

## Voluntary Water Conservation Needed

After a rapid snowmelt this spring and an unusually dry summer, Seattle's Regional Water System reservoirs are lower than usual this fall—despite recent rains. Coal Creek Utility District is joining with water utilities around the region to ask customers to voluntarily reduce water use until we get enough rain to refill reservoirs. Even seemingly small daily actions can add up to help stretch the region's water supply for people and fish. Here are a few ideas you can do around the home:

- ❑ Shorten your showers (every minute = 2 gallons) and take showers instead of baths.
- ❑ Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth or shaving.
- ❑ Flush less often if possible, and check your toilet for a leak: if it occasionally refills or makes a hissing noise, this could indicate a leak. A simple toilet flapper replacement will usually fix it!
- ❑ Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator for drinking instead of running the tap to fill a glass with cold water.
- ❑ Try to rinse dishes and pans less before loading them into the dishwasher, and wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.
- ❑ Use a broom instead of a hose for outside clean up.



## Ensuring Safety During Extreme Heat

Earlier this year, Coal Creek Utility District adopted new policies and procedures aimed at safeguarding our residential customers during extreme heat events.

In compliance with Washington State RCW 57.08.081, we will not terminate water service for non-payment on days when the National Weather Service issues a heat-related alert for your area. This applies to all residential users, including mobile homes and tenants. If your water service has already been disconnected due to non-payment, you have the option to request reconnection during heat alerts.

Our priority is your well-being, and we're committed to providing reliable and compassionate water services to our community. For more information, contact us at 425-235-9200.

## King County Raises Sewer Rates in 2024

In January 2024, you will begin seeing sewer rate increases on fees paid to King County for sewage treatment and disposal, as a result of a recent vote by the King County Council.

Coal Creek customers currently see two sewer rate portions on their bills. The King County sewer portion shown is for treatment, disposal, and conveyance of sewage to their Renton Treatment plant. The Coal Creek portion of the bill is for sewage collection, conveyance to King County's system and Treatment Plant, as well as sewer system maintenance.

King County's new sewer rates are \$55.11 per month for existing connections—a 5.75% increase over their current rate of \$52.11. Revenue generated by the rate increase will pay off debt service, offset an increase in operating costs, and create a rate stabilization reserve of \$9.25 million.

New connections to the sewer system will be charged \$74.23 per month for a period of 15 years after connection to the system, paid directly to King County. Should customers wish to save roughly \$2,000 in interest payments, they can pay this in a lump sum up front. This fee will pay for new sewer lines, and offset the cost of their new \$1.4 billion Brightwater Treatment Facility, which began construction in 2005. More information about Brightwater can be found on the County's website at: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/WTD/brightwater/>

The total bill for existing Coal Creek residential sewer customers will be \$75.87 per month (\$55.11 King County rate + \$20.76 Coal Creek rate). The total bill for commercial customers will be \$77.35 per month plus an additional water volume charge.



## Coal Creek Connection

Your newsletter for water and sewer-related issues and information serving Newcastle and the surrounding areas since 1959

Fall/Winter 2023








### National "Get The Lead Out" Effort Underway

As introduced in our Spring Newsletter / Annual Water Quality Report document, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Washington Department of Health have asked all public water systems to document what type of pipe material is being used in our water systems by October 2024. This includes both utility-owned lines, as well as our customer's lines. Working in coordination with PACE Engineers, Coal Creek Utility District is currently developing a service line inventory, using publicly available information including permit files and GIS Databases. The resulting pipe material inventories will be publicly accessible, and will be continuously updated should we identify any lead lines that need to be replaced. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns!

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Coal Creek Connection: a publication by Coal Creek Utility District

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## Attention: Homeowners with Irrigation Systems

If you have an Irrigation System at your residence, you are required by state law (WAC 246-290-490) to have a Backflow Assembly Device installed and tested every year.

This same law applies to other components that you may have connected to your water plumbing:

- Fire Sprinkler system
- Swimming pool
- Hot tub / jacuzzi tub
- Decorative fountain
- On-site well
- Water makeup lines (that supply a boiler or heating)

**AND... if you are a business of (most) any kind... OR if you raise farm animals... you too must have a Backflow Assembly Device installed and tested.**

These devices prevent contaminated water from flowing back into the water system—a public health hazard that you don't want originating on your premises.

