



# NEWS SPLASH

## Late Spring 2008

### DISTRICT CELEBRATES ITS 60TH BIRTHDAY!

The Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District is celebrating its 60th birthday this year! The District was originally formed as King County Water District 82 in 1948 by 35 residents living in the northwest corner of Pine Lake. Subsequent annexations and mergers with Water District 121 (Beaver Lake area) and 122 (Cascade View area north of SR 202) increased the service territory to the current size of 29 square miles and provision of service to approximately 15,700 water customers. The District completed its first sewer plan in 1970 and now also serves 9,300 sewer customers. The name was changed to Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District in 1987 to more closely reflect the Plateau location, which includes both urban and rural areas.

Over time, many dedicated individuals have stepped forward to provide water and sewer service to District customers. There have been 45 Commissioners who have served on various Boards over the years. Oscar Freed served as a Commissioner for 30 years from 1948 through 1977. For almost his entire tenure, Oscar was also the General Manager, and after retiring served as a consultant. Over time, the District has grown to 51 employees and five Commissioners. Our current Commissioners are Steve Stevlingson, Tom Harman, Lloyd Warren, Mary Shustov and Bob Brady. Ron Little currently serves as the District's General Manager. Ron started in 1981 as an engineer, and became General Manager in 1987. The District has only had three General Managers in its entire 60 year history: Oscar Freed, Mark Spahr, and Ron Little.



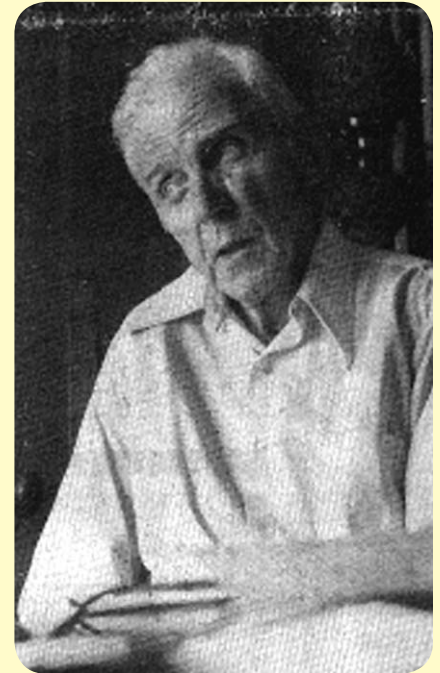
2008 District Board of Commissioners, from left: Bob Brady, Tom Harman, Lloyd Warren, Mary Shustov and Steve Stevlingson

The office has changed as well. Originally operating from Oscar Freed's kitchen, the facilities moved to a trailer, then moved again to a garage with office space. The District offices are now located in an office building with a detached vehicle storage building and garage on a 12.5 acre site at the intersection of 228<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Groundwater is still the primary water supply for the District. The District is currently experiencing a slower growth pattern after dealing with up to a 20 percent growth rate during the 1980s and 1990s. That substantial growth resulted in the need to supplement the groundwater supply with connections to the regional surface water supply, and the Cascade Water Alliance accomplished this task for its members, including the District. In addition, the District conducts an aquifer storage and recovery program under a special permit from the Washington Department of Ecology, where regional water is pumped into the groundwater aquifers to provide additional supply during the summer months.

At just over 30 years of age, the District's sewer system is still relatively young. All sewer flows are discharged into the King County Metro system. Nearly half of the District's customers in urban area still use septic systems, although the District anticipates a transition to sewers within the urban area over the next few decades.

The District is planning a birthday celebration later this year to observe 60 years of providing water and sewer services to its customers. Please watch for more information about the event in future newsletters.



Oscar Freed expressed concerns about water shortage issues on the Sammamish Plateau back in 1975. This photo was taken by Elaine Kraft for an *Eastside Journal* article dated September 17, 1975.

# YOUR TOILET IS NOT A TRASH CAN!

Members of the District's Sewer Team have observed a variety of items getting flushed down toilets that are negatively affecting sewer system operations. Most notably, sewer technicians have observed items such as baby wipes and disposable floor cleaning cloths in the sewer system. When a product is identified as "disposable" it means that proper disposal should be in the trash can. **However, your toilet is not a trash can!** Try to remember the following: If you wouldn't put an item in your garbage disposal, it certainly doesn't belong in the toilet! This applies to any wastewater disposal that you might have, including septic and grinder pump systems as well as the sewer system. Let's take a journey down into the sewers with the District's Sewer Team and see what's going on down there...

Debris can block pump inlets and clog the pump, obstruct check valves, and cause pump failures, requiring costly repairs. The crew must pull out the pump, clean out the mess, and make any necessary repairs, which can take several hours. It is an unpleasant job for these hard working technicians!

Trash can also get caught around the floats in the wet wells. A wet well is a vault which holds the sewage while it waits to be pumped down the sewer line. Float switches to the wet well tell the pumps when to turn on and off. When trash gets caught on the floats and they don't move freely, they can't send the correct signals to the pumps, leading to high wet well alarms. The crew then has to respond to the alarm and cut the debris off the floats, which is also time consuming and labor intensive.

In order to prevent a buildup of this type of trash in the system, the sewer team has had to increase its sewer jetting maintenance. Sewer jetting is a dirty, nasty but very important job! Jetting involves the use of a large vehicle rigged with a piece of equipment similar to a large pressure washer, which is used to clean out sewer lines to ensure proper flow.



*Inglewood Lift Station*

There is always the potential for sewer backup to occur in your home if the trash clogs your house's connection to the sewer system. Sewage could then flow back into your home and cause damage to floors and carpets, leave a highly unpleasant odor throughout

your house, and clog your toilets so they are unusable, at which point the cleanup will be your responsibility.

Your sewer rates pay for sewer system maintenance, and in order to help us keep maintenance costs down, please do not put trash in the toilet!

Here is what you can do to prevent possible sewer problems:

- Do not put any trash down the toilet. See the adjacent box for information of what materials should not go down the toilet. Seek appropriate disposal methods for these items.
- Minimize your use of disposable items and seek out alternative cleaning methods instead.
- Speak with all of your family members, especially any children in your home, and instruct them not to throw any rubbish down the toilet.



**Never put any of the following materials into toilets, sinks or drains. These materials may clog your system and create unsafe conditions in your home or damage to your sewer or septic system:**

- Sanitary wipes such as baby wipes, disposable floor cloths or cleaning wipes
- Disposable diapers, sanitary napkins or tampons
- Cigarette butts
- Cat litter
- Hair clippings
- Rubber gloves or other disposable gloves
- Fireplace ashes
- Plastic objects such as toys or eating utensils
- Cooking fat, lard, oil or grease
- Degreasing solvents
- Strong chemical, toxic, caustic or poisonous substances
- Flammable material such as gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil or paint thinner
- Glass, metal, wood, seafood shells, aquarium rocks or gravel

- Speak with your housekeeper or anyone who cleans your home and inform them not to put these items in the toilet. Anyone cleaning your home might be improperly disposing of these articles down the toilet. We request that you clearly communicate this information to your housekeepers.

Thank you for your assistance in helping to keep our sewer system flowing smoothly! If you have any questions about sewer system operation, please contact James Whitney, Sewer Superintendent, at (425) 392-6256 x 219 or email him at [james.whitney@sammplat.wa.org](mailto:james.whitney@sammplat.wa.org).

*Many thanks to Peg Dotson of the District's Sewer Team for providing information for this article.*