



WaterTap

Washington's Drinking Water Newsletter

Volume 30, #1 - January 2015



The 'new' Office of Drinking Water

By Clark Halvorson, Director

After I became director of the Office of Drinking Water a little over a year ago, I spent the first few months talking with our highly talented staff, stakeholders, and water systems. Those conversations made it clear that:

- We have an incredible program and, with the help of our partners and water systems across the state, we have created a culture of public health awareness about drinking water in Washington State.
- We can do better. We need to provide our team and our local partners with new tools and resources so we can better respond to public health threats, serve you, and support your efforts.

Based on these conversations I made some changes to our organizational structure. The plan:

- Emphasizes providing support in each of our regional offices for our Operator Certification and Engineering Sections, Water Quality and Data Management Team, and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Team.
- Sets up systems and support to help us do some of our core functions more strategically.
- Helps us target our communications better.

Impressive results

Over the past year, we focused on four major areas: Improving DWSRF Program management, information technology services, a renewed focus on the Satellite Management Agency (SMA) Program, and identifying and supporting consolidation opportunities.

The results have been impressive. One example I love to quote: Our DWSRF Program has gone from fifth worst to second best in the nation for unliquidated loan obligations. We found ways to ensure that loan recipients are ready to proceed quickly with infrastructure projects, enabling loan funds to be used more efficiently.

We also changed the way we manage the cultural review process, and the team has a new manager with strong engineering and project management expertise. These are key areas our stakeholders asked us to focus on. I cannot wait to see how this team improves a funding program that is already among the best in the nation!

A staff-led review team gathered input from SMAs and stakeholders, which was invaluable in helping to shape recommendations and influence our plan for improving the program.

(continued on page 4)



Standing room only

Director Clark Halvorson presents his plan for the new Office of Drinking Water to operators at a recent conference.

Sanitary survey preparation

By Scott Torpie, State Engineer

We want to reduce the number of significant deficiencies we find during sanitary surveys, and to do that we need your help. You can avoid deficiencies by attending to the following items before the survey:

- Inventory all structures, material, and land use within 100 feet of any well and 200 feet of any spring. Identify all microbial and chemical contaminant threats. Prepare a plan to eliminate or mitigate them. Discuss your plan with the surveyor during the survey. See *Sanitary Control Area Protection* (331-453).*
- Inspect your well, spring, and storage tank facilities. Verify the integrity of seals and screens used to keep contaminants out of the well casing, spring box or tank interior. See *Sanitary Protection of Reservoirs: Hatches* (331-249),* and *Simple Fixes for Wellhead Openings* (331-232).*
- Physically disconnect any treatment process or source not listed on your water facilities inventory. We will let you know when you may reconnect it.
- Provide current photographs (less than 1 year old) of the parts of your water system we may not be able to access. For example, photograph the roof or reservoir overflow that must be climbed. Photographs should verify that all storage tank roof vents, hatches, overflows, and openings where the level gauge wire enters each tank are sealed or screened to prevent the entry of contaminants.
- Your storage tank overflow pipe outlet should be built with an approved air gap and screen.
- A raw source water sample tap should be on each source.
- Each well house, pump station, and storage tank should be secure from unauthorized access.
- Animals should not be able enter your buildings.
- Water treatment chemicals should be NSF-approved for use in potable water. Any hard-piped water supply into the chemical solution tank should be built with an approved air gap or equipped with an approved reduced pressure backflow assembly.
- The outlet pipe for any pump control valve or vacuum relief valve should be built with an approved air gap and screen.



Up close and personal
Jeff Johnson, an engineer in our Eastern Regional Office, inspects the ozone generator during a sanitary survey at Walla Walla's ozone treatment facility.

