



View from t3ba'das Neighborhood on Skokomish Reservation

THE CONNECTOR SPRING 2026

WATER PROJECTS UPDATE

The water department has several projects underway in various phases of planning and construction. Here's a snapshot of each of the statuses of the projects:

- **Manzanita Water Storage-** This water storage project in Union is nearly complete, with construction expected to wrap up in May. Two water reservoirs were constructed next to the new substation- one for storage for the Alderbrook water system and one for the Highland Park system. A booster station and backup generator are also installed as part of the project. This project was funded by a Public Works Assistance Account package with partial grant funding and the rest a low-interest loan.
- **Shadowood Water Storage-** This project off of Cole Rd. in Shelton will be completed mid-year. The concrete reservoir and booster station are installed and the old tank and building will be demolished and final grading and landscaping completed. This project was funded by a combination of DWSRF grants and a partial low interest loan, which was mostly offset by capital budget funding from the legislature.
- **Bay East-** This project in the Lynch Road area is completing the permitting phase and Dept. of Health approval and will be put out to bid in 2026 for construction. This project will install iron and manganese treatment and have a new booster station. This project was 85% funded by DWSRF grant with 15% as a low interest loan.
- **Canal View-** This project in Eldon is in the permitting and DOH approval phase. It will be bid this spring with construction to occur and be completed before the end of 2026. It includes a new reservoir and mainline, backup generator, and possibly treatment for saltwater intrusion, this depends on bid pricing for the first part of the project. This project was funded by a DWSRF grant.
- **Big 5 Consolidation (now Springwood)-** This project consolidates five small systems just outside of the Shelton city limits. It will intertie Cherry Park, Springwood, Lakewood Heights, Island Lake Manor and Woodland Park into one system, now known as the Springwood Consolidated System. Mainline installation to the new reservoir at Cherry Park will be constructed and treatment installed, as well as a backup generator. This nearly \$5 million project was funded entirely by a DWSRF grant.

These large construction projects are in addition to the daily work the PUD crews are undertaking this summer including lead service line inventories, new water services, and small mainline replacements. Any questions about the projects can be directed to the water department at (360) 877-5249 or waterdept@mason-pud1.org.



Brandy Milroy,
Water Resource Manager



New infrastructure
at Shadowood.

Our Federal Hydropower System

Litigation vs. Collaboration

States Leaders Should Choose Regional Collaboration over Litigation for the Federal Hydropower System. The long-litigated battle over balancing the operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) and the needs of Columbia River fish wages on before Judge Simon in Oregon U.S. District Court, with Oregon and Washington's governors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) choosing to continue to litigate rather than collaborate. Study after study has been conducted on the taxpayer's dime, including a federal Environmental Impact Statement and a 2022 "Murray-Inslee Report" to evaluate the impacts of the federal river system and eventual replacement of the benefits of the system to the Pacific Northwest and the United States at large.

Each one of these studies, regardless of the partisanship of the administration commissioning the study, has concluded that the Columbia River System is the economic engine of the Pacific Northwest and that the power it provides to our region is not currently replaceable, therefore the studies recommended against dam breaching. Despite billions of public ratepayer dollars (27 cents of every dollar of your power bill) going to fish and wildlife habitat projects, Oregon's Governor Tina Kotek decided to litigate again, with Washington's Governor Bob Ferguson's support. Ironically, both governors also pontificate energy affordability for the average Washingtonian and Oregonian. Oregon's governor refused to even meet with her state's public power leaders before filing the injunction, despite promising them a "seat at the table" on the future of the Federal Columbia River Power System discussions. Remember, this is where we get our low cost, carbon free power.

This newest injunction has resulted in Judge Simon ordering more spill over the dams, again. This means that an already-settled rate case between BPA and the public power customers that depend on BPA for power supply, now must renegotiate power rates through 2028 and BPA now has to make up a projected \$300 million shortfall in just two years, due to the loss of power generated because of the mandated spill. It also must find another 250 average megawatts of power on the market to meet the load for its customers, further driving up costs for Mason PUD 1 and other utilities that depend on BPA for our power supply.

