

Mason County PUD No. 1 has been participating in watershed planning through an association called Water Inventory Resource Area (or WRIA 16) focusing on the area along Hood Canal.

**What is watershed planning?** Watershed planning is basically determining how our water will be used by both people and the environment. The WRIA groups examine how much water is available at different times of the year. Even though we live in a very wet area, at times we experience water shortages for in-stream flows. If we do not have enough water in the streams during certain times of year, the fish may not be able to move upstream to spawn. There is a movement within State agencies to set benchmarks for these in-stream flows, which will regulate the amount of development that is allowed in our area based on the levels of water the Department of Ecology (DOE) determines is available to serve both people and fish.

**Why is this important to Hood Canal residents?**

The main problem is that the information that DOE is using to set the in-stream flows is sometimes inaccurate. If the data is incorrect and regulations are set too high, we may not be able to meet the standards. Degradation on small streams in our area have caused extra gravel to bury the water and give the appearance that the water is not there at all, when it is just under the bedload during our dry months. If the in-stream flows are set based on the information the DOE currently has, which does not account for below-sediment water, it will affect Hood Canal property owners' ability to develop their land.

**What is the District doing to help?** We work with many groups to ensure that these in-stream flow regulations are based on good data and information. Unfortunately, with the budget cuts this year, the State's funding for WRIA groups has been suspended. We continue to work with local groups and the Washington PUD's Association to help policy makers make informed decisions on water usage and conservation. It is important that the local community's voice is considered when policy is being created that affects our economy and way of life. Protecting our salmon and our options for responsible growth and development are both high priorities for PUD 1.



Ron Gold, Commissioner

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** regularly meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the PUD 1 office in Potlatch. For more information on meetings, agendas and minutes, please visit [www.masonpud1.org](http://www.masonpud1.org).

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# CROSS CONNECTIONS AND YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Everyone wants safe drinking water. One way to protect the water that PUD 1 supplies to you is to identify “cross connections” or “potential cross connections”. Cross connections are physical or potential physical connections that could allow liquid, solid or gas to flow into the water system if the system lost pressure or if the pressure on your side was greater than the system’s pressure.

## POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL CROSS CONNECTIONS INCLUDE:

irrigation systems, garden drip systems, swimming pools, decorative ponds, private wells, hose bibs and fire sprinklers. Cross connections can contaminate the water supply and make you and your neighbors ill and potentially cause death.

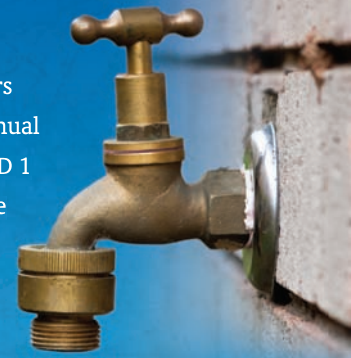
Several residential customers have filled out Water Use Questionnaires over the last few years and we have begun inspecting properties to determine which customers need to install backflow prevention assemblies. If your property has not been inspected and you have any of the potential cross connections listed above or a home-based business that uses water, please contact the PUD to schedule an appointment for a **FREE inspection** with one of the District’s Cross Connection Control Specialists (CCCS).

The CCCS will determine the type of backflow prevention assembly that needs to be installed. Customers will be responsible for hiring a certified backflow assembly installer to install the device and perform the initial test. We have a list of certified installers and our own certified installer/tester on staff. Once a backflow prevention

assembly is installed, customers are required by law to have annual testing by a certified tester. PUD 1 will send you a reminder notice when it is time to test with a list of certified testers.

The Cross Connection Control Program is designed to protect you and your drinking water. We appreciate your efforts to help us keep the water clean by reporting potential cross connections and having your property inspected. Please contact us with questions or to schedule your free inspection.

Jocelyne Gray, PE, Director of Operations - Water



## Renters vs. Landlords Who should be responsible for the utility account?

If you are a landlord that allows your renters to use power or water services on an account registered in your name, there are a few points you may want to consider:

- Under PUD’s policies, any late fees, shut-off fees for non-payment, meter tampering fees and collections charges are your financial responsibility, even if you are not the one living at the residence. Often, landlords are unaware that services have been disconnected for non-payment and if the renter turns the service back on

by themselves, the landlord is responsible for paying the tampering fees and other associated charges, which can add up to over \$250.00 each time.

- If your renter is late with the rent or refuses to pay, you may not terminate utilities, even if the service is in your name. The Washington’s Landlord-Tenant Act states that it is, “unlawful for a landlord to intentionally cause termination of any of his or her tenant’s utility services, including water, heat, electricity, or gas, except for an interruption of utility services for a reasonable time in order to make necessary repairs” (RCW 59.18.300).

