

The people of the Pacific Northwest have really been blessed with hydroelectric power- a resource that supplies power, irrigation and flood control through our region. When our country was growing in the early 20th century, so was the demand for electricity. The mighty Columbia River provided opportunities for hydroelectric power development and the ability to irrigate land, which at the time was considered desert, with fresh water. We now can turn nonproductive land into farm land to help feed our nation.

When developing these hydro resources, fish were not a high priority at that time. No matter what we do in life, there is always a cost, and unfortunately the fish paid a heavy price by losing access to existing and new habitats.

In today's world, things have really changed when it comes to the impact on fish and wildlife habitats. Even when a hydro plant needs to get relicensed, mitigation for fish is at the top of the list for consideration. Fish, particularly salmon, are very important to our Northwest culture and people. So what's changed is our effort to restore the habitats and make the fish runs a top priority right alongside power generation, irrigation and flood control. The restoration effort has a very large impact on our power rates in the Pacific Northwest, to the tune of about 25-33 cents for every dollar spent for electricity. Bonneville Power Administration estimates the costs spent on fish and wildlife restoration from 1978 through 2012 to total about \$13 billion, PLUS other "miscellaneous" billions in credits and capital investments.

While mistakes have been made in the past, the federal hydro system has learned from those mistakes and a tremendous amount of effort has been put into reestablishing this resource for our native and regional communities. These efforts have seen fish runs become restored to historical levels, and even higher levels in some cases. Hopefully, humans now realize that we have an obligation to be good stewards of our planet and the natural resources that we enjoy in the Pacific Northwest.



Ron Gold,  
District 2 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.mason-pud1.org](http://www.mason-pud1.org).

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important PUD information by emailing  
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CONNECTOR  
SPRING 2014**



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# WEATHERIZATION & INSULATION REBATES

PUD 1 also offers Energy Audits and an insulation rebate program. We are now taking Energy Audit appointments for 2014. Appointments book out several months in advance and are on a first come, first served basis.

Customers must undergo a free energy and insulation audit by the District's Energy Service Technician to help determine the home's current insulation levels in order to be eligible for the insulation rebate program. Please contact Energy Services to schedule an appointment at (800) 544-4223 or by emailing [teresah@mason-pud1.org](mailto:teresah@mason-pud1.org).

The Community Action Council of Lewis, Thurston & Mason Counties also offers a weatherization program for qualifying homes and customers, based on lower income eligibility guidelines. Services include attic, wall and floor insulation, targeted air sealing, and much more. If you know that your home needs weatherization but the cost to make repairs is not feasible for you, call the CAC at (360) 438-1100 x. 2100 for information on how to qualify for this FREE program and help conserve energy and lower your bills.



# April 22<sup>nd</sup> is Earth Day!

Looking to upgrade to an energy efficient appliance or heating/cooling system? Take a look at our website to see a list of conservation rebates that are available.

We had an overwhelming interest in the free CFL light bulbs and shower heads. While we ran out of our surplus of freebies, we will give more away at our Customer Appreciation BBQ in the fall. One box of bulbs and shower heads is allowed per year, per account (while supplies last). The 2014 Customer Appreciation BBQ will be advertised in the summer newsletter and on the PUD's Facebook page.



## WATER DEPARTMENT NEWS

# CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS go green

Each year, the District is required to report to our customers the water quality and the water use efficiency for our Group A water systems. We report this data in the annual Consumer Confidence Report. We use a template for our reports, but the District has 30 reports to update each year. Since 1999, these reports have been mailed out to each customer in the individual water systems.

In 2012, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) changed the rules allowing water systems

to provide the water quality reports electronically. This year we will mail post cards with the specific URL (website link) that will direct each customer to the specific report for the water system that serves them. Last year, a postcard was mailed with the Consumer Confidence Report that allowed customers to opt-in to continue receiving the hard copy report. If you are new to the water system or want to continue to receive a hard copy, please contact the Director of Operations-Water. The electronic version of the report will be a PDF version of the hard copy so you will need to download the free PDF reader to view the report <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

By mailing postcards instead of the full reports, the District will save money on printing and postage costs. The reports have grown from two pages to eight pages and are now in color. As regulations increase, the length of the reports will increase. In the future, we might be able to make the reports interactive.

If you have questions about the reports, please call me.

