



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, January 2024

Welcome to Water on Whidbey January 2024!

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association sends a monthly newsletter to keep our community up to speed with water news. We'll send this newsletter to our email list and post it on our website. We aim to provide an easy place to find all the month's news and web content.

Please share this newsletter with your fellow water system board members, commissioners, operators, members, friends and neighbors, and anyone who drinks water. Please encourage them to [subscribe](#).

News from Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Annual Meeting Recap

Thank you to all who attended the 2023 annual meeting in December. We had a great turn out for the Zoom meeting with **51 total participants** including voting members, guests and presenters.

The **Apprenticeship program scholarship was extended to two years**, covering the full tuition needed for participants to complete training for their WDM II OIT certification. We had an update on the two participants currently attending ERWOW's Apprenticeship program through the benefit of the WIWSA scholarship.

Chris Kelley, the Island County Hydrogeologist, presented a timeline of the county's hydrogeological database concluding with a presentation of the latest toolset. You can go to the [Island County Hydrogeology Dashboard](#) to lookup the latest well information. It's a work in progress as Chris will be continuing to update the data and enhance the features of the tools as time and staffing permit. For more details and a copy of Chris's presentation follow this [link](#) to the WIWSA website.

SMA Service Levels Panel

- Bill Wiegand, President, Georgetown Water Association
- JJ Olson, Business & Compliance Manager, NW Natural Water Services
- Silas Olson, NW Natural Water Services
- Derek Pell, Office of Drinking Water
- Alexis Medina, Office of Drinking Water

Introductory remarks from Bill Wiegand explained the customer perspective very well. There was only time for brief responses from NW Natural Resources and DOH. The discussion will be continued in the March Member's meeting, currently planned for March 21st.

Board of Directors

We had several changes to the board this month. At the annual meeting, **Culley Lehman was unanimously re-elected to the board** for another term. Two new members were elected to the board: **Bill Poss, a Commissioner of the Saratoga Water District and Michael Quintus, Cooks Water Supply operations manager, a Group B system in Oak Harbor**. Welcome Bill and Michael!

We still have one open board position because as he announced last month, John Lovie has stepped down from the board as of the end of December. He will be sorely missed, especially for his prolific communications through this newsletter and the website not to mention his wise counsel. He is already writing a steady stream on his [substack blog](#) so you know where to find him.

New Members

No new members since the last newsletter.

PFAS News & Events

The Navy announced that they are hosting two Open House Public Meetings on February 1st, 2024, at 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm and 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm, both held at the Elks Lodge, 155 NE Ernst St, Oak Harbor, WA 98277 to provide information to the public about the Navy's offer to sample drinking water wells near Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. The full announcement can be found here: <https://pacific.navfac.navy.mil/NASWIPFAS>

The Open House Public Meetings will have detailed information about the proposed drinking water sampling near Area 6 Landfill. The sampling is for certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which may be present in these drinking water wells due to past use of firefighting foam or other PFAS- containing materials on base.

Property owners who drink water from a well on a property located within the sampling area may request sampling at either the open house, by calling **1-844-WHI-PFAS (1-844-944-7327)** and leaving a message, or by sending an email to naswi.pfas@jacobs.com.

Some PFAS news links:

- [The EPA announced the automatic addition of seven per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\) to the list of chemicals covered by the Toxics Release Inventory \(TRI\).](#)
- [EPA Report Shows Steady Progress to Protect Communities from PFAS Pollution](#)
- [Washington state has a number of new draft PFAS rules under consideration](#)
- [A list of Tim Connor's PFAS pieces to date](#)
- [Yakima's city water is PFAS free](#)

Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program

WIWSA is partnering with ERWoW/RCAC and SMAs and water systems on Whidbey Island to offer a scholarship and apprenticeship for persons interested in pursuing a career in drinking water. Please see the Scholarship page on our website or contact us for details. Our first applicant is starting a second year, while another has started their first year. **We are actively seeking applicants for 2024**, so please refer anyone who might be interested in this program. The deadline for applications is May 31, 2024.

