



OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Office hours: 10:30AM to 3:00PM, Monday through Friday

Other times by appointment

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WATER EMERGENCY CONTACT PROCEDURE

If you have a water pressure problem/emergency call the office number (503) 368-7309 and if no one answers, be sure to leave a message as the line might be in use when you call and will kick you over to messaging. If you don't reach anyone at the office, then call (503) 804-4649 and if no answer, also leave a message. You can also come to the office, 9155 Nehalem Rd. during regular hours.

October Update 2023

Rates-

By now, you should have all received your new water billing postcards for July and August. In our continued effort to keep our community up to date, we are sending out this newsletter as a recap of all the changes that have occurred this past year.

The District held a public meeting this past spring to discuss the Board's proposal to increase water use rates and increased "system enhancement fees" which refers to loan maintenance costs. In that meeting, the Board discussed the pressing need for increasing the "system enhancement fees" — basically loan maintenance — as well as the need to increase in both sets of fees. We also indicated that the Board anticipated an increase would take effect at the beginning of July 2023. At the District's regular Board of Commissioner's meeting following that public meeting, the Board voted to implement the proposed rate increases. This Board meeting was a public meeting as are all Board meetings with notice of the meeting posted as required by Oregon law.

Basically, our water bill is now composed of three items.

1. A base rate of \$25 per month which is intended to provide funds to be used for operations and capital improvements.
2. Loan maintenance costs—identified as "system enhancement fees" (SEF)— a term that has been used for years—these costs comprise the following (on a monthly basis):
 - a. \$20 which is paying off a loan taken to replace main water lines, a project that was done about 2006.
 - b. \$15 which is paying off a loan of about \$1MM which was taken to make the original offer on the land that constitutes the watershed for 3 of our springs—part of this loan was used to pay for litigation costs and part for land purchase.
 - c. \$ 50 which is paying off a loan of \$2.1MM which was taken to finalize the purchase of the watershed land and additional litigation costs.
(you may recall that the District condemned the land to preserve it from a development that would have placed about 30 septic tanks in our watershed—after several years of litigation there was a settlement that involved a payment of \$1.75MM for the land but also under Oregon law the District had to pay the other party's attorney fees so the overall cost including the District's attorney fees was almost \$3 MM)
3. Water usage fees.

The costs given above (excluding water usage) total \$110 per month. However, currently we bill on a bi-monthly basis, so you are seeing a bill of \$220 plus your water usage fees.

The water usage fees were increased starting with the July/August bill for the first time since 2006 to use a 4-tier rate structure (vs the old 2 tier).

The new usage rate structure is:

- Tier 1: 0-8000 gallons \$4 per 1000 gallons
- Tier 2: 8000-16000 gallons \$6 per 1000 gallons
- Tier 3: 16000-24000 gallons \$10 per 1000 gallons
- Tier 4: above 24000 gallons \$15 per 1000 gallons

Water Conservation –

The District wants to thank you for your water conservation efforts during this recent low Springs flow period that is becoming quite consistent between the months of July – September. Water conservation can go a long way to help alleviate these impending shortages, which are expected to worsen in years to come. The District along with the Conservation Committee plans on identifying additional water saving ideas and behaviors that will help ensure that Neahkahnie has enough water in the coming years and for future generations. Now would be a great time for all Neahkahnie residence to consider installing low flow plumbing fixtures in your home.

The Commissioners in Tillamook County have declared a local state of emergency due to drought conditions existing across the county on September 20, 2023. Although we are experiencing some rainy and wet conditions it will still take several months for our Springs to be replenished, so continued conservation is still required. See link to article below.

https://www.tillamookheadlightherald.com/news/commissioners-declare-drought-state-of-emergency-in-tillamook-county/article_ec365fae-595d-11ee-a8f7-3b8debb80e4b.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Thank you,

The Neahkahnie Water District & The Neahkahnie Water Conservation Committee