Jocelyne Gray, PE

*Director of Operations - Water*



## Cold Loads & What to Do When Your Power Comes Back On

Some customers may have experienced their power finally coming back on after several hours in the dark and cold only for it to go back off almost instantly. This is due to what we call "cold loading". It means that when the substation and power line feeders are reenergized, people naturally turn on the heat, TV, lights, go back to doing laundry, cooking, etc. This massive and instantaneous use of electricity on a cold substation causes the substation's breakers to trip open and then the power goes off again for everyone.

Crews try to bring up different feeders (these feed different subsections of homes) slowly and individually to avoid this cold loading issue, but sometimes it's unavoidable. However, there are things that customers can do to help avoid tripping the breaker.

- When you notice power fluxes or if your power goes out completely, shut off your breakers except for your porch light. This helps protect your home's equipment AND keeps your house from taxing the substation when you are energized.
- Keep only a porch light on. This lets our crews know that you are energized and alerts you that your power is restored.
- When power is restored, only use what you absolutely need for the first 90 minutes. This keeps the system from overloading and tripping the substation breaker.

In the early days of electricity, residents had to operate on a time-share type of model to prevent overloading on the system. Here is a humorous excerpt from Fairview City UT, council meeting minutes in 1911.

"January 13, 1911- Fairview passed an ordinance governing the electric light plant and establishing a rate schedule. The power was only available for lights at night only. In March of 1913, they passed a proposal to run the power plant 2 days per week for flat irons and washing machines. This soon caused problems with the telephone company who

shared the same lines and sometimes ran into power when they did not expect it. People with flat irons were expected to pay extra for the power used...In 1914, the power plant was run on Thursday from 10 to 4 to accommodate washing machines and irons...it was 1918 before the power company ran 5 days a week and 1921 before it ran continuously."

While we've come a long way from having to ration our electricity usage, that concept still applies today after an outage. Please help us and yourself by minimizing your electricity usage after a power outage. This will benefit you and your neighbors in the long run by avoiding a second outage. On another note, our tree trimming seems to have made a great impact this winter as our outages have been very few and small, compared to other years' severe weather seasons. Our system has done a great job of weathering the storms, so to speak, with minimal outages during the high wind and rain and even the snow.



Steven Taylor,  
General Manager

Contractor Heli-Dunn trims around the transmission line with their eight-bladed Heli-Saw.



## Vegetation Management Pays off This Winter

Over the last two years, the PUD has increased its focus on vegetation management, or tree trimming, as it's more widely known. The annual budget has allowed for an increase each year to help sustain this program. Over the last four years the vegetation management budget has tripled to \$325,000. In the summer of 2013, the District hired seasonal employees for a trimming crew. This in-house crew allowed the District to get more "bang for the buck" by working on the county and private roads while the contracted trimmers worked the main arterial highway transmission and distribution lines. This past winter, a helicopter trimming company was also hired to trim along the main transmission lines.

The results so far this winter have been fantastic. Outages, especially in the northern end of the system (Brinnon, Lilliwaup, Jefferson County) have been minimal and the outages that have occurred have been smaller and faster to repair. We had several large storm events in recent months in the Hood Canal with high wind, rain and even snow accumulation and only small, isolated outages were reported over the course of those events.

This doesn't mean that vegetation management will solve all of our outage problems. We live in a mountainous and very heavily vegetative area, but it is great to see a return on our investments and since outage reduction efforts are such a large part of our strategic plan and budgeting, we wanted to share our progress. We are scheduled to repeat this hybrid method of both in-house and contracted trimming this summer to maximize our outage reduction efforts.

## New Phone System, Automated Reminder Calls & Secure Payment Options

**We have had a lot of changes over the last few months in the customer service and finance departments.**

We have finally upgraded our antiquated phone system and now offer a new, automated payment option over the phone. This system is brand new and we continue to improve upon it to make it user-friendly. We appreciate customer feedback and if you are having issues paying online or over the phone, please let us know so we can address them. You can always choose to speak with customer service and they can take your payment for you by phone, mail, or in person if you prefer. Our new payment processes are now even more secure and help protect customer account and payment information. No payment information is stored on-site at the PUD office or on the PUD servers.

Also, beginning this February, the PUD started making automated courtesy calls to customers with past due accounts. This saves our credit and collections specialist countless hours of making the reminder phone calls. The automated voice will identify itself as Mason County PUD No. 1, ask you to call the office, and give you the toll free number. It WILL NOT provide or ask for account or payment information. It is simply a courtesy call to remind you that your account is overdue so you can avoid late fees and disconnect notices. Random callers that demand immediate payment over the phone or ask you for your personal account information are likely scammers and you should never give out your information unless you have contacted us directly and are sure that you are speaking with your PUD.