For more information, tools, and tips and to help you prepare for your sanitary survey, visit us online at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/RegulationandCompliance/SanitarySurveys/GroupAChecklist.aspx>

Consumer Confidence Report due by July 1, 2015

All Group A community water systems must provide a CCR to their customers and our regional office by July 1 each year. At a minimum, we require each system to report following criteria to their consumers:

- Water system name and water system ID number
- Source information
- Required statements
- Definitions of terms
- Detected contaminants in finished water
- Compliance with regulations
- Required educational information

For information about the above criteria, see *Preparing User-Friendly Consumer Confidence Reports* (331-296)*. If the requirements are not met, your water system may not receive credit and you won't meet your obligation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

If you want to use EPA's CCRiWriter to prepare your CCR, visit <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/rulesregs/sdwa/ccr/index.cfm> Click on Tools for Systems. EPA's submit button does not send your CCR to our regional office, so print it and mail it to us along with your certification form. For more information, contact Willa Lawton at 1-800-525-2536 Ext. 4, 360-236-3145 or willa.lawton@doh.wa.gov

*Our publications are online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications>

National water use at lowest levels since 1970

Last month, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported that water use across the country reached its lowest recorded level in nearly 45 years. About 355 billion gallons of water per day (BGD) were withdrawn for use in the entire United States during 2010. This represents a 13 percent reduction of water use from 2005 when about 410 BGD were withdrawn and the lowest level since before 1970.

Water withdrawn for thermoelectric power was the largest use nationally, with the other leading uses being irrigation, public supply and self-supplied industrial water, respectively. Withdrawals declined in each of these categories. Collectively, all of these uses represented 94 percent of total withdrawals from 2005-2010.

For the first time, withdrawals for public water supply declined between 2005 and 2010, despite a 4 percent increase in the nation's total population. The number of people served by public-supply systems continued to increase and the public-supply per capita use declined to 89 gallons per day in 2010 from 100 gallons per day in 2005.

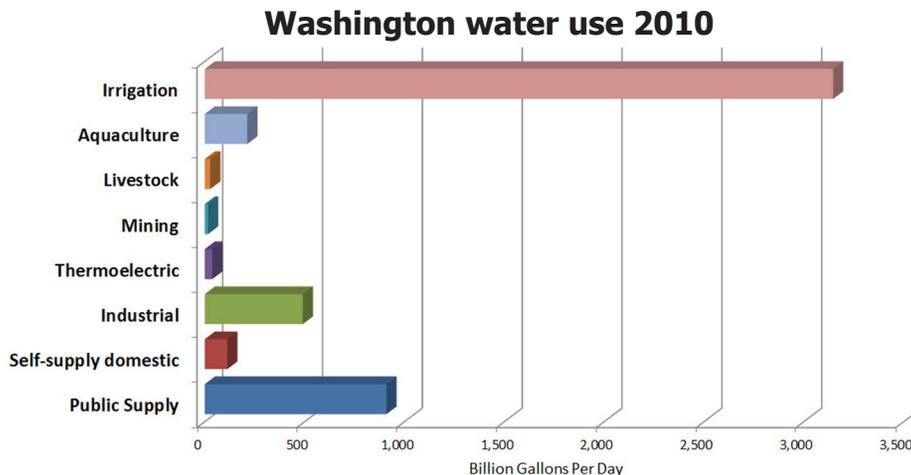
Washington State water use, 2005–2010

In Washington, between 2005 and 2010, the population grew nearly 7 percent from 6.3 million to 6.7 million people. At the same time, total water withdrawals for all uses declined nearly 15 percent from 5.81 BGD to 4.95 BGD. Almost this entire decline was in thermoelectric power water use.

Total groundwater withdrawals for all uses increased 7 percent, from almost 1.5 BGD to 1.6 BGD. Total surface-water withdrawals for all uses declined over 22 percent, from 4.3 BGD to about 3.4 BGD.

Irrigation accounts for 60 percent of the fresh-water withdrawals in the state and public-supply accounts for about 20 percent, with the other uses making up the remainder. Industrial uses account for essentially all of the saline-water withdrawals.

Source: This article is based on a USGS news release, November 5, 2014. For information, contact Ethan Alpern 703-648-4406.



Congratulations, Puget Sound Energy!

