



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, February 2026

Welcome to Water on Whidbey, our Quarterly Newsletter!

Starting with this issue, Whidbey Island Water Systems Association will switch to a quarterly newsletter. Our aim is still to keep the community up to date with water news through our website and to publish a quarterly round up of information, meeting and training announcements and association news in the newsletter. The switch to a quarterly schedule will allow us to publish more frequent posts to the website along with expanding our web content.

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:

- Greenbank Beach Water Company (Group A - 20 Connections)

WIWSA's membership is currently 118 members: 67 Group A water systems including municipal systems, 41 Group B systems and 10 associate members. Thank you all for your participation!

Q1/2026 Member's Meeting—March 19, 2026; 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm IN-PERSON and ZOOM

The first Quarterly Member's meeting for 2026 will be held in-person on **Thursday, March 19, 2026 (5:30 - 7:30 pm)** at the Coupeville Library and online over Zoom. Meeting notices will be emailed to the WIWSA newsletter subscriber email list early in March. For the featured topic, we hope to have Ed Sewester from Island County Public Works to review the new requirements for franchise holders, a topic that was discussed at our annual meeting last month. In addition we also hope to have Joanna Skaar from NW Natural Water Services provide the water services perspective to these requirements. Please join us! We look forward to seeing you at the library or on Zoom.

Group B Meetup—April 16, 2026; 5:00 to 7:00 pm ZOOM Only

The first Group B meeting for 2026 will be held in April over Zoom. WIWSA board member Michael Quintus, manager of a Group B system in North Whidbey with 8 connections, will lead a discussion on water service operations for systems that do not have an SMA. There should be plenty of time for group discussion of issues and concerns, and where members can share

their experiences. Announcement with zoom details will be emailed in early April to all Group B subscribers on the email list.

Do you have a story to share? We'd love to hear about it!

At the Member's Meeting last month, Jill Lipoti presented a recap of Scatchet Head Water District's multi-year project to improve their mainline and water system infrastructure. It was a powerful story and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to hear it. If you missed it, you can view the [video](#) or [review her presentation](#) on the [2025 Annual Meeting Recap](#) post.

We all got to hear about this story because it was mentioned at one of WIWSA's board meetings last year. When we heard about Scatchet Head's project and followed up with Jill, she graciously agreed to prepare and present to the membership.

The WIWSA board discusses member meeting topics at every monthly board meeting and we'd like to feature more work that's going on within the community. Do you have a story to share at a future member meeting about a project with your water system? Or maybe a best practice or a problem solved that might help others with a similar needs?

Please email mail@whidbeywatersystems.org with a short summary of your story and the board will consider it when planning the member meeting agendas. Thanks!

Annual Dues Invoices in March

In early March, please look for an email from our Treasurer, with the annual dues invoice. If you have any changes to your Designated or Alternate Representatives or their contact information, please update our records with an email to treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org at your earliest convenience.

We greatly appreciate your support and participation in the Whidbey Island Water Systems Association. Your financial support allows us to put out this newsletter, maintain the website, put on the quarterly meetings and periodic training sessions, offer a scholarship, advocate on behalf of the membership and provide email support to members with questions or issues. If there's an opportunity for us to help in other ways please let us know!

WIWSA Board of Directors Update

At the annual meeting, Meade Brown was formally elected to the Board of Directors after being appointed to an open position in July 2025. In addition, Joe Grogan, Jeff Tasoff and Mitch Allen were each re-elected by the membership.

At the first board meeting after each annual meeting, the board is required to elect officers. At the February board meeting the existing 2025 officers were re-elected: Randi Perry (President), Joe Grogan (Vice-President), Brenda Bosman (Treasurer) and Mitch Allen (Secretary). Congratulations, and thank you to all board members for their service!

WIWSA has nine board members but the board has the option of adding 1 or 2 additional directors subject to a member vote at the next annual meeting. The majority of what we do at WIWSA is handled by a board member. We would be delighted to grow the board particularly to a candidate who can take over the Secretary role, assist with on-going projects such as the website or initiate new projects. Please get in touch at mail@whidbeywatersystems.org if you are interested in learning more about joining the board or want to refer someone you know. Thanks!

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.

Other News

- State Representative Clyde Shavers is co-sponsoring [HB 1906 - 2025-26 \(Increasing transparency and consumer protection in water system rates\)](#); a bill introduced last year that has passed the House and in the Senate at this time. Read additional comments from Representative Shavers [here](#) (scroll to item sub-titled "Protecting Your Monthly Budget with Guardrails for Water Rates").
- [Court to consider extending water adjudication claim deadline](#); Whatcom County will be allowed to file a motion to extend the May 1 claim-filing deadline in the state's sweeping water rights lawsuit, a judge ruled. Thousands of people must file a form by May 1 to assert their water rights claims, but only 1,600 of an anticipated 15,000–20,000 water users filed in 2025.
- [Can Washington state recover from its 'abysmally low' mountain snowpack?](#) There is still a chance for snow to come to Washington's mountains this season, but don't expect the region's dismal snowpack to miraculously recover.

News from our Partners

Island County

- In 2025 the county commissioned a third-party consultant to conduct a review of the Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP). In January, 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 (see the presentation in the working committee [agenda \(pages 45 to 55\)](#)).

To allow you to follow further progress, there is a dedicated web page on the county website for the [Coordinated Water System Plan Update](#). It currently describes the establishment and role of the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), the key focus areas for the update, and a high level breakdown of the work schedule. Still to come are links to the consultant's report highlighting key focus areas and additional details on upcoming meetings. This is a key program towards managing the future development and sustainability of the county's water systems.

- The draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan documents are still available for public review but the comment period has ended. Visit the county's [Comprehensive Plan page](#) for access to the documents and links to comment on the draft.

Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water

- Have a waterworks professional that deserves recognition? There are still a few days left to nominate them for the 2026 Drinking Water Week Awards (May 3 - 9). The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) is accepting nominations through February 26, 2026. Read all about it [here](#).
- The Office of Drinking Water most recent January 2026 ODW Now newsletter discusses: Drinking Water Week Awards 2026, WQMS downtime, new PFAS monitoring requirements go into effect and much more. Check it out [here](#).
- The next Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meeting will be held March 2, 2026. See the DWAG page [here](#) for meeting links and the [agenda](#). The scheduled topics include Water System Consolidation/Regionalization, Draft EPA Perchlorate Rule, PFAS Monitoring and more. You can sign up anytime for email notifications for all DWAG notices [here](#).

Department of Ecology

- [SHARP dashboard tracks contaminated site ratings](#): Ecology started using the Site Hazard Assessment and Ranking Process (SHARP) to assess contaminated sites in January 2024. There is now a real-time dashboard to track the status of about 6,500 contaminated sites in Washington that need cleanup or are being cleaned up. They range from small gasoline spills on dirt to complex mixes of different chemicals impacting soil, water, or air over hundreds of acres. Currently there are six (6) sites in Island County included on the dashboard; check it out [here](#).
- [Water Supply Availability Committee \(WSAC\)](#); This winter's rainfall and snowpack projections have taken a downward turn despite a relatively wet fall. WSAC meets monthly to review measurements and projections. You can dig into details at their [website](#), including meeting videos and presentation materials.

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

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.