



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, March 2025

Welcome to Water on Whidbey March 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

RECAP: March Quarterly Meeting

The **Q1 Member Meeting was held on Zoom on March 20, 2025, 5 pm to 7 pm** with 65 members and guests in attendance. A recap with links to a [video recording](#) of the meeting, copies of presentations and the draft agenda are available on the website on the meeting recap post [here](#). Note that the video recording was started after the meeting had begun but does include all of the featured topics starting with Chris Kelley's update.

The meeting topics were kicked off with an update on the [Coordinated Water System Plan](#) from **Chris Kelley, Island County Hydrogeologist**. The CWSP was developed in 1990 to provide guidance for all county water systems, including minimum design standards and defining service areas for Group A water systems. Kelley mentioned that the plan hasn't be revised since publication in 1990 so a study group was formed with a local engineering firm. The group will first determine what parts of the plan were in need of an update and to scope that work with the intention of presenting a recommendation to the County Commissioners for further action later this year. You can read an overview of the plan [here](#) or the full plan [here](#).

Several insurance topics were covered in the meeting:

- **Sarah Gooding from Island County Public Works** presented on Public Works Franchises which are required for any water system which has water lines within a county road right-of-way. Sarah described what a franchise is, the application and renewal process, why there was a requirement for a certificate of liability insurance, the requirements for franchise holders and provided a list of planned 2025 roadwork projects that will affect some franchise holders. If you want to check on the roads within your water system's service area where you may have water lines, you can use the [ICGEOmap](#) and then click on the roads to see if they are owned by the county. Franchise presentation can be found [here](#).
- **Morgan Carter from Tradewinds Insurance and Wendy Parsons from Parsons-Whidbey Insurance** each presented a summary of the insurance options necessary and available to Group A and B water systems including General Liability, Property Coverage, Directors & Officers, Umbrella Liability and a more recent addition: Cyber Liability. You can find the contact information for both companies in a new Insurance section on our website at the bottom of the [Services page](#). Tradewinds' presentation materials are included [here](#).

Ernie Klimek of Evergreen Rural Water of Washington was our final speaker for evening, He spoke about the Apprenticeship and QUEST programs both of which should be familiar to WIWSA members as the WIWSA scholarship is offered for these programs. The Apprenticeship program is a 2-year classroom training program for apprentices employed in water and wastewater service to gain their Level 2 certification. QUEST provides a 1-year program for anyone with a goal for Level 1 certification. Ernie also described a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) program for high school and trade school students interested in starting a career in water or wastewater service. This is still in the planning stage but should be launched this year. You can find more information on the Evergreen Rural Water [website](#).

All subscribers to this newsletter will receive invitations and Zoom information for upcoming member meetings along with the planned agenda. If you are not currently on the email list, you can sign up [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE: [Group B Meetup, April 22, 2025 5:30 pm to 7 pm](#)

We are planning another Meetup of our Group B members and anyone serving on the board or otherwise supporting a Group B water system in Island County on April 22, 2025 from 5:30 pm to 7 pm. We had two meetings last year with 20-25 attendees and will continue them this year as long as there is interest from the community.

The main topic will be a presentation on the impact of the Coordinated Water System Plan Revision on Group B systems with Jeff Tasoff and Donna Keeler along with a general Q&A and discussion of Group B issues. The CWSP revision is a good opportunity to systemically address the issues that we have been discussing in our meetings such as the challenges with consolidation of small systems and general access to services. I hope you will join us!

We are going to hold the meeting at the Coupeville Library (788 NW Alexander St, Coupeville, WA 98239) as well as Zoom. This will be our first chance to try out the library's new facility that combines an in-person and online meeting.

Notices will go out to all Group B members of the mailing list as well as anyone who has attended a previous meeting.

[Welcome New Members!](#)

WIWSA's membership has grown to 106 members: 60 Group A water systems including municipal systems, 39 Group B systems and 7 associate members. This month we welcome:

- Amble Road Water Systems (Group B).

[Billing and Contact Information](#)

It is annual dues time again! **You should have received your 2025 dues invoice in your email inbox by now.** If you haven't received the invoice or if there has been a change in the main contact for your water system please get in touch with treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org. We will update the account and re-issue the invoice. Thanks for your support!

