



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to our customers.

March 2025

Commissioner Message

PFAS Remediation at Thurston PUD Water Systems

By Chris Stearns, PUD Commissioner and Board Chair

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large family of chemicals in use since the 1950's to make a wide variety of stain-resistant, water-resistant, and non-stick consumer products. Some examples include food packaging, outdoor clothing, and non-stick pans. PFAS also have many industrial uses because of their special properties. In Washington State, PFAS have been used in certain types of firefighting foams utilized by the U.S. military, local fire departments, and airports.



Commissioner Chris Stearns, District 3

Background

PFAS was identified as a contaminant by EPA with a lifetime advisory level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Effective January 1, 2022, the WA State Board of Health adopted State Action Levels (SAL) for PFAS. Prior to SALs being adopted, Thurston PUD began testing for PFAS in 2020 on our water systems and tested all of our Group A water systems by February 2022.

In 2024, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted maximum contaminant levels (MCL) that will be effective on November 20, 2029. There were ten PUD water systems over the MCL. The PUD mailed letters to all customers on these ten water systems by early July 2024 informing them about the PUD's plans for PFAS remediation.

Thurston PUD's Actions

Upon learning of the new potential adoption of EPA MCL's, the PUD hired the consultant Northwest Water Systems in March 2023 to evaluate the water systems that had levels of PFAS detected and develop engineering options for PFAS remediation. We wanted to ensure that our water systems would be ready at the earliest possible time to move forward with PFAS remediation. We submitted a request for grant funding from the Washington State Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) in November 2023. Our request for grant funding was approved for six water systems. Out of the four systems that did not receive grant/loan forgiveness funding, two of the systems no longer require remediation as they are no longer over the MCL. The PUD submitted another request for grant funding from the Washington State Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) for the remaining two water systems in November 2024.

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Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman


District 2


Russell E. Olsen


District 3

Chris Stearns

Important Messages

 Check out the "All About Our Customer Service Team" article on Page 2.

 Project Update—Hawley Hills 686 water system. Page 3.

 World Water Day—March 22nd. Page 4.

To report a water quality concern or other water emergency call us toll free at [\(866\) 357-8783](tel:8663578783).

We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to address water system issues. Phone calls are directed to an afterhours call center and on-call staff.

Thurston PUD
1230 Ruddell Road SE
Lacey, Washington 98503
(360) 357-8783
Toll-Free: (866) 357-8783
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www.ThurstonPUD.org

Customer Service Team Spotlight

This month, let's shine the spotlight on the PUD's Customer Service Team. This team plays a very important role as they help ensure the PUD runs smoothly. Please continue reading to learn more about this section's role at the PUD.

What specific functions and recurring duties does the Customer Service Team cover?

The Customer Service Team covers many specific duties and processes within the PUD. Below is a list of some of the most important tasks completed or performed by our Customer Service Representatives:

- Assists customers with a multitude of functions by phone, email, and in-person
- Works closely with Meter Readers to equip them to get meter reads and audit meter reads received
- Customer notification of potential leaks or other issues based off the meter reads
- Generate service requests related to water quality issues, maintenance requests, and other areas
- Monthly billing of active accounts
- Customer account management
- Processing customer payments
- Account past due and disconnection processes
- Manage the Customer Support Program
- Deleted accounts collection
- Manage incoming and outgoing mail



The Customer Service Team

From left: Cathy Wise, Kalelia Gipson, Mariah Montague, and Raven Thomas

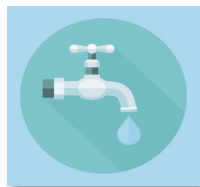
How many people are employed within the Customer Service Team?

The Customer Service Team is comprised of four (4) employees. This team includes our Customer Service Supervisor, Mariah Montague, Senior Customer Service Representative, Raven Thomas, and our Customer Service Representatives Cathy Wise and Kalelia Gipson. This is a tenured team, with a combined 24 years of employment at the PUD.

What is the Customer Service Team working on now?

Most Customer Service duties are recurring, which means that tasks like monthly billing and the past due accounts process are processed each month like clockwork. They also greatly contribute to special projects like water system acquisition, public hearings and meetings, and technology upgrades/improvements. Without the hard work of the Customer Service Team, the PUD wouldn't be what it is today!

PFAS Remediation at Thurston PUD Water Systems (*Continued from Page 1*)



PFAS Treatment is not required by DOH at this time and is not required by EPA until 2029. However, Thurston PUD is in the process of engineering and will install PFAS Treatment as quickly as allowable. Thurston PUD has worked as fast as possible and received grant funding so that PUD customers did not have to pay for installing treatment for PFAS remediation on these water systems. We are working diligently to receive DOH authorization to initiate and complete treatment for PFAS remediation at our water systems at the earliest possible times.

