DID YOU KNOW?

Watershed Purchase
Skagit PUD has agreed to buy 250 acres of forest land around Gilligan Creek from the Weyerhaeuser Company for $1.5 million in an effort to protect water quality. Gilligan Creek is the PUD’s primary source of drinking water from the Cultus Mountain Watershed.

Funding to buy the parcel is provided through the state Department of Ecology with 25 percent loan forgiveness of the purchase amount. The project will help reduce risks of soil erosion, chemical pollution, temperature impacts, and landslides to the stream. The property sale is expected to close before the end of the year.

Pay By Phone Now Available
We now offer a new way to pay your utility bill 24/7 by using our Interactive Voice Response phone system. It’s fast and convenient. No computer necessary. You can pay your bills anytime and anywhere. All you need is a phone. Call us at (360) 424-7104 and follow the voice prompts. The system will first ask for account and service location information. Then the prompts will guide you to make a payment using a credit card, debit card or eCheck. The service is available in English and Spanish.

MV RESERVOIR PROJECT WRAPS UP

Work is winding down on Skagit PUD’s new six million gallon concrete reservoir located at the corner of East Division Street and Digby Road in Mount Vernon. The concrete reservoir measures 167 feet in diameter and is over 42 feet high. It replaces a one million gallon steel reservoir that was built in the 1970s, which was undersized for the area served. To increase durability and strength, the exterior walls were wrapped with 46.5 miles of galvanized strand cable and then spray-coated with concrete. Life expectancy for the reservoir is 100 years with minimal maintenance required. Total project cost is $11 million.

7 Steps to Avoid Frozen Pipes: How to Prevent Expensive Repair Bills This Winter Season

Frozen and burst water pipes can ruin your whole day. The best strategy in combating the cold winter months is a defensive one. By taking preventive measures to winterize your homes, you can not only save money but also save water and reduce energy usage.

1. Know what areas of your home—like basements, crawl spaces, unheated rooms, and outside walls—are most vulnerable to freezing.

2. Search for pipes which are uninsulated or pass through unheated areas. Wrap them with pipe insulation available at hardware stores.

3. If you have heat tape installed on exposed pipes, make sure the tape is still operational and installed according to manufacturer’s specifications. Inspect the tape for cracks or fraying.

Faucet cover

Frozen Pipes > SEE BACK PAGE
Capital Surcharge  Ensuring system reliability

Within Skagit PUD’s distribution system, there are hundreds of miles of underground pipes, valves and pumps that help deliver water to homes and businesses every day. As your public utility, it is our obligation to adequately support and maintain this valuable, yet aging, infrastructure.

In 2013, Skagit PUD’s Board of Commissioners first approved a monthly capital improvement surcharge to help pay for improvements to the PUD’s water distribution system.

The surcharge, which appears on your bill, is based on the fact that Skagit PUD has over 600 miles of water pipelines within Skagit County to maintain. Our service area stretches from Fidalgo Island at the west end of the county to as far east as Marblemount. From north to south, the PUD’s service area starts in Alger/Lake Samish and extends south to Conway. We even manage a water system on Guemes Island.

Approximately 55 percent of our water mains are iron/metallic pipe, about 30 percent are plastic, and 15 percent are asbestos-concrete. Most of the lines three-inch and under are plastic, and 70 percent of the mains pre-date 1995.

The $2 per month capital improvement surcharge enables the PUD to continue providing safe and reliable water while maintaining and replacing its existing assets.

Maintaining our system through replacement and rehabilitation is critically important in order to preserve a good level of service, ensure adequate fire flows, minimize outages and maintain water quality. Deferring needed maintenance can result in expensive system repairs.

2018 BUDGET PROPOSED

New rates reflect ongoing need to maintain assets

WATER is essential to our daily lives, but few people stop to consider its value and importance, especially when compared to bottled water and other everyday products.

Skagit PUD’s water costs less than a penny per gallon—a true bargain considering the energy and expertise it takes to treat and deliver safe and reliable water to homes and businesses day in and day out.

In order to continue providing safe and reliable drinking water, while maintaining and replacing the PUD’s existing assets, a rate increase of 8.5 percent or approximately $3.89 per month for the typical residential customer is proposed for 2018.

Approval Process

Skagit PUD’s budget process occurs in three stages: Preliminary, Proposed, and Adopted. The Preliminary Budget was submitted to the PUD’s Board of Commissioners before the first Monday in September. PUD staff then made changes in response to Board feedback and further research. A public hearing on the Proposed Budget was held on October 2.

After the public hearing, Board members directed further changes to the budget, which will be included into the Adopted Budget that is binding at the outset of the 2018 calendar year.

The proposed 2018 budget incorporates the 8.5 percent rate increase presented in January 2016, as part of a multi-year financial forecast. The proposed rate increase would go into effect January 1, 2018. Total rate revenue is projected to be $22.6 million in 2018.

A copy of the proposed 2018 budget is available online at SkagitPUD.org.

Frozen Pipes

> CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

4. Everyone in your household should know where the main water shut-off valve is. Check the shut-off valve annually to make sure it’s working properly. If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut off the water immediately.

5. Covering or wrapping your outdoor faucets is a simple job that can save you a big expense, both in water and plumbing fees.

6. Turn off and drain irrigation systems.

7. If no one will be home for an extended period of time during extreme winter weather, consider turning off your main valve altogether and hiring a plumber to drain your system. That way, if your furnace quits working, there will be no water in your pipes to freeze.