



Tide flats at Hamma Hamma

## THE CONNECTOR FALL 2019

### COMMISSIONER CORNER

# WHAT IS THE TRUE COST OF WATER?

Water is free; however, the collection, transport and treatment of clean, potable water is not. These are many costs that the PUD incurs to ensure that our communities have access to clean, reliable, potable, and safe drinking water.

Communities that do not have access to sustainable and safe water supplies are at risk. When there are service disruptions from failing or inadequate infrastructure, the impacts on local communities are huge.

There are more than 800,000 miles of drinking water pipe in the United States and it is at a crisis point. We need to invest in our water infrastructure in order to maintain our quality of life and protect the communities where we live from public health and environmental risks. Investing in our local water infrastructure has a positive return for the public health of the communities we serve.

The water portion of your utility bill from PUD 1 supports the ongoing compliance, maintenance, and infrastructure

improvements needed to keep the water systems operating efficiently; however, the need for further investment is great. In some of the communities we serve, the pipes were installed 60 or more years ago. By building on past ingenuity and protecting the future, we need to be investing in our water infrastructure today. We do this through a measured approach in our strategic work plan and budgeting processes.

Our supply of water is not infinite. By focusing on providing the best quality water to our communities we need to realize the connection cycle, from drinking water to wastewater, and back to us. Pressures from climate change and population growth are straining the clean, potable water systems up to or beyond capacity. Through responsible system and infrastructure planning and meeting our obligation to the customers of all the water systems we serve, there will be continued sustainability for growth and livability.

Many of us have friends and neighbors who work in the water sector. They all have a passion for the communities they serve and are devoted to the safety of the water supply. They work 24/7, 365 to ensure we all have reliable access to safe, clean, potable water. The water crew at PUD 1, is second to none. They are dedicated professionals in the trade.

This is not a "me/I" thing, it is a "we/us" thing. We are in this water business together. We all need to step back and pay close attention to how we use our most precious resource: Water!



Mike Sheetz, Commissioner  
District 1



# COMMUNITY RESILIENCY TAKES PLANNING AND PREPARATION



Fall is always busy in the PUD world. We are under the gun to finish up our summer projects, we are doing our strategic planning for next year, and working on our budgets. One of the things that the PUD 1 commission brought up during our strategic planning process is disaster preparedness and safety. Capitalizing on our two safety awards that PUD 1 won this year, we are expanding that safety culture mindset to more than our day-to-day activities.

In 2017, PUD 1 annexed into Mason County's hazard mitigation plan and attended all the disaster planning workshops and mitigation exercises. This not only made us more aware of potential hazards in our area and connected us with resources in our community first responder partners, but it also made us eligible for grant funds through FEMA for mitigation projects.

One of the projects we used to apply for funding was for water marshalling stations across Mason County in the event of a catastrophic earthquake or similar event that would render many of our water systems unusable. We identified five systems throughout our county that we could direct the public to for safe, potable drinking water. We also identified water reservoirs that would benefit from seismic valve retrofits to help avoid the breaking of valves and draining of all that water into communities.

We don't know yet if our projects were chosen for funding, but it spurred conversation about how prepared we are at the PUD office if "the big one" hits. We've had landslide issues on 101 where the PUD has been isolated north and south for several hours. What if it were several days? Where would our personnel sleep? What would they eat? How would we get our line trucks out to start putting the lines back up? Who would we coordinate with?

This has been identified as a primary focus for the PUD in 2020, and I invite you to make it a primary focus in your own homes

and business as well. Where will you sleep? What will you eat? Do you have an out-of-town contact person that your family all knows to call to check in with? Do you have a generator or a place nearby to go with a generator if the power is out for a long time? These are all good things to plan for anyway, even if we never see the impending Cascadia subduction zone quake in our lifetimes. Other emergencies also arise that require planning.

One of the things we worry most about when we have natural disasters and extreme weather events that block roadways and take out power or water is reaching our most vulnerable community members in time. If you have a neighbor or family member on oxygen or life support or only electric heat, you might think about helping them establish an emergency plan as well. We are all more POWERful together.



Kristin Masteller  
General Manager



## OPERATIONS REPORT

The primary focus for water and power crews this summer have been reliability and infrastructure replacements. We have done several water main replacement projects, along with underground cable replacements and overhead-to-underground line conversions.

We keep a list of high outage and high leakage areas for power and water. We prioritize these areas and tackle them section-by-section, year-after-year. This year's good weather and the extra manpower from our summer temporary crew allowed us to do replacements and conversions at Dalby Road, Seamount, Point Whitney, Alderney, and Highland Estates, along with other various projects throughout the year.

We also did several well pump replacements, eight water

reservoir inspections and cleanings, and the installation of two new water system generators. This was in addition to the substation maintenance at T3ba'das, pole replacements and tree trimming in various side areas. Our contracted tree trimming project will begin sometime in October and occur down the main state highways.

We plan to continue system maintenance as long as the weather permits and in between power outages and water emergencies. If you'd like to see a status report on the work we've done this year and have planned for 2020, please visit our website and read our strategic work plan on the "Meetings" page.



Darin Hall  
Director of Operations



# BUDGET WORKSHOP AND RATE HEARING Scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>

FCS Group was hired to conduct the analyses and they have presented the findings from the COSAs, as well as the recommendations for rate structures, at various board meetings over the last year. We also have these presentations and materials on our website on the "Meetings" page. On November 12th, staff will present our first draft of the 2020 budget at a board workshop. This workshop will be held at 11:00 a.m. in the board room at the PUD office. Following the workshop, a public rate hearing will be held at 1:00 p.m. The regular business meeting will follow the rate hearing.