Summary

Our top priority at Thurston PUD is delivering safe, clean, and reliable drinking water to our customers and communities. Upon learning of PFAS in 2020, we took action immediately and were an early implementer of testing and requesting funding for PFAS remediation. Our water systems are in compliance with the regulations and requirements of the Washington State Department of Health. The EPA adopted maximum contaminant levels (MCL) will not be in effect until November 20, 2029, however, we are expediting the installation of PFAS treatment remediation. We will continue to work hard to do our best to ensure the water complies with the Washington State safe drinking water requirements.

Completion of the Consolidation Project for Hawley Hills 686

Thurston PUD is pleased to announce the capital improvement consolidation project has been completed at the Hawley Hills water system and is functioning well.

This project was identified in the 2020 Asset Management and Capital Improvement Plan as a project that needed to be completed.

This Capital Improvement Project consolidated the Hawley Hills, Deerfield Park 1 & 2, and Marvin Garden water systems, updating the infrastructure to increase reliability for the future. The improvements included: construction of a new larger reservoir, a replacement generator, mainline extension and looping, replacing and updating the booster station, and the installation of a telemetry system to monitor the water system. The construction of this project began in May 2023 and was completed September 2024.



The new Hawley Hills 686 reservoir.

The total consolidation project cost was \$1,444,450. The sources of funding were:

- \$944,500 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant (with 100% loan forgiveness)
- \$500,000 loan paid for by capital surcharge monies

The completion of this project ensures the water system continues to function properly to provide safe, clean, and reliable drinking water.

Protect Yourself Against Utility Scams

Utility scams are common, though maybe not as common as other types of scams like online shopping scams, banking or credit card scams, and debt collection scams. However, utility scams are still prevalent, and we want to provide you with information to help identify scams and suspicious activity. Please read more below.

How do utility scams work?

Scammers can contact you by phone or email, or they may even visit your home. Scammers usually threaten to disconnect your water service if you do not make immediate payment. Their intent is to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they are telling you.

How can I avoid utility scams?

If you are on the phone with someone claiming to be a Thurston PUD representative and you suspect a scam, please hang up and contact us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783.



Never wire money or pay with a prepaid or reloadable gift card or cryptocurrency to anyone who demands it. Thurston PUD only accepts cash, checks, money orders, and Visa or MasterCard payments. Our employees are prohibited from accepting physical payments from customers while out in the field and will always direct you to contact our Customer Service Team to make a payment.

How can I verify a PUD employee?

PUD employees working in the field drive vehicles with PUD logos on the sides and an identifying number on the back. Our employees may also be wearing clothing with PUD logos and can provide their employee identification upon request.

If you experience any suspicious activity, please call our office immediately to report. For more information on scams, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/scams.htm.

World Water Day—March 22nd

World Water Day is an annual United Nations (UN) Observance which began in 1993. World Water Day is held on March 22nd each year and aims to celebrate water and raise awareness on the two billion people living without access to safe water. For 2025, the theme is Glacier Preservation. Please review the infographic below for some facts on glaciers. For more information, please visit www.unwater.org.


THE SECRET LIFE OF GLACIERS

WORLD WATER DAY 2025: INFOGRAPHIC

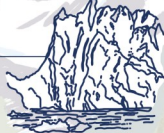
- #### 1. FROM SNOW TO ICE

Glaciers form when snow piles up over many years, compressing into solid ice.



 It can take up to 100 years for snow to turn into glacier ice!
- #### 2. DIFFERENT TYPES AROUND THE WORLD

Glaciers come in many forms depending on where they are.

 - **Ice Sheets:** Cover large areas like Greenland and Antarctica. 
 - **Mountain Glaciers:** Found in high mountains like the Himalayas, Rockies, and Andes. 
 - **Tidewater Glaciers:** Flow directly into the sea. 
 - **Piedmont Glaciers:** Spread out at the foot of mountains, forming large lobes. 

 Mountain glaciers exist on every continent except Australia.
- #### 3. SLOW BUT STEADY

Glaciers move slowly under their own weight, carving landscapes as they go.

 Some glaciers move as slowly as a few centimetres a year, while others can surge several metres in a day!
- #### 4. CHANGING WITH THE CLIMATE



As temperatures rise, glaciers melt faster than they can form, leading to retreat.

 About 10% of Earth's land surface is still covered by glaciers, but they are shrinking.
- #### 5. GLACIERS AND WATER

Glaciers store approximately 70% of the world's fresh water, making them the largest reservoir of fresh water on Earth.

 As glaciers melt, they release water that feeds rivers and provides drinking water for millions of people.

 UN WATER
22 MARCH
WORLD WATER DAY
2025 Glacier Preservation