Because Backflow devices can fail due to debris, freezing, improper installation, and unapproved plumbing connections, the state's Department of Health requires these devices to be tested annually by a certified Backflow Assembly Tester (BAT). Find a list of BATs on this website:

<https://grcc.greenriver.edu/wacertservices/bat/hire-a-bat/>

Additional ways to maintain water safety at home include:

- Do not submerge a tap-connected garden hose into a swimming pool, sink, or bucket containing water or other liquid. Water can flow both ways!
- Do not use hose-end applicators to apply garden chemicals or insecticides to your yard.

**If you have any questions about backflow prevention, give us a call at (425) 235-9200.**

## Don't Forget to Winterize!

Even though this year is predicted to be a warmer "El Niño pattern, unexpected freezes are always a possibility. Prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes with these simple steps:

1. Disconnect and drain all garden hoses.
2. Insulate exterior pipes and faucets with newspaper, rags, or insulating material, then cover with plastic and secure with string or wire. You can also use electric heat tape.
3. Insulate interior pipes and faucets in cold areas (including unheated attics, basements, garages and crawl spaces) the same way as Step 2.
4. Locate your main water shut-off valve to make sure it works and you know how to use it—prior to an emergency—so you are prepared to stop excessive water loss and flooding if a pipe breaks.
5. If you have a yard sprinkler system, drain and blow out the system completely.
6. On extra cold nights, open the doors of closets or cabinets that are located near water pipes on your home's exterior walls.
7. For maximum protection, apply caulk around incoming pipes, and close or block your home's foundation vents during the coldest months (mark your calendar to open them up to prevent dry rot, once the threat of freezing has passed).

### Locating Your Main Water Shut-Off Valve

Your main water shut-off valve is either round, or shaped like a lever. It's usually located in your basement, crawlspace, garage, or outdoor foundation, often near the front faucet. Having trouble? We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (425) 235-9200.



## Keeping Your Infrastructure Updated

### New Vactor Decant Facility at the 580 Zone Reservoir Site

As part of our commitment to environmental stewardship, Coal Creek Utility District is building a new dedicated Decant Facility to provide a place for Vactor Truck waste to be deposited for processing and reutilization.



Site of the future Decant Facility

What's a Decant Facility and why do we need it? Whenever our utility maintenance or repair projects involve a lot of wet soil and debris, we call in our Vactor Truck. These vehicles operate like a giant vacuum, sucking up wet soil, debris, and liquids—which are then transported to a Decant Facility for filtration, processing and treatment.

In recent years it's become more difficult to find locations that will accept this slurry due to environmental concerns, so the District is building our own Decant Facility on the same property as our 580-zone reservoir, where there was already existing infrastructure and available space to accommodate it.

Working with PACE Engineers, we're defining the project scope in a way that respects the community—including survey, civil design, structural design, and permitting assistance—and subcontracting with Follett Engineering for electrical design and underground utility location. When complete, this facility will stand as a testament to our dedication towards a more sustainable future!



Our Vactor Truck at the site

### Donegal Sewer Rehabilitation

**A unique method of sewer line rehabilitation will maximize its life cycle while minimizing cost.**

The first step in this project was a comprehensive Closed Caption Television Camera (CCTV) robotic camera inspection of 3,525 feet of 8-inch AC sewer pipe. In addition to collecting crucial data on manhole IDs and pipe length, this process enabled us to confirm that the sewer pipes could indeed be addressed using an innovative rehabilitation method called Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP).

CIPP involves inserting a flexible liner inside the existing sewer pipe, inflating the liner, and exposing it to heat or ultraviolet light to dry and harden the liner into a smooth, hard surface inside of the existing pipe. With engineering support from PACE Engineers, the District will be able to use this method to restore the majority of the pipes to near-new condition—only 295 feet of sewer pipe will need to be addressed with standard dig-and-replace methods.

Work is estimated to begin in February 2024 and take roughly five months. During this time, we encourage residents to make sure their sewer traps are in good condition in order to minimize potential odors from the resins used in CIPP repair. Opening a window, or setting up a fan around areas with floor drains or P-trap access should also help. We look forward to this significant enhancement to our sewer infrastructure!



CIPP underway (above and below)



Live Near a CCUD reservoir or pump station? Our staff always wear uniforms and drive clearly-marked vehicles. If you see unusual or suspicious activity, please contact us immediately at (425) 235-9200 to help us keep our facilities secure.