

March 2021 Newsletter

Please submit questions/comments to admin@sallal.com

Potential Water Supply Contract with North Bend

Securing additional water supply is important for Sallal's future. One option for that supply is to purchase water from the City of North Bend. One of the benefits of a contract with the City is that it would stop any further loss of Sallal's service area to the City because we would be able to serve all requests in our area. We are in negotiations with the City regarding a contract to purchase water from them as a supply source for the Urban Growth Area (UGA) within Sallal's service area. As part of the same contract, we would potentially sell water to the City for stream flow mitigation purposes. The idea is that we would buy water from the City during the rainy months when the City does not need to mitigate. We would sell them mitigation water during the dry months when the river needs the mitigation water and only when water is not available from their primary mitigation source, Seattle Public Utilities. It's all about the timing.

Your Board will only sign a contract that is in the best interest of this Association. The fact that a contract has not been agreed upon with the City after years of meetings and negotiations should demonstrate that the Board is being careful. We are not rushing into this and are doing our best to represent the best interests of the organization and all its members. If such a deal can't be made, Sallal won't do it. If the Board does succeed in negotiating a fair contract, we will present it to members before signing it. Ensuring that members continue to have safe and sufficient water at reasonable rates is the Board's top priority.

During the Special Meeting at the Snoqualmie Casino in 2019, the Board committed to scheduling two meetings when a contract proposal with the City of North Bend becomes a reality. Both meetings (anticipated to be about a month apart) would be an informational Open House for the first half followed by a question-and-answer forum. These meetings are not required, but the Board committed to holding these meetings because it's the right thing to do.

There are complex engineering issues that still need to be resolved, and negotiations continue with the City in the following areas: Impact of the City's water conservation ordinance on Sallal members; the City's new ordinance that requires Sallal to provide water usage data to the City of members that live within the City's limits; the franchise agreement that the City recently required Sallal to obtain; as well as the water supply contract between the two parties.

While Sallal is owned by its members and is not regulated in the same manner as an investor-owned utility, it nevertheless has certain characteristics of a public utility. Sallal answers to the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Ecology (DOE) for water usage and quality, facilities design, and health and safety. Sallal is obligated to serve the public residing or conducting business in the areas it serves. This includes everyone in the service area, regardless of property use in most circumstances, and means that Sallal cannot deny service based on ideologies, beliefs, views, or philosophies about growth, development and environment aspects, zoning, politics, etc. Our obligation to serve is not elective – it is a statutory requirement and needs to be taken into account when considering the future of the Association and decisions regarding its service area and resources.

New Water Right	<p>A second option to increase water supply is to secure a new water right. To this end, Sallal continues to pursue a new water right to serve the water demand in our service area. This will not be an easy pursuit, but the Sallal Board is approaching this carefully and deliberately with input from a variety of water right experts. Ultimately, our objective is to obtain approval of the water right that we applied for in 2001. But there are no certainties with that outcome. The process for completing work needed to potentially gain approval of a new water right will run through July 2023. Continuing to advance through this process will be contingent on the costs and technical difficulties we encounter along the way.</p>
Sallal's Service Area	<p>The Department of Health recently approved the City of North Bend's Water System Plan. Their plan includes service to the Mule Pasture and the proposed National Guard site near Truck Town. These two sites have been removed from Sallal's service area and will be served by the City rather than Sallal. These parcels were removed from Sallal's service area because Sallal currently has insufficient water rights to serve the sizeable water demands of these large developments. (One of the benefits of a contract with the City is that it would stop any further loss of Sallal's service area to the City because we would be able to serve all requests in our area.)</p> <p>As was discussed in last month's newsletter, Sallal's approved water system plan shows that we continue to have sufficient water rights to serve normal growth through 2030. However, unless we can secure additional water rights or purchase water from the City, service area deletions could continue to happen in the future.</p>
Capital Projects Update	<p>Construction work for a new reservoir and a new supply well continues. These facilities should be in operation in the late spring. The new office/shop building at our Edgewick site recently went out to bid and will take about 1-year for construction.</p>
Member Education	<p>If you are selling your home, please contact us as soon as you have a signed sales contract or at least 30 days prior to closing. The transfer of membership has to occur upon closing and there are some minor fees involved. So please loop us in early in the process to avoid any delays in membership transfer.</p>
New Ways to Manage Your Account	<p>With our recent billing system change, you can now access your account online. Once you have completed the initial setup, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay your bill on our website, using a credit card. (There is a \$3.00 fee for this payment option.) • View your billing and payment history for the last year. • View your water usage history in a table or graph. • View a copy of your current bill (after the 1st of each month). • Update your information and make account preference changes. <p>Please take this opportunity to update your contact information to ensure receipt of your monthly bill as well as any emergency information about your drinking water.</p> <p>These great new options will allow you to view information on your account 24/7. But first you must set up your account online to gain access. All members will need to follow these steps below to access their account:</p> <p>Go to https://sallal.epayub.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2F (or follow the red "Pay Online" link from our website at www.sallal.com/billing)</p> <p>Click on "REGISTER" in the top right of the screen and use your Sallal account number to register. You will need to create a username and password. Please save this information somewhere safe as we cannot recover your username and password for you in the Sallal office.</p>