

We have come through the “big dark” once again and now It is mid-February and time for...daffodils? Here are some highlights of the past goings on at your water association:

### 153rd Project Status

To review:

1000’ feet of 8” heavy duty PVC pipe (C-900 ) has been placed beneath 153<sup>rd</sup>, 5 services have been stubbed out and the road restored to two different standards per request from the residences along 153<sup>rd</sup> St. The upper section has been graded, compacted, covered with several inches of crushed screenings and compacted again to a smooth and durable driving surface. The lower section has been graded and compacted, covered with 1.25” crushed rock and compacted again.

This phase of the project started with a connection to the 8” main on 119<sup>th</sup> and ended with a 6” valve near the Harrington/Raven driveways. A water diversion berm directing water to the south of the Harrington driveway was installed and a loose pile of dirt was left to dissuade casual vehicle use. We have left the traffic cones in place as a further barrier.

The main was disinfected per water works standards, flushed and refilled with drinking water. A bacteriological sample was taken and shows no contamination. We plan to install an enclosure of some sort around the 6” valve and provide a lid.

Total cost of phase 1 of this project is \$85K consistent with our original estimates.

What comes next?

This spring when the days get longer and the weather turns fair, we plan to finish the project at least as far as the east side of Westside Hwy. Some 300’ of main needs to be installed along with a hydrant and pressure reducing valve. The residences that were prepped for connection during this phase will be transferred over to the new main from the old. Eventually, the old 3” steel line passing through the “Underwood” easement (south side of the Hille property) will be abandoned and new service lines for the two residences currently connected to that old line will be made.

### Planned Capital Asset Improvement projects for 2024

In addition to the work mentioned above we expect to finish the work on the Cove Road extension from 115<sup>th</sup> Ave to 121<sup>st</sup> Ave. This work will include connecting the new line at the west end, completing two road bores and hooking up 7 connections.

## Sanitary Survey

Every five years the WA Department of Health (DOH) conducts an on-site inspection of our water system. That inspection occurred on November 14<sup>th</sup> this year. Although we have not received a final written report, the verbal feedback during the roughly 4-hour inspection was positive, and no significant deficiencies were identified during the survey. A tragic footnote: Steve Hulsman, who conducted the survey for the Department of Health and who was an epic area bicyclist was hit by a car while riding his bike on Marine Drive (just to the south of the Fauntleroy ferry dock) and killed at the end of 2023.

As a response to the survey, the Board is preparing a 5-year budget for WWA. We are eager to involve members in this effort which seeks to determine the adequacy of our current reserve for Capital Asset Replacements and ferret out future resources to contribute to the reserve. If you would be interested in participating in this work, please contact Holly Shull at [frostflower2000@yahoo.com](mailto:frostflower2000@yahoo.com).

## Canyon spring (SO2) source, reactivation possibility

This section is about a source that once provided water to the system but was de-activated due to a “just-over-the-line” unfavorable test result that indicated the source might be linked somehow to surface water. Technically the source is classified as Groundwater under the influence of Surface Water. We’ve conducted another Micro Particle Analysis test in January and again it failed with the lowest possible reading. We are planning another test in May with the intention of applying to DOH for seasonal use of the spring if it passes at that time. It would be great to have this substantial (15 gpm) source added to our system since it is already accessible with minimum cost.

## Distribution System Loss (aka Leaks) status

We continue to be confounded by our system leak rate (this represents non-metered losses). In September/October of last year it had crept up to 7.8 gpm which is unacceptably high. In the following period (November/December) the rate had dropped to 4.4 gpm. We would like to take credit for this improvement except that we ... didn’t fix anything. We found one additional sizable leak after the January meter readings and then we had THE BIG FREEZE where everything went crazy on the leak front. However, the freeze caused problems mostly on the customer side of the meter (around a million gallons worth) and limited issues on the distribution system. We are using our leak detection meters installed over the last few years to good effect. We have also retained a leak detection company to assist in finding leaks on both sides of the meter. As of mid-February, it appears that the leak situation has calmed down.

Between the extraordinary leak rate on the customer side and disruptions to the well point collection system in the canyon due to the freeze event we were forced to use the Anderson wells at summertime pumping levels in January and thus we have drawn down the aquifer height to late summer levels. Now that we are back to wintertime normal operation, we will be resting the Anderson well field as much as possible in anticipation of summertime usage.

### King County Right of Way Fee

As you are aware by the line item on your bi-monthly water bill, (KC ROW Rent) we have been escrowing money from each member against the expectation that we will need to pay a Right of Way Fee to King County dating back to their original notification letter in April 2018. At the time of that letter the County provided us with a formula and an estimate of what that fee will be. We used that information to make a per customer assessment and challenged King County's calculations based on our GIS map of the system that cut the County's Right-of-Way footage by about 30%. King County acknowledged receiving our letter with our revised measurement but made no other response relative to the eventual cost to the system. We expect that this bill will come due with the renewal of our Franchise License in 2025. We won't really know the amount owed until we go through the negotiation at that time but one thing that may cause our estimate to be less than needed is the increase in property values on Vashon over the past five years. So just a heads up that an assessment is a possibility when we get the real bill.

### From Paul Huss, our operations manager:

"When I first began working with Doug at the end of 2022, I was concerned about how I would learn everything that goes into operating and managing a water system. Doug assured me that I would get all the training that I would need to succeed just by showing up and doing the work. One year later, I am now applying to get my certification and the application form lists all of the activities that are typically performed by water system managers. As I go down the list, it dawns on me that I now have experience with everything on it and more. Working with Doug this past year has been an incredible apprenticeship, and every day brings new and sometimes unusual challenges that continue to teach me new lessons. In the past, Doug has trained operators who then take those skills and go on to work bigger systems, but that is not on my agenda. I live on the Westside Hwy and drink Westside Water every day, so I am committed to providing safe and reliable drinking water for WWA for a long time."

Reminder: to contact WWA the master phone # is (206) 567-4568.

### From Holly Shull, current treasurer:

"My family has enjoyed drinking Westside Water for over 40 years, and when Doug in February 2022 asked whether I would be interested in joining the WWA board – learning that board meetings took place only once every other month - I figured it was my family's turn to step up and give back. For the first year I took on the position of secretary, which provided a good introduction to the workings of the board and Westside Water. This year, I moved to the

treasurer position and under the tutelage of Pat Call and Doug Dolstad I have been finding my way around the numbers of WWA. It has been a pleasure working with them, and with departed and current board members. It feels good to be contributing to our community.”

[A historical perspective from long time member Sunny Speidel:](#)

“Not too long after my husband and I moved back to Vashon, which I found refreshingly small after 20 years off island, Doug approached me about joining the board. I’d been friends with his sister Diane since grade school. But I was sick to death of being on boards. Doug, trying to convince me, said “it’s not too big... “I was thinking: “yeah, it’s a little smaller than Seattle.” And when he rattled off the dimensions of Westside Water’s territory . . . I grasped the size of small. I laughed then, but by the time I left the board they had to throw me out.”

[Update on impact of new shares sold](#)

Since none of the four new connections are active as yet, there is no impact on water usage in the system.

[2023 WWA Picnic/Potluck](#)

Great food, fun and music were enjoyed at the WWA potluck/picnic at Farmstad last year We hope to plan another in 2024, but likely a bit earlier as the yellow jackets were very hungry in September. Hope you can make it – the more the merrier and always good to get to know our neighbors/members.



Happy spring, members,

The WWA Board