

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

**SPRING CLEAN-** The City of Liberty Lake along with the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District will again this year conduct a Spring Clean event on Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>. The event will start at 8 a.m. and run to 3:00 p.m. Bagged yard waste can be brought to the disposal area located just north of Barlows Restaurant on Meadowwood Lane. Volunteers will be present to assist in unloading waste. Please, no garbage, hazardous waste or appliances.

**WATER CONSERVATION-** The District's drinking water source are wells drawing from the Spokane-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. The District encourages residents with lawns not to waste water and conserve wherever possible. Watering to a depth of 4 to 6 inches encourages deeper, healthier root development and allows longer periods between watering. Just over 1 inch of water per week is all that is needed. To measure your water use, place an empty tuna can on the yard while watering. The tuna can when full is approximately 1 inch. Adjust watering during rainy/cool periods. It is recommended to water between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. to reduce water loss by evaporation. Water rates at Liberty Lake are based on 240 gallons per day consumption. Water in excess of 240 gallons per day is charged a premium rate.

**IRRIGATION SENSOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM-**The District has initiated an irrigation sensor incentive program for Liberty Lake residents and businesses. The idea is to promote the "fine tuning" of residential and commercial irrigation systems by using moisture sensors to control the irrigation system electronics resulting in watering when landscapes need water. To learn more about moisture sensors, irrigation controllers, and rotary and spray sprinklers contact BiJay Adams at 922-5443 extension 230.

**ELECTRONIC PAYMENT-** Monthly billing is now available. Monthly billing is only available to those making payment by "**Direct-Debit**" Your payment for charges will be withdrawn from your account on the last day of the month or the next business day if it falls on a weekend. You will continue to receive quarterly billing showing usage and overages. Payment for charges can also be done by "**Direct-Debit**" on a quarterly basis. The authorization form is available at the Administration offices, 22510 E. Mission or on the web site at [www.libertylake.org](http://www.libertylake.org). Return the signed form to the District. For additional information contact Glenys at 922-5443 extension 221.

**DAN GROGG RECEIVES AWARD-** Dan Grogg the Chief Operator of the District's Water Reclamation Plant received the Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association Operator of the Year for 2010. The award was presented to Dan at the PNCWA annual conference in Bend Oregon.

**DISTRICT RECEIVES AWARD-** The Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District received the Washington State Department of Ecology Outstanding Performance Award for the operation of the Water Reclamation Plant in 2009. This was the 4th time that the District has received the award.

**LEAK DETECTION-** Is your water bill too high? Leaking toilet bowls, irrigation systems and faucets could be the reason. In some cases the service line from the meter to the house could also be leaking. For information regarding assistance in finding these leaks contact Chief Operator John Yake at 922-5443 ex. 227.

**DISTRICT WEB SITE-** Check out the District's web site at [www.libertylake.org](http://www.libertylake.org). Information regarding rates, staff, water quality, lake protection, lake level and much, much more.

**DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONER MEETINGS-** The District Board of Commissioners meet the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District Administration Offices located at 22510 E. Mission, Liberty Lake, WA. The public is welcome.

**SECURITY OF FACILITIES-** Wells, reservoirs, sewer manholes, valves, sewer lift stations, hydrants, treatment plants and other water and sewer utilities are all vulnerable to unauthorized access and vandalism. Security measures are in place and improvements will continue to assure these facilities are safe. One of the best security measures is the eyes and ears of District residents. If you see or suspect suspicious activity at any of the District facilities, please call 9-1-1 and report the incident.

**GOVERNOR SIGNS CLEAN FERTILIZERS, HEALTHIER LAKES AND RIVERS LEGISLATION INTO LAW-** Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law the "Clean Fertilizer, Healthier Lakes and Rivers" legislative bill ESHB 1489. The legislation manages the sale of phosphorus in fertilizers and provides a common sense and cost effective approach to making sure that our lakes and rivers are clean. This legislation was one of the environmental community priorities for the 2011 legislative session and the first to be signed into law. The Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District passed a resolution in 2005 discouraging the use of fertilizers that contain the nutrient phosphorus within the boundaries of the District. This law will go into effect January 2013. For additional information contact BiJay Adams at 922-5443 ex. 230.

