

# Connections

September/October 2014



## The Treatment Process - Reliable Service Tips, Part IV

In previous newsletters, we described how your wastewater travels through the collection system. Now we will describe the treatment process and how this final and critical step makes wastewater safe for the environment.

### Treatment Produces Safe Water and Useful Biosolids

Before wastewater can be treated, it is screened to remove garbage and debris such as wipes, diapers, and floss that can be harmful to mechanical equipment.

**Each year more than 200 tons of garbage is removed from the sewer and hauled to the landfill.**

After screening, wastewater enters a settling tank where heavier solids fall to the bottom and are removed along with any floating materials such as grease. Next, microorganisms are added which feed on dissolved organic matter

in the wastewater. After these microorganisms are removed, the partially clean wastewater enters a disinfection system where ultraviolet radiation is used to destroy most of the remaining bacteria before it is discharged into the Columbia River.

Organic solids undergo a separate treatment process that uses microorganisms to produce "biosolids" that are safe for the environment. Biosolids are hauled away to be used as fertilizer for farms in Cowlitz County and Central Washington.

**Both treated wastewater and biosolids are tested to ensure that they meet or exceed state and federal standards before they are reintroduced to the environment.**

### PPCPs

Although the treatment process is designed to eliminate common household pollutants, it was not designed to treat pharmaceuticals or personal care products (PPCPs) such as medicines and cosmetics. The chemicals in PPCPs are harmful because they can inhibit the microbial processes used at the treatment plant and despite meeting state and federal standards, trace amounts of these materials can be detected in treated wastewater.

**Often we don't realize we are flushing PPCPs into the system.**

Every day people use between nine and fifteen personal care products and apply an average of 126 different ingredients to their skin. When someone takes medications, some of the compounds are absorbed but most are not; they pass through the body and are flushed down the toilet.

There is limited research about how to address PPCPs and our treatment plants would need improvements in order to completely eliminate these contaminants. Adding steps to the treatment process to eliminate PPCPs would be very costly to the District and ratepayers.

**Help keep rates affordable and protect the environment:**

- Take unwanted medications to participating pharmacies or hazardous waste collection facilities. Take controlled substances to the Clark County Sheriff's office.
- Buy personal care products that contain only biodegradable or natural ingredients.
- Never flush or pour drugs, medicines, or personal care products down the drain.

**For more information visit:**  
[crwwd.com/rx-disposal.html](http://crwwd.com/rx-disposal.html)



Salmon Creek Treatment Plant

#### Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday,  
8 am - 5 pm  
Closed Weekends &  
Holidays

#### Emergency?

Call 24/7:  
360-750-5876

#### Commissioners

Norm Harker  
Neil Kimsey  
Denny Kiggins

#### General Manager

John M. Peterson

Visit us online at [www.CRWWD.com](http://www.CRWWD.com)

PO Box 8979 • Vancouver, WA 98668 • Phone: (360) 750-5876 • Fax: (360) 750-7570



# Free Leaf Disposal

For Vancouver and Clark County residents only

Prevent street flooding — NEVER blow or place leaves in the street.  
Use this coupon for free leaf disposal from:

October 1 - December 20, 2014

## DISPOSAL LOCATIONS:

**H & H Wood Recyclers**  
8401 NE 117th Ave  
360-892-2805

**West Van Materials Recovery Center**  
6601 NW Old Lower River Rd  
360-737-1727

**City Bark**  
2419 NE Andresen  
360-253-8461

This coupon must be presented at the drop-off site and is for **LEAVES ONLY**, up to 5 cubic yards. Yard debris or mixed loads will be charged at the regular price. Leaves must be emptied from plastic bags.

Sponsored by:



To redeem coupon, complete the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Vancouver residents: Funding for your participation in this program is provided through your garbage rates.  
Clark County residents: Funding for participation is provided by Clark County Public Works and Environmental Services.



## Delivering fiscal responsibility and transparency to our customers

The State of Washington performs audits of local governments to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The 2013 audit, released earlier this year, confirmed once again that the District is in full compliance with all areas of financial reporting and has controls in place to effectively safeguard the public's money.

"The District takes pride in managing resources in a responsible and transparent manner, which is a top priority of our customers," said Ken Andrews, District Finance Director/Treasurer.

For more information and to view the audit reports, visit [crwwd.com/about/financials.html](http://crwwd.com/about/financials.html).

## Participate in 2015 budget planning

August kicks off the District's annual budget planning period, which ends with budget adoption by the Board of Commissioners in December. You are invited to attend any of the five public meetings:

- **October 14:** Budget workshop #1 will present six-year financial and capital (infrastructure) plans.
- **October 28:** Budget workshop #2 will review operations and maintenance (O&M) expenses, the budget decision packages, and training budgets.
- **November 10:** Budget workshop #3 will review revenues/expenses and fund balances.
- **December 9:** Budget public hearing at 5 p.m.
- **December 23:** Board action on 2015 budget.

## Come see us at the Safety Fair

Stop by our booth to find out about improvements we're making to your sewer system and grab some giveaways, including *Freeze the Grease, Save the Drain* kits. See you there!



**Saturday, September 20, 2014, Noon – 4 p.m.**  
Public Safety Complex, 505 Northwest 179th Street,  
Ridgefield, WA 98642

## Reliability Tip: When in doubt, DON'T pour it out!

The drain might seem like a convenient way to get rid of unwanted liquids, but some chemicals can kill the microorganisms used in the wastewater treatment process. This results in inadequately treated wastewater being discharged into the environment. Never flush:

- Disinfectants
- Cleaning chemicals
- Floor care products
- Furniture polish
- Metal polish
- Oven cleaner
- Varnish
- Windshield solution
- Wood preservative
- Antifreeze
- Paints and paint thinners

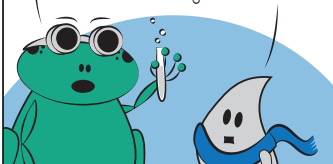
**Everything you flush re-enters the environment: what you flush really does matter.**

For the full list of reliability tips, visit: [crwwd.com/service-tips.html](http://crwwd.com/service-tips.html)

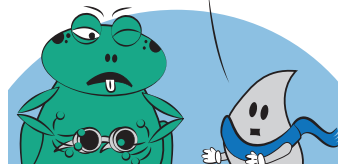
## Frog and the F.O.G.G

According to my analysis, you appear to be entirely FAT and GREASE. Yet you can talk! How is that even possible?

Yup, I'm what's left after filters catch a lot of the sticks and leaves and bags and stuff.



Someday I'll introduce you to my friend Reggie Rag-Ball. He's 100 pounds of wipes, paper towels, dental floss, toothpicks, hair, pens, straws, candy wrappers, toys, balloons and other trash that got snagged in a pump last year. Talk about a mess. Nice enough fella though.



You're missing my point! If a GREASE BALL can talk, who knows what OTHER disgusting creatures might be COMING TO LIFE in our sewers as a consequence of our reckless flushing?!



Oh hi Reg. We were just talking about you. Is your friend OK? He looked a little green.