

Explore the wonders of the Skagit watershed with Letterbox Trail

Skagit PUD is once again joining with area environmental organizations and groups to hide "letterboxes" up and down the Skagit Watershed this summer. Letterboxing is a great way to explore the natural wonders of Skagit County while learning how to help protect



our watershed.

Participants follow clues to discover hidden letterboxes, which include a journal (for stamping) and a stamp or stickers for participants to place in their own journal. In addition, participants collect a "magic word" to record at each site.

Saturday, June 20 is the official start date when all the letterboxes will

be hidden and clues are released. After the 20th, stop by the PUD lobby or any public library for a list of Letterbox Trail clues. The Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (www.skagitwater.org) and Skagit PUD (www.SkagitPUD.org) will also have information and clues available online.

A special celebration is scheduled for the end of October for everyone who joins the quest.

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PUD Environmental Services Coordinator Randy Brower (left) outlines plans with Mount Vernon Police Officers Jon Gerondale and Jon Skiffington for help in relocating the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Community Garden due to pipeline construction this summer.

Pipeline bids come in low

Skagit PUD has selected Shoreline Construction Co. of Woodinville to lay 1.6 miles of 36-inch pipe through Mount Vernon as part of the first phase in a proposed 6.6-mile transmission pipeline project.

Phase I will follow the Kulshan Avenue right-of-way starting at East College Way and connect to existing transmission lines at the intersection

of North LaVenture Road and Kulshan Avenue. PUD engineers estimated the project would cost \$7.8 million; however, the lowest three bids came in between \$3.6 million and \$4 million.

PUD Engineering Manager Greg Peterka attributes a tough economy and greater competition to the much lower bid prices.

"There's a lot of contractors who are very hungry for work," Peterka said.

"Other cities are also finding them coming in very competitive."

In order to minimize costs and activity on the site, the pipeline project is being constructed in conjunction with a city of Mount Vernon sanitary sewer force main. The PUD will be working with the city and the contractor to minimize impacts to the local neighborhood

Work is slated to begin in June.

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PIPELINE

Spring 2009
Owned By The People We Serve

NEWSLETTER FOR SKAGIT PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT CUSTOMERS

IN THE PIPELINE

Water Facts | 3 |

Except for the air we breathe, water is the single most important element in our lives. Inside are some useful facts and simple suggestions that will help you understand more about water.

Pipeline Project Bids | 4 |

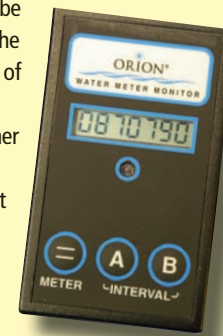
Bids for Phase I of the Judy Reservoir to Mount Vernon Transmission Project came in \$4 million lower than estimated. Tough economy part of the reason.

Letterbox Trail Returns | 4 |

Explore the natural wonders of Skagit County while uncovering interesting facts about the Skagit Watershed and ways you can help to protect it.

Meter Monitors

Learn how you can easily monitor your water usage and be alerted in the occurrence of a leak. Call our customer service department today, 424-7104, to see if your home or business qualifies for our Water Meter Monitor program.



Winter storms force tough decisions on summer water supply damage repair



A PUD construction worker takes a closer look at storm damage at the Gilligan Creek water supply intake.

This winter's heavy rains and rapid snow melt forced Skagit PUD to take our water supply intakes out of service for several weeks in order to make major damage repairs.

The PUD's primary source of water for filling the Judy Reservoir comes from four creeks—Gilligan, Mundt, Turner and Salmon—located in the Cultus Mountain watershed above Clear

Lake. Construction crews have spent most of the spring clearing and repairing the intake sites, in an effort to keep the water flowing to fill Judy Reservoir.

The most significant damage was at the Gilligan Creek intake. "The PUD's Gilligan Creek system provides roughly 70 percent of the water that we receive from the creeks to

Repairs > [SEE PAGE 2](#)

Watching our WATER

Using a little 'water sense' can save you money

If you're thinking about ways to save energy during these difficult times, start by thinking about water. Most people don't realize it, but the energy used to pump, heat, deliver and treat the water we use every day is much more than a drop in the bucket.

But by using a little "water sense" we can all use water and energy more efficiently and preserve our nation's energy and water supplies for future generations.

The key to saving our water is thinking

about our habits. Each American uses an average of 100 gallons of water a day. We can cut that by as much as 30 percent, through a few simple steps.

First, we need to know how we use water. Most people don't know that leaving the tap open during a daily ritual like brushing our teeth can use up to eight gallons of water—that's the same amount as the average person drinks in 16 days.

Water > [SEE PAGE 2](#)

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By turning the tap off, you'll use just half a gallon.

Second, technology is making water efficiency easier than ever. New tools are available each day to help all of us use less water without sacrificing product quality or performance.

Efficient appliances and fixtures are a good place to start. They are cost-effective and can dramatically reduce your daily water use. Installing high-performance, high-efficiency toilets in your bathrooms can cut your indoor water use by about 16

percent. A new crop of dishwashers and washing machines are using considerably less water than conventional models. Point-of-use water heaters prevent excess water use while waiting for the hot water to reach the faucet or shower.

We can change the way we use water outside our homes too. Many people don't realize that 30 percent of household water is used outdoors, typically for irrigation. A

well-maintained irrigation system can achieve excellent landscaping results while using much less water. Look for sprinklers that produce droplets, not mist, make sure your system is well maintained and that water is evenly distributed. Set timers properly, and install rain shut-off devices and moisture sensors to reduce excess watering and run-off.

Businesses play an essential role in water conservation as well. They account for 17 percent of all water used in public systems. Through upgrades to their equipment, many businesses can cut their water

usage by 20 to 30 percent.

