



Water on Whidbey

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association

Newsletter, May 2026

Welcome to Water on Whidbey, our Quarterly Newsletter!

Whidbey Island Water Systems Association has switched to a quarterly newsletter. Our aim is 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. [Click here to subscribe to receive the website posts in your email inbox in between newsletter issues.](#)

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 quarter we welcome:

- Possession Shores (Group A - 103 Connections)
- Possession Point (Group B - 6 Connections)

WIWSA's membership is currently 120 members: 68 Group A water systems including municipal systems, 42 Group B systems and 10 associate members. All together WIWSA member systems serve over 10,000 connections in Island County.

Thank you all for your participation!

Q2/2026 Member's Meeting—June 16, 2026; 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm IN-PERSON and ZOOM

The next Quarterly Member's meeting will be held in-person on **Tuesday June 16, 2026 (5:00 - 7:00 pm)** at the Coupeville Library and online over Zoom. We hope to have an update on the franchise requirements discussed at the Q1 meeting followed by speakers presenting on water system reserves and rate structure. The agenda and meeting details will be emailed to the newsletter subscriber list near the end of May.

RCAC: Developing a Wellhead Protection Program; May 13, 2026; 9 AM to 12 Noon PST ONLINE

Source water is the foundation of any drinking water utility. Are you struggling to know where to begin on a wellhead protection program, or didn't realize your water system needed one? This

free training will provide a walk-through of the Department of Health's Wellhead Protection Program guidance and requirements.

There is no cost for this online program. [Click here to REGISTER](#) or for more information.

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

Thanks to everyone who attended the first 2026 Member's Meeting which was held in person on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at the Coupeville Library and online over Zoom. This is a slightly abbreviated recap, you can find the [full recap on our website](#) with links to the [meeting recording](#) and other material.

There was a quorum present at the library with over 40 people attending and another 20+ people joining on Zoom. The meeting was a lively discussion over Island County's new franchise requirements among the community members, county, state and industry representatives, followed by some general Q&A where members exchanged their expertise and experience. Thank you to Ed Sewester from Island County Public Works, and Joanne Skaar and the NW Natural team for participating in the Franchise discussion.

After summarizing WIWSA's December letter on the franchise topic (presented at January's 2025 Annual Meeting), WIWSA President Randi Perry introduced Ed Sewester (Island County Public Works). Ed reviewed the current Franchise program status along with the objectives of the new requirements that had been announced in a letter sent by the county to Franchise holders last September. He said that maintaining road integrity and limiting repair and maintenance costs is a large factor in developing the new requirements.

Ed was followed by Joanne Skaar (NW Natural Water Services) and members of the NW Natural team who gave the water operator perspective on the impact these requirements would have on the water system operations and expenses. They made a case that compliance requires more than running a few tests. The preparation, communications and coordination demand personnel and time to execute, all of which detracts from the 24/7 operations effort that is on-going.

Many audience members asked questions and provided feedback which Ed indicated, would be shared with the County Commissioners. Some particular requests are that the new franchise requirements must recognize that the Satellite Management Agencies, who currently manage the water systems, are the best qualified to provide any certification required, and that the county should be working with the fire districts directly in establishing any fire hydrant inspection and testing requirements.

RECAP: Group B Meetup; April 16, 2026; 5:00 to 6:30 pm ZOOM Only

The first Group B meeting for 2026 was held on April 16, 2026 over Zoom with 13 Group B water systems represented and about 20 attendees all together. This is an abbreviated recap, you can find the full [recap on our website](#) with links to the recordings and presentation.

Michael Quintus, Whidbey Island Water Systems Association (WIWSA) board member led the meeting and presented a [review of Cook Water Supply Operations](#), an 8-connection Group B system in North Whidbey that he manages for his community. It's a nicely designed and well-maintained system which includes 2 source wells along with filtering systems for both arsenic and manganese. Island County's Aneta Hupfauer and Tracy Hall spoke about Group B

planning and introduced a streamlined template for Group B water systems to prepare a draft plan.

You can view the recording and the presentations through the links below or read the [full recap on the website](#). If you want to be notified of future Group B meetings, be sure to register your email for meeting notices by [subscribing to the newsletter](#) and specify that you are on a Group B system.

- [Zoom Recording](#)
- [Cook Water Supply Operations presentation](#)
- [Group B Water System Planning presentation](#)
- [Download Group B Water System Planning Templates](#)

Annual Dues Invoices have been Emailed!

