



# Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, January 2026

## Water on Whidbey January 2026!

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

### Welcome New Members!

This month we welcome:

- Teronda West Country Club (Group A, 104 connections)

WIWSA's membership is currently 119 members: 68 Group A water systems including municipal systems, 41 Group B systems and 10 associate members. Thank you all for your participation!

### RECAP: 2025 Annual Member's Meeting—January 15, 2026; 5 pm to 7 pm IN-PERSON and ZOOM

The rescheduled Annual Member's Meeting for December was finally held in person on **Thursday, January 15, 2026** at the Coupeville Library and online over Zoom. There was a quorum present at the library with over 30 people attending and close to the same number attending on Zoom.

We had a full agenda with our annual director elections and budget review, along with the [proposed bylaws amendments](#) to support online meetings and to clarify WIWSA voting procedures. Our featured topic was a presentation from Jill Lipoti on Scatchet Head Water District's infrastructure project that was very well received by the group. There is a bit more on that below along with a link to Jill's presentation at the bottom of this segment.

After reviewing the 2025 financials, both the financial report and 2026 budget were approved. We had votes on four Directors. Meade Brown, who had been appointed by the Board of Directors to an open position in July, was formally elected by the membership to serve through 2027. Joe Grogan, Jeff Tasoff and Mitch Allen were each re-elected by the membership to serve new terms through 2028.

Here is a brief recap of our main topics followed by links to the video recording, agenda, presentation materials and useful links that were mentioned at the meeting.

**WIWSA Bylaws Amendment**—Meade Brown summarized the proposed bylaws changes and the board's reasoning for making the recommendation for these changes. The membership voted unanimously to approve the amendment. There are links below to both the redline of the amended bylaws and the board's reasoning for the changes. The website has been updated with the approved bylaws.

**Let's address our crumbling infrastructure**—Jill Lipoti presented a recap of the multi-year project at Scatchet Head Water District to improve the mainline and water system infrastructure. In an entertaining and informative session, she covered the project from the beginning to the present day. We encourage you to view the meeting recording to get the full benefit of her terrific presentation. A big thank you to Jill for sharing this with the community.

**Franchise Regulation Changes**—Randi Perry read a letter that WIWSA has sent to Island County staff and the Board of Island County Commissioners requesting reconsideration of recent changes made by the county that affect all new franchise applications and renewals. This will be discussed further as the featured topic at the Q1/2026 Member's Meeting in March.

- [Meeting Recording \(Video\)](#) Please note that the recording has 3 minutes of extra video before the meeting starts.
- [Agenda](#)
- [Group Chat](#)
- [Proposed Bylaws Amendments](#)
- [Reasons for Proposed Bylaws Amendments](#)
- **[Let's address our crumbling infrastructure](#)** (Jill Lipoti, Scatchet Head Water District Presentation)

## **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](mailto:treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org) at your earliest convenience. Thanks for your support!

## **Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program**

Once more in 2026, WIWSA is teaming with Evergreen Rural Water (ERWOW) to offer a scholarship for an applicant of Evergreen's one-year [QUEST](#) program or their full two-year [Apprenticeship](#) program. We would like to enroll at least one new participant this year.

QUEST applicants will receive training for Level 1 certification in Water Treatment and Water Distribution Management. 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. The full Apprenticeship program takes the applicant through to Level 2 certification and is intended for those working in the field to enable on-the-job apprenticeship as well as classroom time.

We are actively recruiting scholarship applicants for either of these programs (Apprenticeship or QUEST), and are looking for help with outreach to employers and educational programs to recruit potential applicants. WIWSA's scholarship covers full tuition for either program.

Please reach out by [email](#) if you are someone you know might be interested in learning more, or visit our [Scholarship page](#). The deadline for the scholarship application is May 31, 2025.

### **Stormwater Runoff Management; an opportunity to increase aquifer recharge**

Within our water system communities property owners can increase aquifer recharge by managing stormwater runoff using simple, efficient and cost-effective green stormwater infrastructure. Often, if stormwater runoff is left to flow into a county road ditch there's a good chance it will end up in the ocean instead of our aquifers.

There are many methods to encouraging stormwater to soak back into the ground instead of running off your property. Of course it is important to consider drainage patterns relative to septic systems, foundations, and neighboring properties, and to recognize that management practices on bluffs and shoreline boundaries have to prioritize bluff preservation and slope stability.