Materials for these special meetings will also be posted on the PUD's website for those who aren't able to attend the meetings in person. You can also stop by or call the office to ask questions you might have on either the budget, COSAs, or the rate designs. We have also prepared a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet, which is available both at the front counter and on our homepage at [www.mason-pud1.org](http://www.mason-pud1.org).

On behalf of the PUD 1 commissioners, I invite you to join us and welcome your questions and input.



Katie Arnold  
Treasurer

Over the last 15 months, the District has undergone a cost of service analysis (COSA) for both the power and water businesses. The purpose of these studies is to ensure that the District is capturing sufficient revenues to cover the cost to replace infrastructure, adequately fund reserves, and ensure that each customer class, and subsequent rate schedules, are fair and equitable based on how that customer class uses the PUD's water or electric system. This has been a huge undertaking, given that it's the first time that the District has undergone a full cost of service analysis.

## 2018 FUEL MIX SUMMARY



HYDRO

88.47%



NUCLEAR

10.75%



COAL

0%



NATURAL GAS

0.01%



BIOMASS

0%



OTHER

2.77%



## PUD 1's GM Named a 40 UNDER 40 by Puget Sound Business Journal

Puget Sound Business Journal unveiled their 2019 list of 40 Under 40 honorees, naming PUD 1's general manager Kristin Masteller one of "the 40 most impactful business leaders under the age of 40...who are making major strides in their career while leaving a positive impact and helping shape the Puget Sound region". With over 200 nominations this year, Masteller was chosen as one of the 40 elite, and is the only public sector leader that made it on this year's list.

Masteller accepted the award at the PSBJ's annual 40 Under 40 luncheon in Seattle on September 27th, stating, "I am humbled and honored to be in the company of the other 39 leaders on this list. I have been given this great opportunity to serve my community and to work with 23 other fantastic public employees." She added, "We all work together to provide a valued service to our community, and I am pleased that people feel that the work we are doing, and that I am leading, is making a positive impact."

Others from 2019's 40 Under 40 class include leaders from the banking, retail, restaurant, tech, nonprofit, and health care industries. Read more at [www.bizjournals.com/seattle/40-under-40](http://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/40-under-40).





## Round Up for the Canal Comfort Fund

As of October 2019, the PUD issued over \$5,500 in Canal Comfort funds to Jefferson County and Mason County's Community Action Councils, assisting 37 households in need. Thank you for your compassion and generosity!

If you are able, please consider rounding up your payment and applying the change to the Canal Comfort Fund. Every little bit helps (and is tax-deductible)! Your neighbors in need will greatly appreciate it. You can now do this online through SmartHub or on your paper remittance slip. You can set up ongoing monthly donations or one-time gifts as well.

Past practice has been to apply donations to the CAC specifically in the county that the donor lives. We polled our donors in 2018 to ask if they would prefer to keep the donations in their own county or if the PUD could split the donations across both counties. The majority voted to split the donations, however the PUD wants to be respectful of our donors' wishes. We do not want to lose any donations over this change. If you feel strongly that you'd like to keep your donations in your own county and not split them amongst customers in both counties, please note your preference on your remittance slip, or call or email Shiane and let her know your preference (360) 877-5249 x. 201, or shianes@mason-pud1.org. Otherwise, we will apply donations to both organizations. Either way, your donations are greatly appreciated!

# STREAM MONITORING

## Informs Water Resource Planning

This summer, the PUD installed stream monitoring stations in three creeks in the Union area. The data collected at these stations is vital for understanding how human consumption, weather and infiltration affect local groundwater availability. With stream monitoring stations located throughout the area, coupled with rain and groundwater monitoring, a comprehensive model can be generated to ensure water sustainability.

Schumacher, Alderbrook and Big Bend creeks have all been equipped with a surface water level staff gauge mounted on a 4 foot well point containing a data logging device that continuously reads the creeks temperature, and pressure. Once a month, the data is collected from the loggers, and PUD personnel take depth and water flow measurements at different points of the creek's cross section.

After a year of data collection, a good understanding of the sensitivity and environmental tendencies of the Union streams will help ensure sustainable water design and efficient water use for future generations. This helps us with our water system planning processes and will help the county with their land use process.

Starting in October, the public can also



James Reyes, right, is show how to setup cross section measurements by Joel Lecuyer from Kitsap PUD.

access the data we are collecting. Our friends at Kitsap PUD helped us design this monitoring network and they host our data on their own network's site, so Mason PUD 1 didn't have to pay a huge sum of money to develop our own site for just a few streams. This info can be found on the Mason PUD 1 website at: <https://mason-pud1.org/water-monitoring/> or at Kitsap PUD's site: <http://kpudhydrodata.kpud.org/>.

The District thanks Kitsap PUD, Hood Canal Communications, Alderbrook Resort, the Skokomish Indian Nation, Green Diamond Resource Company, and the Squaxin Island Tribe for their assistance and support in launching this monitoring project.

James Reyes, EIT  
Water Resource Engineering

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 [mason-pud1.org/about/meetings/](http://mason-pud1.org/about/meetings/).



[www.mason-pud1.org](http://www.mason-pud1.org)

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