In October, Puget Sound Energy received an Excellence Award for promoting WaterSense labeled products during the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. At the same conference, EPA recognized the 2014 WaterSense Partners of the Year for their commitment to promoting water efficiency and strengthening the drought resiliency of communities across the country.

The 2014 WaterSense Partners of the Year winners, along with more than 1,500 other WaterSense partners, have helped American consumers save 757 billion gallons of water since 2006—enough to supply all of the homes in the U.S. with water for 26 days. WaterSense partners' combined efforts have resulted in a \$14.2 billion reduction in consumer water and energy bills over the past 8 years and a reduction of 37 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

Rulemaking: Group A Public Water Supplies

We extended the informal comment period on draft revisions to the Group A rule to **January 31, 2015**. Changes include technical revisions throughout the rule and changes to requirements related to planning, disinfection, and emergency sources and supplies. To review and comment on the draft rule, visit our website at www.doh.wa.gov/odwrulemaking Email your comments to brad.burnham@doh.wa.gov

Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) turns 40

This year EPA celebrated the 40th anniversary of the SDWA by launching a webpage with an overview of the SDWA, a timeline of milestones since 1974, resources for K-12 educators, and more. Peter Grevatt, director of EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, also authored a blog on the anniversary. Visit EPA at <http://www2.epa.gov/safedrinkingwater40>

Apply now for small water system grants

We're now accepting grant applications for our new Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) preconstruction grant program and for our small water system consolidation program. Both programs help smaller water systems with infrastructure challenges.

The preconstruction grant program helps smaller public water systems that hope to finance infrastructure projects with low-interest DWSRF loans. The grants (up to \$25,000) pay for preconstruction activities such as planning, feasibility studies, design and engineering, historical and cultural consultations, and environmental reviews. DWSRF loan applicants must meet readiness-to-proceed criteria before they can obtain a loan.

Flood resilience *A basic guide for water and wastewater utilities*

Drinking water systems are particularly vulnerable to flooding, which can damage pumps, disconnect chemical tanks, break distribution lines, and disrupt power supplies. EPA's Water Security Division developed a guidebook to help systems become more resilient to flooding.

Using a simple four-step assessment process, it helps the systems understand their flooding threat and identify practical ways to protect critical assets. It provides worksheets, instructional videos, and flood maps. Find it online at <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/emerplan/upload/epa817b14006.pdf>

The water system consolidation grants (up to \$30,000) help utilities estimate project costs and benefits for customers, and make an informed decision on whether to proceed with consolidation. The grants pay for feasibility studies and other expenses associated with merging small water systems into larger, more efficient ones, including design and engineering, payment of system development charges and other administrative fees, and purchase of materials necessary to complete a service connection.

The application window for preconstruction grants closes January 31, 2015. The deadline for consolidation grant applications is February 23, 2015. You can find information about how to apply online at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DWSRF.aspx>

Look for links to grant applications in the "New" section on the right side of the DWSRF webpage.

If you have questions about the grant programs, email Eloise Rudolph, infrastructure funding coordinator, at eloise.rudolph@doh.wa.gov or call 360-236-3124.



The 'new' ODW

(continued from page 1)

SMA's are valuable partners to us and to water systems. We are committed to having a successful SMA program, and we want to do more. We won't seek legislative changes, but we will boost program implementation and update the SMA rule. Areas of focus include:

- Stricter enforcement of the SMA requirement.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for SMA's versus contract operators.
- Monitoring SMA contracts.
- Exploring additional incentives for SMA's that actively partner with us on restructuring and consolidations.
- Updating the SMA rule to define responsibilities for non-ownership SMA's.

On the information technology front, my goal is to provide tools that efficiently support collaboration among the state, labs, local health, and water systems. We are developing new tools to manage water system information, updating our grant and loan management tools, and working toward a transition to the SDWIS Prime national data management tool.

Finally, we made great progress working with you to identify and support efforts to consolidate water systems across the state. Washington has the fourth highest number of community water systems in the nation—2,270 systems. Of those, 90 percent have fewer than 1,000 connections and 66 percent have fewer than 100 connections.