**"WATERSHED WATCH"** A column titled "Watershed Watch" is published twice a month in the *Liberty Lake Splash*. The column has information regarding the two major watersheds at Liberty Lake, the watershed of the lake

and the watershed of the aquifer. Helping with the writing of the articles are community volunteers and members of the watershed citizen advisory committee. For more information contact BiJay Adams at 922-5443 ex. 230.

**HOW TO FERTILIZE YOUR LAWN AT LIBERTY LAKE-** If you must fertilize, do not use phosphorus compounds for the protection of the lake, aquifer and environment. “Fertilize with Care”. A common “rule of thumb” for fertilizing Washington lawns is no more than 4 pounds of nitrogen per 100 square foot per year. The plants will not use anything in excess of this. How do you compute the amount of nitrogen in a bag of fertilizer? Generally, there are three numbers on the fertilizer bag, i.e. 21-0-0. The first number is the percent of nitrogen (N), the second number is phosphorus (P), and the third number is potash. It is the second number, phosphorus, that can find its way back to streams, rivers, and lakes causing aquatic growth. Use fertilizer with zero phosphorus (P). It is recommended to fertilize lightly (4) times per year using the holidays of Easter, Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Labor Day. For a 1000 square foot yard, using a 50 pound bag of 21-0-0 fertilizer, each of the 4 applications would require approximately 5 pounds or a 2 pound coffee can filled ¾ full of fertilizer. Buying fertilizer can also be confusing. Fertilizer can be quick release (all Nitrogen (N) is release immediately) such as urea, ammonium sulfate and ammonium nitrate; slow release (nitrogen is release over a longer period of time) such as IBDU, sulfur-coated urea and ureaform; and “bridge” type fertilizers (a mixture of quick release and slow release products). Always apply fertilizer according to the manufactures recommendations. Excessive use of fertilizer will not be used by the plants and tends to migrate to ground and surface waters.

**TO FLUSH OR NOT TO FLUSH, THAT IS THE QUESTION!** What is flushed down the toilet is usually not a topic that is discussed among family and friends. “Out of sight, out of mind” probably describes how we think about it. The District’s water reclamation plant is a biological treatment plant designed to treat organic material, basically human waste. Just about everything else that is flushed down the drain should be disposed of in another manner. So what happens to all the other materials that we flush down the drain? Items like metal, rags, diapers, and grease may not even make it to the treatment facility and get lodged in the collection pipes. The sewer mains are periodically vacuum pumped to clean out these items. Cleaning of sewer mains adds to the overall cost of operation and increases sewer rates to customers. Items that reach the treatment plant are mostly captured at the headworks and hauled to a solid waste disposal site. Other inorganics and dissolved products may or may not be processed through the plant. Some products that are listed as “flushable” or biodegradable should also be disposed of in the trash. The following are examples of items that should not be flushed:

Diapers (cloth, disposable, “flushable”)

Toilet Bowl Scrubbers

Dental Floss

Fats, grease and oils

Sanitary napkins, tampons or any non-organic material

Vitamins, medicine or other pharmaceuticals

Towels, rags and clothing

Sheet plastic, wax paper, kitchen wrap

Razor blades, syringes, needles, lancets

Any petroleum based products i.e. fuels, solvents, thinners

Paint

Metals including micro-thin aluminum packaging labels

For additional information contact Dan Grogg, Chief Operator, at 922-5443 ex. 236.

**PURPLE PIPE PROJECT-** The District will join the Spokane County sewer project on Henry Road with the installation of the District’s purple pipe. Spokane County Utility Department will be installing sewer collection mains along Henry Road from just south of Country Vista drive to 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. The District will at the same time install purple pipe for future reclaimed water that will eventually be terminated in wetlands in the Saltese Flats area. The development of wetlands in the Saltese Flats is several years in the future, but the cost savings of joining in the County project at this time is significant.