The annual dues invoices were emailed in March. If you did not receive an invoice, it may be that we need to update our records. At your earliest convenience, please contact our treasurer at treasurer@whidbeywatersystems.org.

We greatly appreciate your support and participation in 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

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 with 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.

Scholarship/Apprenticeship Program

We are delighted to share the news that WIWSA scholarship recipient Jeremiah Pace is a member of the 2026 graduating class from Evergreen Rural Water of Washington's apprenticeship program. The scholarship program was started in 2022 to help train a new generation of water service professionals on Whidbey Island. It takes a lot of effort to hold down a full time job and complete a rigorous training program at the same time. We are proud of Jeremiah's accomplishment and hope that others will follow his example. Congratulations Jeremiah!

[Click here to see some photos and read the full story regarding the graduating class.](#)

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, 2026.

Other News

- [State Representative Clyde Shavers co-sponsored HB 1906 - 2025-26 \(Increasing transparency and consumer protection in water system rates\)](#); a bill introduced last year that has made it through the legislative process and been signed by the governor. Read additional comments from Representative Shavers [here](#) (scroll to item sub-titled "Protecting Your Monthly Budget with Guardrails for Water Rates").
- [Home connecting to Navy waterline after PFAS detected in well](#); A North Whidbey home is being added to the Navy's waterline as the result of harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in a private drinking water well.
- [Washington ranks 37th for tap water quality in new national study](#); The study analyzed the latest data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to track how often community water systems violated safety standards. Washington averaged 1,991 violations per 100,000 residents. While that might sound high, it is still far cleaner than states at the bottom of the list like Alaska, which recorded over 21,000 violations per 100,000 people.
- [New Mexico Launches Satellite-Based Water Leak Detection Program](#); A sign of the times! Recently American WaterWorks Association (AWWA) featured a [webinar on ASTERRA](#), a company providing leak detection services through AI & satellite-based technology. You can read about their program in New Mexico [here](#).

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) and earlier this year launched a [webpage to provide information on the update process](#). Recently the Board of County Commissioners approved a resolution forming the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) to oversee the project and the initial report was released with recommendations for the upcoming project. You can find more information and links in the WIWSA blog post [here](#).
- Island County staff would like to remind all water systems that we are approaching the time to monitor for seawater intrusion with a water test for Chloride and Conductivity. [Read more.](#)
- The updated draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan documents has been made available for a final round of review with both the Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission in May. Visit the county's [Comprehensive Plan page](#) for access to the documents or read the county's public release [here](#).

Department of Health/Office of Drinking Water

- [Drinking Water Week 2026—May 3-9](#); The Office of Drinking Water (ODW) announced their annual award winners as part of Drinking Water Week. Check out the governor's

proclamation and the details on the winners [here](#). Congratulations to all those recognized along with everyone who is part of this vital service.

- The Office of Drinking Water published the March 2026 ODW Now newsletter: World Water Day, Free Zoom Online Cybersecurity Assessments Webinar, a Guide to Construction Loan Funding, a Backflow Incident, the latest on Lead & Copper rules, and much more. [Download it here](#).
- [Point-Of-Entry Treatment \(POET\) Filters for PFAS](#); Department of Health (DOH) recently published a new factsheet to serve as a starting point for people considering POET filters, sometimes called whole house filters. You can find the factsheet [here](#).
- The most recent Quarterly Drinking Water Advisory Group (DWAG) meeting was held March 2, 2026. See the DWAG page [here](#) for [meeting notes](#) and presentation materials. The scheduled topics included Water System Consolidation/Regionalization, Draft EPA Perchlorate Rule, PFAS Monitoring and more. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2026. 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](#).
- [Filing deadline for water rights claims extended to June 2027](#); Water users in Whatcom and Skagit counties affected by Water Resources Inventory Area 1 water rights adjudication have had their filing deadlines extended by 13 months following a March 9 Whatcom County Superior Court decision.
- [Statewide drought declared due to dismal snowpack](#); Near-record low snowpack threatens summer water supplies.
- [Yakima Basin water supply update—Fourth year of drought](#); On April 8, DOE declared a statewide drought emergency, the fourth in a row for the Yakima Basin. Declaring a drought allows for \$3 million in drought relief grants to address hardships on agriculture and communities.
- [Water Supply Availability Committee \(WSAC\)](#); WSAC meets monthly to review measurements and projections. You can dig into details at their [website](#), where you'll find meeting videos and presentation materials including the most recent March 12th meeting.

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.