcountywa.gov if you have any questions or suggestions.

- The Island County Drinking Water team also sent out a helpful email reminder just after New Year's. If you missed it, you can find it [here](#)!

Department of Ecology

- The water rights adjudication process continues in Whatcom county. It is a major step in water rights adjudication in Washington and **may signal how water rights will be handled throughout the state**. Some recent links of interest:
 - [Claim forms for water rights lawsuit finalized; expected to mail in February \(Whatcom County\)](#)
 - [WRIA 1 Water Rights Adjudication Resources](#)

Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water

- DOH/ODW provides a deep library of documents, along with online tools and technical support to help you manage your water system. Check it out, especially if you're new to this world of water: [Where to Find Drinking Water Information to see it all in one place](#).
- The most recent **Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meeting** was held on December 2, 2024. The meeting included discussion topics on Groundwater Recharge, Manganese contaminant policy, PFAS and comments on the **new Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS)** which is currently planned to be up and running in mid-year 2025. See the [Meeting Notes](#) and the [DWAG Webpage](#) for more information.
- The **next DWAG meeting is planned for March 3, 2025**. You can sign up for email notifications for all DWAG notices [here](#).
- See the [January ODW Newsletter](#) for information on the New Emerging Contaminant Grant Funding, Free PFAS testing, an Update on ODW Compliance activities and more.
- **There have been some staffing changes at the ODW Northwest group in the last few months.** Derek Pell has moved on to a position with King County leaving a vacancy in the regional manager's position, with John Ryding as the Assistant Regional Manager. Sarah Spotts recently moved to the Engineering staff supporting Island County and many of you met her at the December Member's Meeting. You can find contact information and assignments on the NW Regional Drinking Water page [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.