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) partnership program that seeks to help protect and preserve the nation's water supply is also a valuable tool in helping promote water efficiency. EPA's WaterSense® program (www.epa.gov/watersense) offers a simple way to make product choices that use less water—just look for the WaterSense label. Toilets and faucets

that meet EPA specifications are independently tested to perform as well as or better than conventional models with no sacrifice to quality or product performance. Skagit PUD is a WaterSense partner.

Using WaterSense labeled products will help save water and money while preserving limited water resources for the future. For example, if every home in the United States installed WaterSense labeled faucets or faucet aerators in the bathrooms, it would save 60 billion gallons of water annually—saving households more than \$350 million in water bills and about \$600 million in energy costs to heat their water.

If you look at the numbers they certainly add up. Saving water is a smart, cost-effective, win-win solution. When you look at the impact of water efficiency as a bigger picture, it is clear it's the only way we can go. It's about changing what we know and turning that knowledge into action.

Let's step up and save this vital resource from washing away.



ABOUT water

Water conservation is something we all should practice. Except for the air we breathe, water is the single most important element in our lives. It's too precious to waste. Here are some useful facts and simple suggestions that will help you understand more about water. They'll help you save hundreds, even thousands, of gallons per month without any great inconvenience.

Dinosaur water?

There's as much water in the world today as there was thousands of years ago. Actually, it's the same water. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank.



Perhaps Columbus sailed across it.

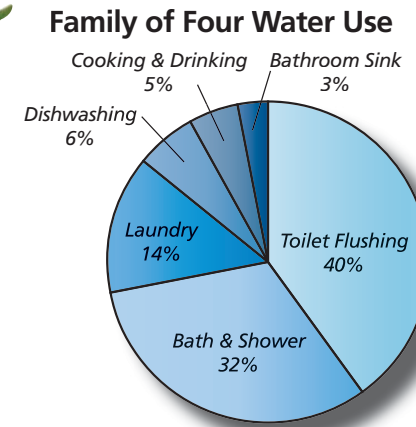
Nearly 97 percent of the world's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable. Another two percent is locked in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves just one percent for all of humanity's needs—all its agricultural, manufacturing, community, and personal household needs.

What activity in my home uses the most water?

Toilet flushing is by far the largest single use of water in a home. Most toilets use from four to six gallons of water for each flush. On the average, a dishwasher uses about 50 percent less water than the amount used

when you wash and rinse dishes by hand if the dishes are not pre-rinsed and if only full loads are washed in the dishwasher.

Without counting lawn watering, typical percentages of water use for a family of four are:



How should I water my lawn to avoid wasting water?

Water your lawn for long periods a couple times each week, rather than every day. This allows deep penetration of the water. An inch a week is a good rule of thumb. If you

want to find out exactly how long to water, put some large cans or jars (peanut butter jars will work) around your lawn and see how long you have to run your sprinkler to fill the jars with the right amount of water.

Water early in the morning to avoid excessive evaporation; it is usually less windy then, too, and the water pressure is usually higher. Night watering may promote lawn disease. Use a sprinkler that makes large drops, because small drops evaporate faster. Watering your lawn with a hand-held hose is a waste of both your time and your water, although it might be okay for a small garden.

Try to avoid watering paved areas and don't use your hose to wash sidewalks or driveways. Both of these practices waste a lot of water.

Plant watering can be reduced by selecting xeriscape (which means low-water demanding) plants or native plants, which provide an attractive landscape without high water use.

DID YOU KNOW?

If everyone in the United States flushed the toilet just one less time per day, we could save a lakeful of water about a mile long, a mile wide, and four feet deep every day.

Little leaks add up in a hurry. A faucet drip or invisible toilet leak that totals only two tablespoons a minute comes to 15 gallons a day. That's 105 gallons a week and 5,406 gallons of water a year.

We drink very little of our drinking water. Generally speaking, less than one percent of the treated water produced by water utilities is actually consumed. The rest goes on lawns, in washing machines, and down toilets and drains.

If you have a lawn, chances are it's your biggest water gobbler. Typically, at least 30 percent of water consumed by households is used outdoors. Inside your house, bathroom facilities claim 75 percent of the water used.

Source: American Water Works Association

REPAIRS: reservoir back on the rise

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fill Judy Reservoir," General Manager David Johnson said.

During this time of the year, the PUD would normally be topping off the reservoir for the dry months ahead. Instead, the water level was fast approaching one of the lowest on record, which required the PUD to purchase water from the city of Anacortes to

supplement customer demand for six weeks.

The damage created at Gilligan Creek was the result of tremendous volumes of water rushing through the creek and landslides above the intake. The landslides produced a powerful flow of water that ultimately sheared away a 3,600-pound grate on the intake pipe, which was

constructed of heavy-duty railroad iron.

Contract crews and the PUD's operations department did a significant amount of work to get Gilligan Creek back to a point where the District could actually capture and deliver water to Judy Reservoir. The PUD was able to resume filling the reservoir around April 1. If all goes well, the District hopes to

raise the water level by roughly three inches per day. This should bring Judy Reservoir back up to normal levels by June.

Because of the need to refill the reservoir faster than usual, the water treatment plant is accepting water into the reservoir that has a slightly higher turbidity level than normally preferred. Turbidity is the cloudiness in water

caused by individual particles (such as sand) that are generally invisible to the naked eye, similar to smoke in the air. Through the filtration process, the treatment plant can easily remove all of the particles. However, too much organic material allowed into the reservoir could trigger what's known as an "algae bloom." The by-product of certain

algae sometimes affects the taste and odor of drinking water. The by-product that causes the odor is not harmful, nor will it affect normal water usage. Our treatment plant staff are carefully monitoring the situation. Water quality continues to meet or exceed all state and federal drinking water standards.