This happened before, in 2018, and it resulted in a pass through "spill surcharge" of \$10.2M. We anticipate that BPA will issue a similar mechanism again, landing on customer's bills in late 2026. After discussions with PUD 1's management team, we have come up with a plan to try to absorb the anticipated costs without having to pass them through to the ratepayers - for now. We will have to reevaluate our cash position and budget every quarter to ensure that we can continue to absorb it. But even if we are able to absorb these higher power rates, what this additional cost does to the PUD is it takes away from our capital projects that we have already in the works, like tree trimming, the Jorstad Substation, and line rebuilds. It reduces our cash-on-hand that we have been diligently building up each year, so we have three months of funds on hand to pay our bills in the event of another emergency like COVID or the crippling snow and windstorms. PUD 1 and other public power leaders have been working through our industry associations to plead with the state leaderships of Washington and Oregon as well as impacted Tribes and NGOs to

come to the table to look at specific habitat projects that would be a better use of these litigation dollars. We would like to see that money instead be invested in focused habitat projects on culturally significant tributaries that help with salmon populations. This continued decades long litigation is tiresome and expensive. The states are using your tax money to fight the federal government, who defends itself with money from your electricity rates, just to get an outcome that costs you even more money in your monthly power bills.

Until there are replacement resources for all the power, shipping, irrigation, tourism and other benefits that the Columbia River system provides, we cannot continue to push for breaching, and we cannot continue to lower the power production output; especially when our state is on track to increase power demand by 30% in the next decade and we are simultaneously shuttering baseload resources, like natural gas plants. There already is not enough energy to meet the growing demand. This is just going to exacerbate issues and raise market prices on energy overall.

I frankly don't know how much louder we can sound the alarm. Oregon and Washington's energy policies are driving costs up for families and businesses and driving energy reliability down, putting our region at risk of rolling blackouts and brownouts that will cripple our economies and put other BPA-served states (like Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Nevada) in harm's way. When the brownouts begin, we don't want to be put in an "I told you so" position. Nobody benefits from that. We want public policy that works for all stakeholders. My hope is that the public power community can compel the governors and our policy makers to listen.



Jack Janda, Commissioner
District 3

Legislative Wrap Up

The Washington State Legislature wrapped up their short session in March. Mason PUD 1 was awarded \$103,000 in the state capital budget for matching funds on our grid resilience grants. Special thanks to Representative Travis Couture for sponsoring our application, as well as to Rep. Dan Griffey and Sen. Drew MacEwen of the 35th District for supporting the PUD's work and funding request.

Senator MacEwen also sponsored SSB 5690 regarding mandating better communication and coordinated grant requests for utility relocations in connection with Washington State Department of Transportation's fish

culvert replacements. This was a priority issue for Mason PUD 1 over the last several years and we thank Senator MacEwen for reintroducing the bill again this session and getting it signed into law.

In addition to the advocacy work PUD 1 staff conducted in Olympia, the PUD's General Manager also travelled to Washington, D.C. with the Washington PUD Association again this year to advocate for several federal priorities impacting Mason PUD 1, as well as a \$5.6 million federal appropriations request to rebuild sections of line on U.S. Highway 101.



PUD 1 team at PUD Day on the Hill in Olympia

UPCOMING Electric Construction



New Poles at Canal View

The electric department has some major construction projects occurring on U.S. Highway 101 in Eldon and Jorstad Creek Rd., along with some smaller line rebuilds.

The PUD received grant funding to construct the two exit feeders from the future Jorstad Substation off of U.S.F.S. Road 24, down to the highway. This construction will be out to bid this spring and will be completed by the fall.

The PUD also received FEMA grant funding to continue our mainline replacement on U.S. Highway 101. We are in the design process

right now and will put that project out to bid in late spring for 2026 construction. The project will replace undersized poles between Eldon and Duckabush Rd. and reconductor with heavier gauge lines to protect the wire from trees.

Enchantment Heights is on the schedule for an underground mainline replacement of the old 1970's direct burial cable. This is the first phase of the rebuild which will be budgeted ongoing in future years until all the old cable is replaced.

