

# Hilltop Water Owners Newsletter January, 2014

## **Notice of Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, February 9, 2014 2:00 pm**

### **Lummi Island Fire Hall**

The Annual Meeting is the one time each year that we invite all members together to review the operation of our water system, including next year's budget, member satisfaction, and the annual operations and financial reports. Though the Board of Directors meets monthly to address ongoing Association business (all members are invited to attend), this is the one meeting each year when we actively solicit your participation. It's a great chance to learn more about your water system.

## **2013 Highlights**

*Arsenic.* Monthly lab tests through 2013 continued to show good results from our arsenic treatment system at Well 2, with an average concentration of *6.0 ppb*, improved slightly from last year's annual average of *7.4 ppb*. The MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level) standard established by the EPA for arsenic in drinking water is 10 ppb; we have now been in compliance for 23 consecutive months. Our highest monthly result in 2013 was 8.8 ppb and our lowest was 2.7 ppb.

*Health Caution.* Please note that even though we now meet the legal standard for arsenic, some people who drink water with even smaller amounts of arsenic over many years could experience various negative health effects, including skin damage,

circulatory problems, or an increased cancer risk. Therefore, some members may wish to use bottled water or install additional filtration systems for their drinking water.

*Reservoir Cleaning.* In April, our reservoir was emptied completely for cleaning. We were able to keep water service active throughout the process, and most of our members experienced nothing unusual. It was encouraging to find that on this first reservoir cleaning since construction in 2008, the tank was found to be in excellent condition, and required very little cleaning.

*New Fire Supply Point.* In September, a new supply point was installed near the Library in conjunction with the recent Island Library remodel. Costs for the project were shared between the Library and the Fire Dept. This 4-inch standpipe improves fire safety for nearby residences and public places. It will also serve as a purging point for routine cleaning of our mains.

*Lowered Well Capacity.* During the past year production capacity has dropped severely at our oldest well (*Well #3*). The steel well casing has grown very rusty over long usage, and needs an expensive rehab to restore its capacity. We are continuing to explore options, but indications are that this is likely to be a significant investment expense in the coming year. We thank all members for being frugal with their water use over the last several months, and request continued conservation awareness.

*Leak Prevention.* Quarterly meter readings this year have yielded useful information about system efficiency by identifying chronic low-level leaks at a number of service connections. In addition, on several occasions members' outdoor faucets, pipes, or connections have failed, causing *severe and rapid losses* of several thousand gallons from the reservoir before we were able to locate the cause and take appropriate action.

We encourage all members to inspect their plumbing on a regular basis, keep it in good repair, report unusual puddles or suspicious sounds of running water in the ground within our service area, and turn off water at the meter if going away for extended periods. We rely heavily on our members for alerts about suspected leaks.

*Water Conservation.* Our water supply capability is predictably challenged during the summer, when usage is highest and aquifer recharge is at its lowest. Therefore water conservation continues to be an ongoing responsibility for all members, especially until normal production capacity is restored at Well #3.

We record water meter readings quarterly, and use the readings to identify and inform individual owners of unusually high usage. In addition, this year we will continue to include a small usage-based charge (\$.50 per 1000 gals) in your annual bill to keep you aware of your own household usage. The guidelines in the table on page 3 show that various water-saving appliances and usage habits can make a big difference in how much water your household uses.

## **Financial Report**

Preliminary financial data indicate we were close to budget for operational income and expenditures for 2013, running a small surplus for the year.

As mentioned above, sometime this year we will definitely have a significant well rehab expense, and there is always some uncertainty about when we will need to renew our treatment media or add an additional treatment tank at well #2. Therefore we need to plan for additional expenses on the order of \$10,000- \$15,000.

We hope to be able to sustain service with the current base rate and the small per-unit rate instituted last year. A financial report summarizing financial projections for 2013 will be available for the AGM, where these issues will be discussed more thoroughly.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

We are each ultimately responsible for our personal and household safety and well-being in case of an emergency situation. Volunteer responders must secure themselves, their families and their homes before being available to offer assistance. Each household should have an emergency plan that coordinates with their local neighborhood plan.

In an emergency, our water system is vulnerable to the whims of nature, so please store enough water for your household for at least three days. Keep in mind that even under normal conditions we may encounter interruptions due to unforeseen circumstances.

## Pressure Relief Valve (PRV) Maintenance

Service connections below 50 feet elevation should be protected from occasional high water pressure that could damage household plumbing. If you have a PRV, know its location and have it tested periodically. Call Jeremy at 758-2612 for more information.

## Reminders

- Please report to the system manager or to a board member (see below) any unusual surface water puddles, water flows, bubbling of water, etc., in the vicinity of our mains.
- Maintenance of water supply components on the *user side* of the meter is the responsibility of the user, *including* PRV's.
- Please know your shutoff location and how to use it. Keep necessary tools handy for emergencies.
- When leaving your residence unattended for extended periods, turn off the water at the mains.
- Questions regarding shut off and meter location should be referred to the system manager or the board.
- Leaks in home plumbing can be detected by turning off all home faucets and water-using appliances and watching the water meter flow indicator. If a leak exists the small wheel will continue to revolve.

## *Residential water usage guidelines*

- Toilet 1.6 gal/flush low flow  
3.5-5.0 gal/flush standard  
4.5-7.0 gal/flush pre 1980
- Bath 36 gallons full bath
- Shower 2-3 gal/min low flow  
5-7 gal/min standard
- Brush teeth ½ gallon wet brush  
10 gallons tap running
- Wash hands 1 gallon fill basin  
2-3 gallons tap running
- Dish wash 5 gallons Wash/rinse  
15-60 gal tap running
- Dishwasher 7 gal/load short cycle  
16 gal/load full cycle
- Washing m/c 27 gal/ short cycle low H2O  
60 gal/ full cycle top H2O
- 10 min car wash 40/80 gallons
- Lawn watering 4/8 gallons per minute
- Running toilet 100/400 gal/hour  
Leaking toilet 50 gallons and up per day

## Thank you!

### Board of Directors

Richard Frye 758-2959  
Malcolm Hutchings 758-7194  
Duncan McLane 758-2354  
Barry Herman 758-2068  
Molly Harmoney 758-2642  
Tom McKernan 758-2212

### System Manager

Jeremy Robinson 758-2612