This year we are supporting 37 contracts with public entities to complete feasibility studies on consolidation of two or more water systems. Thank you for your efforts on this front!

Like Boy Scouts, systems should 'Be Prepared'

By Carolyn Cox, Public Information Coordinator

How many times have you heard the phrase: "It's not 'if' but 'when' you'll have a drinking water emergency"?

More than 120 Washington water systems learned the truth of those words in 2014. Each of them experienced one or more drinking water emergencies. Some were major events—such as back-to-back *E. coli* events on Mercer Island and the Carlton Complex wildfires—but most occurred in small and mid-sized systems.

You have two powerful tools to help you manage an emergency: your emergency response plan and your coliform response plan. They'll do you little good if you let them gather dust on the shelf. Review them and practice emergency response at least once a year.

If you don't have plans in place, create them and use them. The following guidance is online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications>

- *Emergency Response Planning Guide for Public Drinking Water Systems* (331-211)
- *Preparing a Coliform Monitoring Plan: For large or multiple source systems* (331-036)
- *Preparing a Coliform Monitoring Plan: For systems with one supply source* (331-240)
- *Preparing a Coliform Monitoring Plan: For wholesale or consecutive systems* (331-475)



Water is now OK

A homemade sign informs residents of this neighborhood that their drinking water supply, once contaminated, is now safe to drink. FEMA photo/Win Henderson

In the heat of the moment

Intuition may tell you that tending to main breaks or finding the source of contamination during an *E. coli* event is your top priority. Those are important, but your top priority should be communicating with your customers.

In a drinking water emergency, it's your responsibility to notify your customers of a potential health threat. Your customers—and the media—will be hungry for details. You must prepare to give them updates at strategic intervals. They'll want to know:

- What happened?
- How does this affect me?
- How can I protect my family and myself?
- What are you doing about it?
- When will the advisory end?

Obviously, it's tough to repair pipes and talk with customers at the same time. If you don't have a public information officer, identify someone on your staff to serve in that role and get them trained.

You're not alone. We stand ready to help when trouble strikes, and other utilities will often provide assistance. Consider joining the Washington WARN mutual assistance program: <http://www.wawarn.org/>

Remember, it's not "if" but "when" you'll have a drinking water emergency.

Resources

We have two webpages to give the public information about drinking water health advisories. Both include links to water utility websites:

- **Recent Drinking Water Alerts:** Lists advisories that occurred within the past two weeks, including their status. The page design allows us to add updates and links to helpful information.
- **Active Drinking Water Alerts:** Lists all active drinking water health advisories in the state.

You can find both webpages at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DWAlerts>





PO Box 47822
Olympia, WA 98504-7822

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
WA STATE DEPT
OF ENTERPRISE SRVCS
98501



We heard you!

After 2 years of being online only, we redesigned Water Tap and we're back in print.

Check it out!

Look for the next issue in July.



Printed on recycled paper

\$2.1 million awarded to 3 communities

Three water systems were among projects the Department of Commerce selected to receive 2014 Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

Town of Mabton: \$1,000,000 for a new water reservoir

City of Toledo: \$725,000 for a new water reservoir

City of Toppenish: \$399,247 for street and water system improvements

“For over 45 years the CDBG program has provided flexible funding that allows communities to afford necessary improvements and thrive,” said Commerce Director Brian Bonlender. “We are pleased to be a partner with these important local projects.” Commerce received 39 grant applications requesting more than \$24 million. Of those, 15 projects received a total of \$9.5 million.

The state CDBG program receives an annual funding allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and targets assistance to benefit lower income persons in rural areas. For more information, visit www.commerce.wa.gov/cdbg



The Office of Drinking Water publishes Water Tap twice a year in January and July. You can find electronic versions of the newsletter online at www.doh.wa.gov/drinkingwater

If you have questions or story ideas, contact Linda Waring, editor, or Donna Lynch, graphic designer, at 360-236-3100 or watertap@doh.wa.gov

For people with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).