The PUD's line crew is working on smaller rebuilds in several areas in 2026 including Indian Beach, Pebble Ridge, Juanita Drive, and

Union Heights. They are wrapping up Pebble Ridge this spring. These projects are also part of the FEMA grant.

In addition to the existing FEMA grants, the PUD received awards for a \$1 million vegetation management project to trim along the power lines in Mason County and remove several danger trees threatening the power grid. FEMA also awarded approximately \$600,000 for the installation of 10 backup generators on PUD-owned water systems that serve fire hydrants or nearby fire districts to provide fire protection during outages or wildfires. The vegetation management project will begin this fall and continue through early 2027. Notices will go out to affected property owners prior to work beginning.

The PUD thanks our customers and community in advance for their patience during our construction projects. Any questions on the projects can be directed to the PUD office at (360) 877-5249 or customerservice@mason-pud1.org.



Jeremiah Waugh, PE,
Engineering Manager

Congratulations to PUD 1 Water Team Members



Kobe Vind, PUD 1's water/wastewater apprentice, obtained both his Water Distribution Manager 1 certification as well as his Cross Connection Control Specialist certification. Congratulations to Kobe for working hard to achieve these certifications balancing all the studying with his ongoing water apprenticeship.



Madison Duncan, PUD 1's Water Engineering/GIS Technician obtained her Cross Connection Control Specialist certification. Madison has elevated and expanded the PUD's GIS capabilities since she came on board last year. Even though she's new to the public water business, she is super sharp and nearly aced the CCS test!

Electric Meter Audit Beginning this Spring

Meet Summer, PUD 1's contracted journeyman meterman! Summer has been a meter contractor for PUD 1 for several years. When she's not programming and installing our large customer meters through her own business, Summer will be working as a temporary employee from April through July to conduct a system-wide audit of the PUD's electric meters. This will help us update and verify our records of meter service sizes and identify any meter issues in the field that need follow-up attention from the PUD crews.

Most of the time, like with our meter readers, you will not even notice that Summer has visited your property, but in some cases if your meter is hard to access, customer service may call you or Summer may knock on your door for help accessing the PUD's equipment. You may also see her on your doorbell cameras. We want to make sure everyone is aware of the audit work Summer is doing so customers aren't surprised or wonder if her visit is for legitimate PUD business.

She's very nice and professional, so if you see her, give her a wave or say hello. And always, if you have any questions or concerns about people on your property accessing your utility equipment, please feel free to contact the office to verify they're with the PUD.

Josh Garlock, Electric Superintendent



Plant the right plant in the **RIGHT SPOT!**

One of the things we really dislike doing is cutting someone's decorative trees and plants that grow into our electric and water lines and infrastructure. We know that people enjoy their trees and foliage, and we would rather help customers choose the right spot when planning their spring planting, rather than have to cut it or replace it down the

road. Remember-it's not just about power lines and transformers! Roots also cause damage to our water mains and reservoirs. It's best to keep even low growing plants about 10-15 feet away from utilities.

And remember! Call 811 before you dig! If you hit the lines without locates, you can be charged for the time and materials to make the repairs. 811 is free and takes up to 48 hours (2 business days) to get the locates completed. Much easier than breaking a water pipe or dangerously making contact with an underground power line.

KEEP CLEAR
Do not fly objects near power lines.

LARGE TREES AREA
Plant large trees (over 35 feet high when mature) at least 50 feet way from overhead power lines.

PRUNING AREA
To help prevent outages, trees and shrubs will be pruned if they are within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

MEDIUM TREES AREA
Plant medium trees (25 - 35 feet high when mature) at least 25 feet away from overhead power lines.

KEEP CLEAR
Keep the area around the meter clear for reading and safety.

CLEARANCE AREA
Trees and shrubs should be planted at least 10 feet away from ground-mounted transformers.

LOW TREES AREA
Plant low growing trees (15 feet high when mature) and shrubs at least 10 - 25 feet from overhead power lines.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS regularly meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Meetings are now held both in person and remotely. The call-in instructions for the public are posted on the PUD website along with the meeting packets. For more information on meetings, please visit mason-pud1.org or call the PUD office.

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