MUKILTEO WATER AND WASTEWATER DISTRICT

Founded 1920

Summer - Fall 2010

MUKILTEO PIPELINE

Big Gulch Project Slated To Be Completed by Year End

The District has been involved in efforts to address the complicated impacts of uncontrolled storm water in Big Gulch for several years. Construction to replace the sewer system began in 2007. This issue threatened the Districts sewer trunk lines that follow the length of the gulch, and carry approximately 80% of the wastewater flow into the District's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The District's Big Gulch Sanitary Sewer Reconstruction Project involved constructing a stormwater headworks structure, a high flow bypass line, a new sanitary sewer pipeline, and an additional line for future needs. The District has completed the required stream and sensitive area restoration in the upper sections of the Big Gulch drainage basin, and has placed a segment of the pipeline deep underground to protect the lower reaches of the sewer line from the impacts of the creek.

The final phase of the project includes replacing the wastewater treatment facilities' access bridge over Big Gulch Creek, and performing access road safety upgrades. Additional tasks to be completed are cleanup measures on the maintenance access road for the sewer line, planting new vegetation, mitigation procedures, and then final construction close out processes. Completion of the entire project is anticipated by the end of this year.

The total cost of approximately $26 million is due to the complexity of this critical repair and replacement project, which has been implemented in cooperation with the City of Mukilteo as well as various state and federal agencies. This major piece of public infrastructure is vital to the health and welfare of the public, and the District will continue to work to protect the sewer line and to care for the vitality of Big Gulch for the benefit of this and future generations. ◘

Rate Increases In January 2011

A public hearing was held on March 3, 2010 to discuss proposed multiyear increases and commercial rate restructuring. The proposed changes were approved by the Board of Commissioners on March 17, 2010.

The increased rates for our Mukilteo and Paine Field customers are necessary to cover upgrade and replacement costs of the Big Gulch Sewer Trunk Line Replacement Project, the wastewater treatment facility, sewage lift stations, monitoring systems, and miles of sewage collection lines, all of which are crucial to the health and safety of the public and our environment.

Customers within the City of Mukilteo and Paine Field will see an increase of approximately 6% in the sewer portion of their billings. There will also be an increase of approximately 5% in the water portion of the billing for all customers as a result of a wholesale water rate increase from the City of Everett. For rate change details please see our website at www.mukilteowwd.org. ◘

Mukilteo Pipeline is distributed twice yearly and is designed to keep Mukilteo Water and Wastewater District customers up-to-date on water and sewer related issues, projects, and conservation education. We appreciate your comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter.

MUKILTEO WATER AND WASTEWATER DISTRICT

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HOURS OF OPERATION: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed Saturdays, Sundays, & Holidays

Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Procedures Initiated

The Districts Wastewater Treatment Facility, located at the bottom of Big Gulch, operates within requirements set forth by permit from the State of Washington Department of Ecology. There are several categories of the permit for which the State receives monthly test results from the District. Recent tests indicate the District is in need of upgrades to the Oxidation Ditch Extended Aeration System used at the facility.

While the water conservation efforts many of us have implemented are important, the low-flow toilets and water efficient appliances create a challenge for the treatment process. As the amount of water flushed through the wastewater collection system decreases with the conservation efforts, the strength of sewage increases. That concentration level is edging upward and has triggered the State to recommend plant upgrades.

Our wastewater treatment plant works very much like a human digestive system. A perfect balance of oxygen, good bacteria, and movement must be maintained in order for it to perform properly. We must make healthy choices of what we put into our bodies, possibly supplement with vitamins or digestive enzymes, and take care of ourselves with fresh air and exercise to make our digestive system work correctly. We must take similar steps to care for our wastewater treatment facility.

The District has begun by making energy efficient upgrades to the aeration system (oxygenation), and is installing modernized screening and grit removal systems (cleansing) at the Headworks of the plant. The Headworks project is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2012.

Improvements to the aerobic holding tanks are also planned. This system works by removing solids in order to maintain a healthy biological balance in the treatment process.

The last major upgrade made to the Wastewater Treatment Facility was completed in 1990. Treatment plants normally experience major equipment replacement every 20 to 25 years due to the corrosive environment in which the equipment operates. The sustainability of the Wastewater Treatment Facility is a District priority in order to protect the public and the environment. ◘

Before Cold Weather Hits

Know the location of your water shut-off valve and test it regularly. If a pipe breaks, you won't want to have to find it then, or worse, wait for someone to arrive at your place to find it for you. In most single-family homes, the shut-off valve is in the basement or the crawl space, on a wall facing the street, where the water service enters your home.

Turn off and drain automatic and manual sprinkler systems before first freeze. You'll thank yourself in the spring. The alternate freezing and thawing of water in the system can create cracks and weak spots, triggering silent underground leaks or mini-geysers.

Turn off outdoor faucets and be sure to disconnect hoses from them. Make sure the faucet and the outside portion of the pipes are fully drained. A valve inside many houses will shut off the water's flow; then open and close the tap outside to release any water in the pipe. Disconnect the hose to ensure that freeze-proof faucets will drain and to avoid damage to the hose from freezing water.

Winterize unheated or vacant buildings. Significant property damage and water loss can occur before burst pipes are discovered in vacant buildings. If your vacant building has a fire protection system, make sure there is no danger that the water servicing this system might freeze.

Insulate water pipes that may be vulnerable to the cold or have caused problems before. Pipes close to exterior walls or in unheated basements can be wrapped with pieces of insulation. Don't overlook pipes near windows, which can quickly freeze. For particularly difficult pipes, consult a professional on how to select and apply heat tape. **Caution:** Improper use of heat tape can cause fires.

If you think a pipe is already frozen:

Don't wait for nature to take its course:
Thaw the pipe as soon as possible or call a plumber for help.

If you do it yourself, shut off the water or test the shut-off valve. You don't want water suddenly gushing from the pipe when it thaws.

Remember: When thawing things, slower is better.

Pipes warmed too fast may break. A hair dryer trained at the frozen area of the pipe is appropriate. A blow torch is not. ◘