[Systems Flushing](#)

A reminder that all water systems benefit from regular flushing as part of their maintenance protocols. Flushing removes stagnant water, restore disinfectant residual, remove loose deposits, and scour pipe surfaces resulting in improved water quality. A regular program of flushing and the exercising of hydrants and valves may also may extend the lifespan of the distribution system and avoid unexpected maintenance expenses. Refer to this [EPA document](#) for more information on developing a flushing protocol and conducting a flush of your system.

If you are water system consumer, flushing the system can be a little disruptive. You can expect that hydrants will be opened to discharge large volumes of water from which you need to keep your distance and there may be water pressure fluctuations and discoloration of water which is harmless though may cause staining. If there is discoloration you will want to run your water following the flush until clear including running your washer until clear before washing clothes.

Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program

Ernie Klimek spoke about the Evergreen Rural Water (ERWOW) programs for Apprenticeship and QUEST at the member meeting this month. As you may know WIWSA has teamed with Evergreen to offer a scholarship to an Island County resident who wishes to enroll in the one-year [QUEST](#) program or to the full two-year [Apprenticeship](#) program. The QUEST program is ideal for members of smaller Group B systems to receive the basic training needed to service their system or Group A systems to train backup operators.

Please check out the programs on [ERWoW's website](#) and visit the [Scholarship page](#) on the WIWSA website for more information or to apply for the program. The deadline for the scholarship application is May 31, 2025.

More News in March

- [PFAS contamination at Joint Base Lewis McChord](#)
- [Ecology letters coming to 30k Whatcom County water users as part of adjudication process](#)
- [Effort Begins to Launch Web App to Enhance Groundwater Data Collection in Moses Lake and Columbia Basin](#)
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News from our Partners

Island County

- County staff is watching the progress of [HB-1947](#) which would remove the requirement for some Group B water systems to use a Satellite Management Agency (SMA) for their water service needs. In short, the bill reads: *New Group B public water systems are not required to be owned or operated by a satellite system management agency unless the water system provides fire flow, has atmospheric storage, serves ten or more service connections, or is required to provide treatment to meet water quality standards. The local board of health may adopt more stringent satellite management system requirements.* The bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee.
- For nearly 60 years, [Opportunity Council](#) **has worked through the Island County Community Resource Center to provide assistance to people and communities in need**, including assistance with utility bills and services. They offer a variety of direct services and can connect people to other service providers as appropriate. Check out the services on their website to see if you qualify or click [here](#) to apply for assistance.
- As mentioned last month, if you haven't looked over the [Drinking Water](#) webpage please check it out, and **sign up for the Drinking Water Newsletter**. There are new tabs for FAQ (water quality, wells, and building permits), ICGeoMap tab (find water system, well, and seawater intrusion info), and links to other data sources. You can email DrinkingWater@islandcountywa.gov if you have any questions or suggestions.

Department of Ecology

- [Yakima Basin water supply update](#); As of March 6, 2025, the five basin reservoirs had only 38% of what's typical at this time of year. That's the third lowest since 1971. The basin will need far above average snowpack to recover, which is unlikely with a rapidly closing window for big storms to provide water.
- [Nooksack adjudication update](#); Water users in the Nooksack watershed and adjacent areas, also known as Water Resources Inventory Area 1 (WRIA 1), should begin receiving their adjudication claim forms via certified mail this week. The mailing list includes about 30,000 landowners.
- By the end of the last Water Supply Availability Committee meeting on February 13, snow was falling! According to experts, it's still too early to tell if the snowpack accumulated is enough to lift the drought declaration by spring. Read more in the [New Year, Same Drought](#) and [Washington Water Supply Update](#).

Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water

- The most recent **Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meeting was held on March 3, 2025**. The meeting included updates on many topics including information on Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), PFAS, Climate Resilience and Same Farm Policy. See the [Meeting Notes](#) for a recap. There is also a copy of the Climate Resilience presentation posted [here](#). You can sign up for email notifications for all DWAG notices [here](#).
- The latest [ODW Newsletter](#) came out earlier this month. Check it out for updates on the Consumer Confidence Report, Lead and Copper FAQ, the online Water Quality Monitoring Schedule (WQMS) and more.
- 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. We have also pinned a link to the page and related docs on the [WIWSA home page](#) in the upper left corner.

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.