Billing

If your water system's contact information needs to be updated, please use the [Membership Application/Renewal/Update form](#). Invoices will be going out in the new year.

Dates and plans for 2024 member meetings:

Save the date! Our next Member Meeting will be Thursday March 21, 2024 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm. Remember that to receive the invitation email with the meeting zoom link you need to [subscribe](#) to this newsletter email list.

News from our Partners

Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan Public Meetings Scheduled

Island County is conducting a periodic update to its comprehensive plan, due by June 30, 2025. Several elements within the planning will affect water systems including Natural Resource, Utilities and Climate Resilience which address water supply and availability, aquifer recharge, saltwater intrusion and watershed management among others.

If you want to learn more or provide input to the process, there are **open house public meetings** planned during February around the county:

Camano Island—Thursday Feb. 1, 2024 6 - 8 PM

Island County Camano Annex - Convergence Room
121 E Camano Dr, Camano, WA 98282

South Whidbey—Tuesday Feb. 6, 2024 6 - 8 PM

South Whidbey High School - New Commons
5675 Maxwellton Rd, Langley, WA 98260

Central Whidbey—Saturday Feb. 10, 2024 10 AM - 12 PM

Island County BOCC Hearing Room
One 7th St NW # 214, Coupeville, WA 98239

North Whidbey—Tuesday Feb. 13, 2024 6 - 8 PM

The Center in Oak Harbor - Multi-Purpose Room
51 SE Jerome St, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

For more information visit the county's [Comprehensive Plan page](#) on their website.

Department of Ecology on December 20th published a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) about the collection and disposal of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), used by municipal fire departments to extinguish liquid fuel-based fires. They are accepting comments through February 5, 2024.

DOE will hold both an information session where you can learn more about the draft EIS through a presentation by Ecology staff and a public hearing where you can submit formal public comments verbally and in writing.

- [Draft EIS information session](#): Jan 17, 2024 from 10 am to 11:30 am Zoom
- [Draft EIS public hearing](#): Jan 31, 2024 from 1 pm to 4 pm Zoom

Visit ecology.wa.gov/AFFF-comment for details and to read the draft EIS.

The **DOH Office of Drinking Water** released information about some important loan and grant programs available this year along with Emergency Rule changes that went into effect on December 29, 2023. The application windows for the announced programs are either open immediately or within the next month. For more details you can find the full ODW release [here](#).

Lead Service Line Loan — Intended for any LSL inventory or replacement projects.

- Application cycle opened January 8, 2024.
- Applications due by 11:59 p.m. PDT on March 29, 2024.

Consolidation Feasibility Study Grant Application Cycle — To support consolidation of small water systems into larger entities with greater technical, managerial, and financial capacity including consolidation of Group B and private wells into a new or existing Group A water system.

- Opens February 1, 2024.
- Applications accepted year-round.

Planning and Engineering Loan Application Changes (Previously Called the Preconstruction Loan) — Updates include funding up to \$200,000 for limited water rights exploration.

- Application window currently open.
- Applications accepted year-round.

Drinking Water Systems Rehabilitation and Consolidation Grant — Funding may be used for consolidation, restructuring, or receivership of a failing system or the rehabilitation of a struggling system.

Find guidance on how projects are selected, who are eligible applicants, and what information you must submit in [Drinking Water System Rehabilitation and Consolidation Guidance 331-742](#).

Emergency Rule Changes — The emergency adoption allows forgiveness of a portion or all of the SRF loan amount, update the definition of a disadvantaged community, removes water system plan requirements for those systems that are seeking a loan to address LSL identification and replacement, and remove obsolete priority rating and ranking criteria to allow more water systems to qualify for loans in conformance.

- Effective date December 29, 2023.
- Expiration date April 26, 2024.

For any of these programs, refer to the [ODW release](#) for more details.

Check out the latest [ODW Newsletter](#).

[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 (at) 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 use the [Membership Application/Renewal/Update form](#) to apply.