You can find online resources that provide guidance on best practices and training at [Whidbey Island Conservation District](#). WICD has a specific [Water Resources page](#), along with a section on Stormwater, Rain Gardens, & Drainage on the [Resource Hub](#) with lots of links. For those who are not familiar with WICD, they are a non-regulatory special purpose district that provides free services to all Whidbey residents and are often incentive-based; this means they provide free technical assistance to all and also financial assistance in some cases.

For general interest, John Lovie recently gave a talk to the WICD on aquifer recharge and climate impacts. You can find the video and presentation on the WICD [home page](#) and have a chance to check out the Whidbey Island Conservation District!

## **News from our Partners**

### **Island County**

- In 2025 the county commissioned a third-party to conduct a review of the Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP), which reportedly was completed near the end the year. This week Dr. Chris Kelly, the county's hydrogeologist, presented a summary of the recommendations and action items at the work session of the Board of Island County Commissioners. A key recommendation was to proceed with updating the CWSP by establishing a Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) to vet the findings and recommend policy updates. Next steps will include formal approval of a resolution by the commissioners to convene the WUCC. You can view the presentation in the working committee [agenda \(pages 45 to 55\)](#) or listen to the [work session audio](#) starting at around 60 minutes into the recording.
- The draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan documents are now available for public review. Visit the county's [Comprehensive Plan page](#) for access to the documents and links to comment on the draft. The individual elements are scheduled for discussion at the Planning Board starting in December through the early months of 2026, see this [page for agenda details](#) as they become available. The comment period closes on February 9, 2026; you can make comments [here](#).

- Check out the [Winter issue of the Drinking Water newsletter](#) which features guidance on Nitrates and consider subscribing to receive future issues by email.

### **Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water**

- Have a waterworks professional that deserves recognition? The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) is accepting nominations for the 2026 Drinking Water Week (May 3 - 9) through February 26, 2026. Read all about it [here](#).
- The Office of Drinking Water has released the January 2026 ODW Now newsletter: Drinking Water Week Awards 2026, WQMS downtime, new PFAS monitoring requirements go into effect and much more. Check it out [here](#).
- The most recent Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meeting was held on December 1, 2025 from 9 am to 12 pm. Here is the [December 1 agenda](#) (including Teams meeting links) and is also available on the [DWAG meeting webpage](#). Attendees heard about the value of Small Water System Plans (presentation: [Challenges of Establishing Adequate Water System Rates Presentation \(PDF\)](#)), Challenges in setting Water Rates, updates on LCR and PFAS rules, a recap of DWSRF applications received in the cycling closing November 30th (61 applications received) and a presentation on customer service feedback ([Feedback on ODW Customer Service Presentation \(PDF\)](#)). You can find the detailed meeting notes [here](#).
- The next DWAG meeting will be held March 2, 2026. You can find out more when the agenda is posted on the DWAG page [here](#) along with meeting agendas and notes from previous meetings and some presentation materials. You can sign up anytime for email notifications for all DWAG notices [here](#).

### **Department of Ecology**

- [Did record rainfall end Washington's drought?](#) Low snowpack in many Washington river basins means drought remains on the table for 2026.

### **American WaterWorks Association (AWWA)/Pacific Northwest Webinars & Training**

- Check out AWWA's full catalog of webinars and training events:
  - <https://www.awwa.org/Events-Education/Webinars>
  - <https://www.pnws-awwa.org/training/training-opportunities/>

### **National Rural Water Association (NRWA) Webinars**

- <https://nrwa.org/training/>; complete listing of scheduled webinars plus you can register to receive new training notifications.
- <https://www.gotostage.com/channel/nrwawebinars>; view recordings from previously held webinars.

### **Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) Workshops**

- RCAC's full training catalog is available here:
  - <https://www.events.rcac.org/rcac/Calendar.asp>

### **Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWOW) Calendar of Events**

- [https://www.viethconsulting.com/members/calendar6c\\_responsive.php?org\\_id=ERWW](https://www.viethconsulting.com/members/calendar6c_responsive.php?org_id=ERWW)
- **ERWOW 2026 Annual Conference February 10-12, 2026** at the ilani Resort and Casino located at 1 Cowlitz Way in Ridgefield WA. [Registration is open now.](#)

## **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](mailto: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.