Renters should also inquire about the history of the residence’s utility costs prior to signing any kind of rental agreement.

- Your deposit to sign up for service is not only based on a credit check, but also the highest bill in a 12 month period, multiplied by two. If your landlord or the tenants before you had high electric and water bills, your deposit amount is impacted by their history of usage at that

residence. (The same goes for purchasing a house that has had existing service with the prior owners.)

- Setting up service under your own account ensures that you are able to monitor utility usage and expenses and that your bill is paid on time every month.
- Water rates and basic charges for water vary depending on what system you are on. To find out what your basic monthly water charge is or a historic average of the electric bills, you can always call or visit our office.

For more questions on setting up a utility rental agreement, please call our office at (360) 877-5249 or stop by and visit with one of our Customer Service Representatives.

**Services that have been disconnected in the past may require reconnection fees to continue service at the residence.**



PUD 1 was hit with two large outages already this year. Both times have been due to trees and branches coming down over transmission lines. Heavy, wet snow, ice and wind all contribute to bringing even the healthiest trees down. Our goal is to restore power to our customers as safely and quickly as possible. There is an actual process that we use for restoring power and bringing customers back online which is sometimes confusing when a person without power sees that their neighbors down the street have power. There's a reason for that though.

**1 The first step in our process is to evaluate and repair our transmission lines.**

These lines supply power to our substations and without them our substations do not have power and we cannot get power to homes and businesses. This is the first priority for repairs. In the last two big outages, transmission lines were down and caused thousands of people to be in the dark.

**2 Next, we have to re-energize our substations.**

PUD 1 has four substations in our area that feed power to different groups in our district; Duckabush Road, Skokomish Valley, Union and Hoodspout each have a substation. We have to reenergize these stations and slowly bring people back online. Bringing everyone on too fast will cause the substation to overload and shut down again. That is why some groups of homes can be back online while others are still waiting. We have to monitor the levels of electricity being consumed to ensure that we can safely bring customers back onto the electrical system.

**3 If substations are working fine, our crews start to check our distribution lines.**

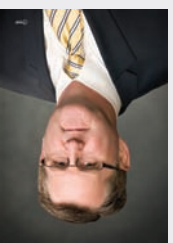
These are the power lines that distribute electricity from the substation to different groups or areas of homes and businesses. Distribution lines feed the power from the substation to the poles and underground lines.

**4 Secondary distribution lines branch out and act like the "middle men", so to speak, between the distribution system and your home or business transformer. We prioritize these repairs based on getting the largest amount of customers online first and this process often takes the longest. Primary and secondary distribution lines are the most common types of small outages that we encounter.**

**5 Lastly, if one or two individual customers are still without power,**

we check the line between your house and the service pole. Sometimes the damage can occur in a yard or near the road. If so, we caution you to avoid all downed or damaged lines and call the PUD immediately so we can make the repairs. Our number one goal is to provide you with safe and reliable electric and water services. Our crews work very hard around-the-clock to meet this goal. We are fortunate that we have very vigilant customers at PUD 1. We appreciate everyone's patience during these outages, as well as your phone calls to alert us to where the outages are so we can continue to serve you as efficiently as possible.

Steven Taylor,  
General Manager



# April 22nd is earth day!

## Here are some ways you can celebrate our planet and make a pledge to conserve energy this year!

- Visit [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) for more information on how to make a difference and to join their A Billion Acts of Green® movement.
- Switch your washing machine temperature to "cold" for all of your laundry.
- Change out your incandescent light bulbs for LED or CFL bulbs. (And recycle your CFLs!)
- Use a clothesline this summer.
- Invest in rechargeable batteries.
- Put your computer on "sleep" mode or turn it off when you're not using it.
- Find five things in your house to unplug or put on a power strip to turn on only when you need it like your cell phone, iPad or iPod, or remote control chargers.
- Purchase an energy-efficient home appliance and apply for your rebate through PUD 1. Call or visit our conservation specialist to learn which appliances are eligible.

**THE FIRST 50 CUSTOMERS** that bring this article into the PUD 1 office on Friday, April 20th will receive a reusable PUD 1 shopping tote, CFL light bulb and showerhead to support PUD 1's Conservation Program and Earth Day!



## APRIL IS BUDGET PLAN SIGN-UP MONTH!

To help our customers plan ahead for winter power bills, we are accepting enrollment in our Budget Payment Plan throughout the month of April. To qualify, you must have lived at your present address for at least one year and have your account paid in full. Your monthly payment will be the same throughout the year so you will always know how much you owe! For more information, contact Julie Gray, PUD 1 Credit & Collections Specialist.



**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!**  
1-800-424-5555