**SHORELINE ACTIVITIES-** Spokane County and the Washington State Department of Ecology regulate certain activities within 50 feet of the ordinary high water mark, including cutting of trees and installing docks. Before conducting any construction near the lake, contact Spokane County Building Department, Washington State Department of Ecology or Department of Fish and Wildlife. For more information contact BiJay Adams at 922-5443 ex. 230.

**SPOKANE RIVER WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES-**The Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) has issued to the District a draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (NPDES) and the public comment period has expired. The NPDES permit is issued by DOE and outlines the level of treatment required for discharge of effluent to the Spokane River. The final permit has not been issued but is expected in the next few months. The permit is the most stringent in District history and will require additional upgrades to the Water Reclamation Plant by 2015. DOE has developed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for dissolved oxygen in the river and requires the District to establish a plan to reduce nutrients and in particular phosphorus in the Spokane River and Lake Spokane. Phosphorus can cause algae blooms and degradation of the downstream water quality. Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District along with other Washington and Idaho dischargers including Avista will be required to meet some of the most stringent low phosphorus levels in the United States. The long range plan of the District is

to get out of the river during portions of the year and dispose of the reclaimed water to wetlands in the Saltese Flats. The draft permit is available at the DOE web site [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wa/permits/eastern\\_permits](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wa/permits/eastern_permits). For additional information contact Lee Mellish at 922-9016.

**BLUE-GREEN ALGAE-(CYANOBACTERIA)**-Liberty Lake like many area lakes have Cyanobacteria commonly called blue-green algae. Most blue-green algae are not toxic but some can produce a toxin that does pose a human health concern. Toxicity is hard to predict. A single species of algae can have toxic and non-toxic strains. Why a blue-green algae suddenly turns toxic is relatively unknown. Human effects include stomach pains, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes, nerve and liver damage. Pets and wildlife are particularly sensitive to the toxin. The District will monitor the lake for algae throughout the summer.

**CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT**-Annually, on or before July 1, the District sends to every water customer a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). This report will show the status of the water quality provided to residents at Liberty Lake. Traditionally, the water quality of our drinking water is very good.

**HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC CHEMICALS**-It is a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act to dispose of any toxic or hazardous chemicals into street drains, sewers, and drywells or at self-service car washes which could contaminate surface or ground water. The Spokane County transfer station at 3941 North Sullivan Road will accept chemicals toxic and hazardous chemicals such as waste oil, antifreeze, herbicides, pesticides, degreasers, paints, etc. at no charge. The District water reclamation plant is not capable of treating these kinds of chemicals and if introduced into the sewer could pollute the Spokane River or the Aquifer. For additional information contact the Spokane County Recycle Hotline at (509) 625-6800.

**MILFOIL TREATMENT**-Chemical treatment of the Eurasian watermilfoil will likely occur again this summer. This invasive aquatic plant has been found in several locations around the lake. Ongoing maintenance will be required to prevent the plant from overtaking the lake. Surveys will be conducted to determine the extent of this year's growth. Lake residents will be notified prior to treatment.

**SPOKANE VALLEY-RATHDRUM PRAIRIE AQUIFER**- The Spokane Valley –Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer is the drinking water source for over 400,000 people in north Idaho and Spokane area including Liberty Lake. The aquifer stretches from Pend Oreille Lake to the Little Spokane River north of Spokane. It is one of the largest aquifers in the world. This resource is not unlimited and must be protected from contamination and overutilization. The Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, comprised of 20 water utility organizations drawing water from the aquifer, has published the updated "Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Atlas". The atlas is a great source of information with pictures and maps outlining the aquifer and its history. The atlas is available free of charge at the District Administration offices. For more information about the aquifer contact Erin Casci, Program Manager SAJB at (509) 998-7898.

