

To: Rhododendron Water Association (RWA) Members
From: Rhododendron Water Association (RWA) Board of Directors
Re: 2019 Water Rates
Date: January 2019

Happy Holiday's and Happy New Year! What a great year 2018 has been! There is nothing but good news to report and 2019 promises to be even better.

To start the good news marathon, your RWA Board of Directors is proud to announce that the Rhododendron water system has achieved the honor of being awarded "OUTSTANDING PERFORMER" by the State Drinking Water division of the Oregon Health Authority. This distinction is awarded to less than 10% of the 3395 systems throughout Oregon. It means our water system has had no significant deficiencies, no reporting violations, and received an outstanding performance review during a recent system survey performed by the Oregon Health Authority. It also means a significant reduction in the monitoring conducted by the state. Please join the Board in congratulating, Water Master, David Jacob for his efforts in making this distinction possible.

Other good news is that RWA completed construction of the Slow Sand filtration system at the treatment plant. The new filtration went on-line in September producing up to 72GPM of filtered water. What does this mean to you as a member of the RWA? It means that RWA no longer needs to purchase, as many or as often, the very expensive filter cartridges as we once did. The savings amount to about \$12,000 annually, which significantly reduces the expenses needed to filter our water. Lower expense means higher Net Profit, which can be used to invest back into the system and/or pay off debt more rapidly.

Continuing with the good news marathon, RWA is pleased to announce the completion of our new 130,000-gallon reservoir, which we hope to have on line, after all testing is complete, by the time you receive this letter. This new reservoir will be a major asset and will play a crucial role in helping prevent future Boil Water orders caused by filtration issues at the treatment plant and will aid significantly in leak detection.

All this good news is a result of RWA obtaining permanent financing through the State of Oregon Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund. As a requirement for this Capital Improvement financing, RWA needed to be 100% metered. With the addition of a new 4" main line, which was bored under Highway 26 between Henry Creek Road and Road 20, and a new main line laid down the south side of the highway, RWA is now 100% metered. With the installation of all the service meters, we are now able to significantly monitor and reduce water loss from leaks.

As long as we are reporting good news, the RWA Board is pleased to welcome a new member to the association, the Zigzag Ranger Station! When the original Rhododendron water system laid the first water lines in 1918, one of the primary users was the predecessor to the current ranger station. Sometime in the 1930's the ranger station separated from the Rhododendron system, electing instead to use water sourced from a spring just up Hunchback Mountain from the ranger station. After recent changes in Federal regulations, the Zigzag Ranger Station requested to be re-connected to the RWA system. The ranger station made significant upgrades to their water lines and added approximately 1000' of main line down the old Mt. Hood Loop Highway Right of Way. The cut over connection took place in September. Welcome back to the RWA Zigzag Ranger Station!

The RWA Board is looking forward to 2019 and beyond. With many of the major and necessary Capital Improvement projects behind us, we will be concentrating on upgrading or replacing many of our major distribution and branch water lines. We will also be concentrating on protecting the source of our water, Big Henry Creek.

In keeping with the good news report, in October 2018, RWA was awarded a \$30,000.00 Source Water Protection Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The funds will be used to investigate,

develop, and negotiate Conservation Easements across 2 large parcels of private property at the headwaters of Big Henry Creek. Assuming we will be successful, our water source would be protected from the possibility that any future-logging operations could affect the quality of our source water.

And the last of the good news, but certainly not least, and as explained in previous rate letters, the “RWA Master Plan” calls for a 3% rate increase every two years. In keeping with that policy, in 2018 the RWA Board raised rates by 3%. So accordingly, **at the November 16, 2018 meeting of the RWA Board, they voted unanimously to maintain water rates at the 2018 level and approved the 2019 Annual Budget.** Please refer to the attached rate sheet for the specifics of the 2019 Rates.

As members of the Rhododendron Water Association, we all have a responsibility to serve the Association in whatever way possible. Whether it is by serving on the Board, attending the bi-monthly Board meetings or Annual Membership meeting, or simply paying your membership dues on time, this is your Association and everyone’s participation is encouraged.

