Water Resources & Sustainability

September 2024

PERSONNEL UPDATES & ANNIVERSARIES

David Schwen, WRS Maintenance Tech II
8/1/2018, 6 years

Erik Lysne, WRS Maintenance Tech II
8/6/2018, 6 years

Jeffery Cota, WRS Maintenance Tech II
8/16/2021, 3 years

Dave Kangiser, Water Resources Specialist
9/17/2019, 5 years

Daniel Sullivan, WRS Maintenance Tech I
9/1/2021, 3 years

Modeling Successful Projects

TED and WRS team members with City of Olympia utility team members at the top of a water tower.

The City of Tumwater is in the process of designing a new 3.5 million gallon reservoir for the drinking water system to improve storage capacity for our growing community. In preparation for the design work, City staff from both Water Resources & Sustainability and Transportation & Engineering had the opportunity to tour City of Olympia's newest drinking water reservoir recently constructed off Morse-Merryman Road. City of Olympia's Mike Vessey, Drinking Water Utility Director and Jeremy Cole, Pump Stations Operations Supervisor, led a tour for Tumwater staff through their site to discuss the design and function of the project. The tour was extremely positive and provided several opportunities to aid Tumwater staff in the design of our new Southeast Reservoir project. This is great example of Tumwater working with its neighboring utilities to learn innovative ways to improve city services. Thanks to Mike Vessey and Jeremy Cole and all Tumwater staff involved for creating an opportunity that will assist in developing a successful project.

Updating the City's Comprehensive Plan - Climate Element

Climate Action workshop participants.

The City is now required to create a new chapter ("element") of our Comprehensive Plan focused on climate change. This new element must include two sections focused specifically on (1) climate mitigation and (2) climate resilience. Climate mitigation focuses on ***reducing*** the pollution (greenhouse gases) that cause climate change, and climate resilience is focused on ***withstanding*** and ***adapting*** to climate hazards (like heat domes and flooding).

Most of the City's efforts to date have focused on climate mitigation, centered on the Thurston Climate

Mitigation Plan and meeting region-wide greenhouse gas reduction targets. Now, work will begin to ensure that Tumwater can bounce back better after climate disasters. That work could be tangible, like improvements to built infrastructure, or intangible like improved relationships with vulnerable populations.

Both mitigation and resilience are necessary and important parts of our climate work as a City. Over the next year, staff will be gathering feedback from the community in a variety of ways and drafting the plan, anticipating adoption by the City Council in December 2025.

Mottman Pond Maintenance

Vactor truck being used during pond maintenance.

The Stormwater Operations and Maintenance crew has been busy this summer conducting maintenance on several key stormwater facilities. The WA Department of Ecology requires the City to maintain our stormwater facilities within one year of maintenance needs being identified during annual inspections. Mark Tiegen and his crew are on track to complete all the required maintenance by the end of summer. This is a major accomplishment for the stormwater team and their work will help keep stormwater clean and flowing when the rains return this fall. Thanks Mark and crew!

High Irrigation Users in Tumwater

With hot weather comes irrigation use. This July was a particularly hot one, with seventeen straight days over 80 degrees, including one day at 100. Do you know who uses the most water for irrigation in Tumwater?

The top three irrigators in July 2024:

1. Tumwater School District: 2.4 million gallons
2. City of Tumwater: 1.9 million gallons
3. Department of Labor and Industries: 1.4 million gallons

Overall, 5.7 million gallons of water was used for lawn and turf grass around buildings, parks, athletic fields, and rights-of-way in one month, the same amount of water used by approximately 1,000 homes.

So, how can we conserve water?

In the short term, reduce watering, where landscaping is non-functional. We can also change what we plant. Plant landscaping that has a lower water demand, such as native and drought tolerant plants. These need little to no water once established. If you want a lawn, try alternative groundcovers or seed mixes that are now available that not only use less water but support wildlife.

In the long term, using alternative sources of water such as reclaimed water, which is already used to irrigate the Tumwater Golf Course and Deschutes Valley Park, is a big part of the solution. WRS staff will continue to look for viable alternatives and promote effective conservation measures for all City and community uses.