**HOW TO READ YOUR BILL**-The District bills in 4 quarterly cycles per year. Each cycle is billed in advance for current charges plus past due balances. Past due bills are charged 10% late charge on previous balance. Monthly sewer rate is \$29.16 and water is \$10.08 for 240 gallons per day. Water usage in excess of 240 gallons per day is charged a higher rate. Most residential homes exceed the 240 gallons per day during the irrigation season. For more detailed explanation of the bill check the District web site at [www.libertylake.org](http://www.libertylake.org) or call the District accountant Kathy at 922-5443 ex. 225.

**LAKE AND STREAM MONITORING**- Ongoing Lake water quality monitoring conducted by Washington State University and the District is continuing this summer. Liberty Creek and other tributaries to the lake are also monitored. A real time monitoring station can be checked at the District web site at [www.libertylake.org](http://www.libertylake.org) Click on Lake Protection/Liberty Creek.

**WATER TO COUNTY PARK**- During the summer of 2010 a water main was installed along Lakeside Drive to the Mackenzie Bay development extending the District water system. This water main will eventually continue to the Spokane County Park serving several homes along the way. The Spokane County Park presently receives water from the Greenridge development located on the hillside overlooking the lake. A reservoir is also in the planning stages.

**NO FEEDING WATERFOWL**- The District enacted a resolution requesting no feeding of waterfowl including gulls, geese and ducks to reduce pollutants to the lake; control waterborne parasites such as swimmers itch, and reduce fecal matter on community properties. Watch for signs throughout the District on the no feeding policy. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife also requests that feeding of birds and wildlife is not healthy for the animals and is discouraged.

**PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH**- Signs are posted at the public boat launch requesting boaters to check for aquatic vegetation on boat trailers. The spread of Eurasian watermilfoil and other nuisance aquatic plants is often carried on boat trailers.

**METER ACCESS**-Meters are read for residential customers only 4 times per year. Customers are required to keep the meter vault clear of obstructions such as shrubbery, debris, machinery, vehicles, boats, etc. Customers with meters in back yards must provide access for meter reading. The District, on occasion, will trim shrubs to access the meter.

Please don't fill the meter box with material that will absorb water and freeze. For additional information contact John Yake at 922-5443 ex. 227.

**FIRE HYDRANT USE-** Unauthorized use of fire hydrants is illegal. The District will issue permits to use hydrants. The permit is \$20 per day or \$250 per year. Backflow prevention devices are also available at the District Administration offices. For more information contact Glenys at 922-5443 ex. 221.

**BIOSOLIDS DISPOSAL-** The biosolids (sludge) that is generated at the District's Water Reclamation Plant on Harvard Road are disposed of near Mansfield Washington in a licensed facility. The company called Boulder Park is accepting biosolids from over 15 treatment plants across the state. The biosolids are being used as a soil amendment with some nutrient value. The District generates about 2 tons of biosolids per week at the annual cost of \$55,000 for disposal.

**ENERGY SAVINGS-** The District has worked with Avista Utilities to reduce energy costs, especially at the Water Reclamation Plant. Lighting, pumps and electrical equipment have been replaced with energy efficient equipment. The District is exploring the possibility of generating electricity to further reduce the cost of energy.

**EMPLOYEE IN THE SPOTLIGHT-** The District greatest resource is its employees. Kathy Millick is the accountant for the District and has done an outstanding job keeping the accounting records. The District accounting records are audited annually by the Washington State Auditors office and Kathy has never received a "finding". Kathy has been with the District for 21 years. She and her husband Paul live on a farm north of Spokane and raise chickens, llamas, alpacas, and dogs. Kathy is always eager to assist customers with billing questions.

**KIDS IN THE CREEK-** Since 2004, Central Valley School District has conducted the "Kids in the Creek" program at Liberty Lake. This program provides environmental education to over 850 fifth graders annually. District employee BiJay Adams has been involved assisting in providing environmental education regarding streams, aquifer, forestry and ropes courses. The program begins in April and runs to June 7<sup>th</sup>.