

Westside Water Association Winter 2025/2026 Newsletter

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



"When the well is dry, we know the value of water" -Benjamin Franklin

WWA members,

Upon receipt of your latest water invoice, you might have noticed that a \$5 assessment fee has been added to your bimonthly bill. This charge supports the new filtration system we're installing for the SO2 well. Specific details are included in this newsletter. The board approved this new charge last fall, as we began to pursue a filtration design for this important water source that will help to ensure ample supplies during the summer months. The alternative source (the Back 40 well) would have required a much more expensive setup, with the cost of that being more than double.

While we are in a good financial situation, WWA continues to plan for attrition of existing infrastructure and future projects. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sam Lanier
mkslanier@comcast.net

Volunteers Need

The WWA Board would like to encourage members to get more involved with our organization. Even if you aren't ready to commit to serving on the Board, there are a number of ways that members can contribute to our non-profit org, that would help spread some of the work load, as well as provide understanding of our Westside Water Association system, and cultivate neighbor-to-neighbor relations. Opportunities are listed below.

Capital projects status

153rd Line

The line down 153rd St (private) is complete from 119th Ave S to the east side of Westside Highway (WSH) including a fire-flow compliant hydrant on the east side of WSH.. What remains to finish this project is a road bore or road cut to extend this line to the west side of WSH and an

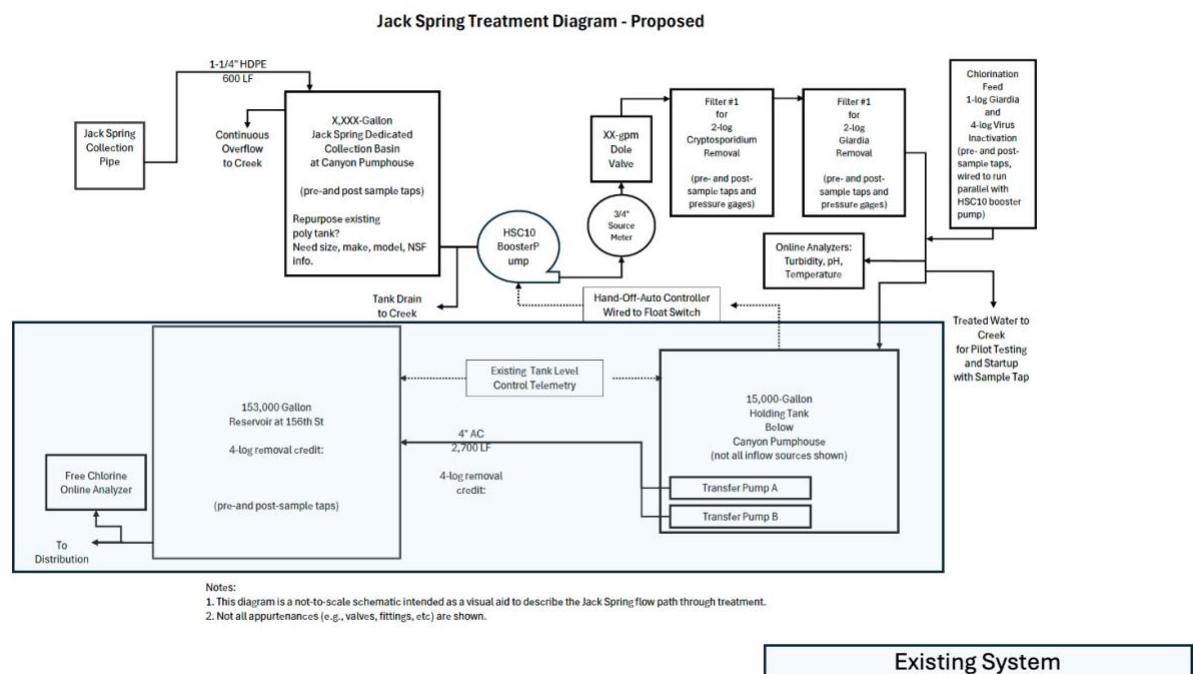
interconnection to the 4" line running along WSH. A plan has been submitted to King County Roads and we are awaiting approval.

Hille/Candy reconnect

One of the objectives of the 153rd St project was to decommission the 3" steel line running east/west through the Hille and Candy properties (S of 153rd). This steel line has been shut off this year and we are in the process of connecting the two properties to 119th Ave and WSH distribution lines, respectively, with meters located in the right of ways.

SO2 Redevelopment

At one time a spring on the north flank of Shinglemill Canyon labeled SO2 (for Source 2) was a consistent water source for WWA. Over the years a change in the groundwater safety standards caused that source to be reclassified as being "under the influence" (of surface water). The source sits there delivering 12 gallons per minute of cool, clear water year round. Reconnection is potentially available if the WA Department of Health approves a proposed simple filtration system. Repeated sampling has shown the presence of micro-particulates at just above the MPA (Micro Particle Analysis) threshold to be considered ground water. We are in the process of having a filtration system designed by Northwest Water Systems to re-qualify this source for use. . A schematic of the planned system is shown below.



You might ask, "Why is this being done"? The answer is: SO2 has demonstrated that it is a reliable source that, with modest investment to improve the already good water quality, will ease the burden presently borne by our well sources - especially during the high use summer season. The source is so close to acceptable that many of the protocols we need to follow are probably unnecessary (e.g. turbidity monitoring). But we are setting up to conform to the full set of standards and will appeal some of them in the future once we have an established

baseline. Paul Huss has obtained his license to be able to operate the filtration system once we are up and running. We would expect to operate this system seasonally (May through September) during our months of higher consumption. It will help us reduce the demand on the Anderson Wells and preserve their capacity. The capital cost of this project is expected to be about \$25K and we hope to have it operational by summer of 2026.

