

Water Ways



CHELAN COUNTY

Water rates part of District study

Chelan County PUD commissioners are considering rate adjustments that would increase overall revenues, although the average amount paid by PUD water customers would increase for some and decrease for others.

Customers will have a chance to comment on proposals at public hearings yet to be scheduled.

Draft adjustments were offered as a starting point for board discussion on July 21 and are not the final recommendation of staff.

Under the proposal, Wenatchee customers' average bills would increase by \$4 per month. Dryden customers would pay about \$9 more on average, and Chelan Ridge customers

would pay about \$7 more per month. Squilchuck area customers would see a decrease of about \$2 per month, and Olalla Canyon residents' bills would drop by about \$1 per month.

The changes are designed to bring revenues closer to actual costs. The proposed changes also would simplify billing by aligning rates between the five water systems operated by the PUD (every system now has its own rate schedule). And the proposed adjustments would continue to reward conservation by charging higher rates to customers who use the most water.

Commissioners are considering rate adjustments as part of a detailed District study of the cost of providing water, wastewater and electric services. Customers will have a chance to comment on proposals at public hearings yet to be scheduled. More information is available at www.chelanpud.org. (Click on "Board Agendas and Recordings," then "July 21, 2008 Board Meeting.")

Progress on conservation goals

In 2007, the PUD developed water use efficiency goals for its Wenatchee area system to comply with Washington's water use efficiency rule. One of the goals was to reduce water system leaks from 15.2 percent of production to 12.5 percent by 2013.

The PUD is pleased to report significant progress toward reducing system leaks. During 2007, the District pumped 817.6 million gallons of water to its distribution system. Of that total, 738.3 million gallons was sold to District customers or used in other ways. The calculated distribution system leakage based on this data was 9.7 percent.

The significant reduction from 15.2 percent is attributed to new, more accurate water meters installed in 2006-07 as part of the District's automated meter reading program.

Much (more) ado about mulch

Give your thirsty plants a break by using decorative gravel, bark, grass clippings or other mulches. You'll conserve water simply by preventing evaporation. Mulches keep weeds down without using harsh chemicals, and insulate plants against heat (and in the winter, against cold).

Chelan County WSU Master Gardener Bonnie Orr, known as the "Dirt Diva" for her entertaining discussions on local radio, told participants at a PUD-sponsored workshop that mulch is an often overlooked component of successful landscapes. Mulches keep plants cooler in the midsummer heat, and make the most use of your water.



Bonnie Orr

Types of mulch include:

Inorganic: broken brick, pea gravel, concrete rubble, tumbled glass, lava rock and water-washed rock.

Organic: Bark, evergreen boughs, ground leaves, peat moss, straw (not hay), cardboard, grass clippings mixed with leaves or straw (but don't use grass if it contains weed killers and/or fertilizers), pine needles, wood chips and coffee grounds.

Living mulches: Any dense, fast-spreading plant will work in shady areas. For full sun, try planting thyme, oregano and vinca.

Black plastic, geo-fabric and rubber mats are temporary weed controllers and are not mulches.

Summer 2008

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How to reach us

Conservation and Customer Services:....661-8008

Water Department: 661-4254

Web site: www.chelanpud.org/water-conservation

Orr led two free, well-attended workshops at the PUD in May: “*Much Ado About Mulch,*” and “*Kiss Your Rhodies Goodbye.*” The “*Rhodies*” class helped newly transplanted Western Washington residents acclimate their gardening techniques to North Central Washington. A third class featured irrigation expert Ward Larsen. Tips for designing and installing irrigation systems are listed below.

Irrigation system how-to's

- Use separate valves for lawn and plant areas. Group plants with similar water needs on the same valve. Accommodate different watering needs by using multiple valves. Ideally, trees should be on a separate valve from shrubs and groundcover.
- Make sure a backflow preventer is installed to prevent irrigation water from backing up into your home drinking water supply.
- Avoid oddly shaped or narrow turf areas (under 10 feet wide). These are difficult to water efficiently.
- Install emitters around the dripline of the plant, which is the area under the outside of the plant canopy. Install enough emitters at the correct sizes to wet the root zone. At maturity, large trees may require 12 or more emitters. Small or newly planted trees may only need 3 - 5 emitters.
- When installing a drip system, don't exceed 200 feet of poly tubing from valve to end cap. Don't exceed a total flow of 200 gallons per hour per valve.
- Don't extend micro-tubing (spaghetti line) more than 6 feet.

For more tips, visit the Water Use It Wisely Web site at http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/outdoor/xeriscape/efficient_irrigation.shtml

Come to the garden

The Riverfront Park Xeriscape Demonstration Garden now contains 61 types of plants and six grasses. The garden was designed, planted and is maintained by Chelan County WSU Master Gardeners in partnership with the PUD. Volunteers spend several hours at the garden tending plants every Wednesday morning. Stop by to ask questions – and thank them for their dedicated work!



June Person

Special thanks to June Person, who served as volunteer coordinator for the garden for the past three years. She is handing her spade to fellow Master Gardener Terry Anderson at the end of the season.

Xeriscape flower of the month – Autumn joy

Sedum telephium, otherwise known as Autumn joy, is a sun-loving succulent that grows 30 inches high by 30 inches wide. It blooms in the full sun of late summer and fall, glowing with a coppery rose color. You can experience Autumn joy at the Riverfront Park Xeriscape Demonstration Garden along the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail in Wenatchee.