Please know that all RWA Board meetings are open to RWA members and guests. If interested in attending, please contact the Board at rhododendron.water@gmail.com or call our message line at 503-622-5000 and leave a message. This is your Association. Participation and comments are encouraged.

Soon you will be receiving the Annual Call for Nominations to the RWA Board. There are two positions open for nomination on the RWA Board for 2019. Anyone interested in serving on the RWA Board is encouraged to submit their name to the Board for nomination. The RWA Board encourages all of our members to let us know what you think about the Association and the direction we are heading, or offer suggestions for improvement.

Additionally, each member must do everything possible to conserve water and prevent leaks. We ask that you please report any leaks as soon as they are noticed by contacting us at 503-622-5000. We also ask that you winterize your pipes or turn off the supply line to your home or cabin if it will be unoccupied for extended periods during the cold weather. Remember that it is against association policy to continuously run water as a method to prevent freezing pipes. The Board has implemented a penalty to immediately shut-off water to anyone found to be in violation of this policy.

The Board would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Laura Patty at Creekside Bookkeeping & Office Services. Laura assumed responsibility for the RWA account in 2015 and continues to be invaluable in helping with the administrative operations of the Association. If you ever have a problem or concern just call Laura on our message line and she will promptly return your call. We have a dedicated message line phone number for the association, 503-622-5000.

In addition, we have our own domain name and web site. Please to refer to our web page at: “rhodywater.com” to stay current with all association activities and notices. Remember, all current news, emergency notices, the By-Laws, Annual meeting agendas, minutes, and general information can be obtained on line via the web site.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments please contact any one of the members of the Rhododendron Water Association Board. We are here to serve you and keep the best interests of the association our top priority.

Sincerely,
Rhododendron Water Association Board of Directors

“Providing tomorrows water quality and reliability... Today”

Annual Billing

The 2019 Annual Water Rates approved by a vote of the RWA Board for the 2019 fiscal year are as follows:

The BASE RATE paid by all members is \$245.00

and

WATER USE RATES by Membership status

\$190.00 per year for Full-time users

\$105.00 per year for Part-time users

Therefore, the total Annual billing for water, based on membership status will be

Full-Time \$435.00

Part-Time \$350.00

Enclosed you will find your 2019 Annual Billing invoice for water services based on membership status.

Payment Policy

As called for in the RWA By-Laws the Annual Dues are payable in full on or before March 1. However, we realize it may be difficult for some members to pay the Annual Dues in a single lump sum payment by the due date of March 1. As a result, the Board implemented a quarterly payment option. If you choose the quarterly payment option, the first quarterly payment must be made by March 1 and all dues must be paid by November 30. Monthly payments are no longer an option.

In addition, the Board has made paying your water dues a bit easier by offering payment by Credit Card. Please contact Association Executive Secretary, Laura Patty, at 503-622-5000 (message phone) for details. We no longer accept "Drop-off" payments. All payments must be mailed or placed on credit card.

RWA will continue to strictly follow the payment policy and aggressively enforce the "Shut-Off" policy should payments not be made in accordance to the agreed payment plan. We urge any member with questions about the Annual or quarterly payment options to contact Executive Secretary, Laura Patty, prior to February 1, in order to clarify any payment arrangements. If the FULL or first quarterly payment is not received by March 1, your payment will be considered late. If arrangement for payment is not received by March 15, your account will be assessed a Late-Payment fee and a notice to Shut-Off water for non-payment will be issued. Also, if you elect the quarterly payment option and fail to make the regularly scheduled quarterly payment, your account will be considered delinquent and will be scheduled for Shut-Off and subject to all the associated service fees. Water service will not be restored until all required fees and any balance due on the account has been paid in full. Also, there will be a \$30.00 fee for any payments returned for insufficient funds.

Rate Payer Assistance Program

In 2018 the RWA Board implemented a Rate Payer Assistance Program. If any of our ratepayers need assistance paying the water dues they may apply for assistance. Please see enclosed application.

This program is strictly funded by generous donations from other ratepayers. If you would like to donate, please see your Annual Invoice.