New Assessment

In order to pay for the SO2 project the WWA board has decided to begin an assessment starting with the January 2026 bill. That surcharge will be \$5 per billing period. That's \$2.50 per month. With the current number of subscribers at 238 this surcharge will bring in about \$7K per year and is planned to be in place for 3 years.

WWA Financial Health

The financials of WWA remain healthy. We keep cash available for active Capital Asset Replacement projects, and keep reserved funds in short term CDs, now earning 3.5% interest. Funds collected for the King County right-of-way rent are also kept in CDs until we are required to pass the funds to King County. Notably, we are thankful that a previous WWA Board proactively chose to impose a rent charge some years ago. Other districts are now incurring greater new charges on their bills to catch up.

New Billing Software

For many years WWA used a billing package from Jayhawk Software. It was desk-top based and lacked good reporting which led us to change software packages in 2021 to UBMax from Softline Data Systems. The UBMax package has served us well, but in early 2025 Softline was acquired by a company called gWorks, that rather than continue running UBMax programs, decided to reinvent the wheel. We were able to keep UBMax live through the July billing. With the September billing, we were required to go live with the 'new' gWorks system, and we (and our members) quickly discovered that invoicing was not functioning as expected! As a result, we decided to print and snail-mail bills for both November and January billing.

Paul Huss, Pat Call and Holly Shull have been evaluating utility billing software companies, with input from the Board. Five utility billing companies were reviewed in detail and MuniBilling was chosen by the Board as our new go-forward system. Unfortunately, after much engagement with MuniBilling, they surprised us with a 35% increase in the annual subscription rate for the software, so we have gone back to the drawing board. Still we hope to be set up with a new utility billing software system by March 2026 billing. We will keep you posted!

Bookkeeper

We will be looking to hire a new part-time bookkeeper to start once we are set up with new utility billing software (after the March 2026 billing). If you are interested, or know someone interested in applying for the position, send Holly Shull an email. frostflower2000@yahoo.com The position averages approximately 20 hours per month.

Meters

For the January billing meter reads, because we needed to get the meter reads and bills printed before our contract expired on 12/31/2025 with gWorks (the current billing software system), and our meter reader was on vacation, Paul Huss (Operations) and Holly Shull (Treasurer) collected reads on our 240 meters. We discovered how difficult, and time-consuming, it is to locate some member meters.



We ask that our members ensure their water meters are accessible, visible and marked with a 12" white pvc pipe to make them easier to locate for the **March 2026** meter read.



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Hands-on Operations Assistance: Reading through some ancient board meeting minutes, it was interesting to note how WWA has evolved from volunteer work parties to clean up tree falls down by the well points, to contracting for work to be done. Building maintenance and road flagging during construction projects come to mind as additional ways members can volunteer to help. Just last week Paul needed another body for just a short time in order to isolate the location of a leak. Shoot Paul an email to get on a list to pitch in when an extra hand is needed. – manager@westsidewater.org

Accounting Software Review: Once we are up and running with the new utility billing software, we plan to research online accounting software. We currently use QuickBooks Desktop, but will be needing to move to online accounting software, as Intuit will no longer support QB Desktop. If you have familiarity with QuickBooks online and/or with other online accounting software we could use help in reviewing other online accounting software packages for fit to our accounting needs and costs, please contact Holly Shull (treasurer) – frostflower2000@yahoo.com .

Historical data maintenance: If you have an interest in data, Pat Call has been maintaining several data sheets (e.g. WWA Master Financial Worksheet and a WWA Capital Asset Replacement Worksheet). Someday we will be needing to transfer upkeep of these important documents to another member. Please reach out to Pat at pat.call49@gmail.com or (650) 867-9083 if you are a numbers nerd and would like to help on this effort.

Preparation for Water Tank Replacement: At some point in time WWA may need to replace our water tanks and seek outside funding/grants for those projects. Reviewing requirements for outside funding, and bringing WWA in line with those requirements is an important project with a proactive and finite element. (Contact Sam Lanier, President - Mkslanier@comcast.net)

Website Maintenance: We created a new website for WWA in 2024, and it would be fabulous if a savvy WWA member could help us update the website periodically. Contact Doug Swan (our current secretary - dreidswan@hotmail.com).

Review By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures for correlation and accuracy are administrative tasks that would be helpful and finite in nature. (Contact David Hawkins VP – jdh@uw.edu).

Participating in these ways is a great opportunity for members to share in the good work, come up to speed on the WWA system and to understand the importance of serving on the board. All our current board members are in their 2nd 2-year term. Board members are restricted to three 2-year terms so on average a position becomes available every year or so. We expect to need new board members in May, 2026. Contact Sam Lanier (President - Mkslanier@comcast.net).

Distribution Systems Loss (aka Leaks)

We continue to struggle with inconsistent measurements regarding our system leak rate. On an average annual basis our rate remains about 13% which is higher than our goal of 10%.

Reminder: Contra Dances every 2nd and 4th Saturday at Havurah 4 pm. Westside Water Members and friends get 10% off the free admission price!!! Want to be on the Notification List? Contact Doug Dolstad dpdolstad@Gmail.com