

Dear Neighbors,

4/1/2025

## Happy Spring!

I hope you all fared well through the winter. With irrigation season upon us and summer on the horizon, I wanted to share some important updates about the Sun Mountain Water System. As always, I welcome your questions or concerns—feel free to reach out anytime.

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## 2025 Rate Update

As discussed in the January 15, 2025 Proposed Rate Increase Notice, beginning **April 1, 2025**, our water billing structure has changed slightly. The **base monthly rate** has increased from **\$32.00 to \$37.00**, which continues to include the first **4,000 gallons** of water used. The tiered usage rates for usage above 4000 gallons set in 2022 remain unchanged.

### Current Water Rates (effective April 1, 2025):

- **\$16.00** for 0–300 gallons used (minimum-use billing tier)
- **\$37.00 Base Rate** for up to 4,000 gallons/month
- **4,001–70,000 gallons:** \$0.15 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **70,001–90,000 gallons:** \$0.20 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **90,001–110,000 gallons:** \$0.25 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **110,001–130,000 gallons:** \$0.30 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **130,001–150,000 gallons:** \$0.35 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **150,001–200,000 gallons:** \$0.40 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons
- **Above 200,000 gallons:** \$0.60 per 100 gallons used above the first 4000 gallons

Below are 2 examples for the calculations of 89,000 gallons and 120,000 gallons:

Gallons Used	-Base Gallons	XRate /100 gallons	+Base Rate	=Total
89,000	- 4000	X \$0.20 : 100	+ \$37	= \$207.00
120,000	- 4000	X \$0.30 : 100	+ \$37	= \$385.00

These tiered rates are designed to encourage conservation and help ensure the system remains sustainable during our high-demand summer months.

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## New ADU Connections

Sun Mountain Water System is not approving Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) connections. Deschutes county requires water systems to sign off that they are able and willing to add ADU units onto their systems. Until we can reduce summer usage or increase our system storage capacity, adding additional units places the system at risk of failure. This decision is a response to the growing interest in adding ADU units onto the system.

While the 2022 rate changes helped curb excessive usage—prompting some customers to reduce or disconnect—the system is still operating on a razor-thin margin in summer. Until we can increase our **storage capacity** and overall system resilience, additional connections risk tipping the balance. We've begun working with engineering and water system professionals to assess long-term upgrades and identify funding, but these improvements will take time.

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## Water & Wildfire Resilience

A growing concern for all of us is wildfire risk. Insurance companies, the State, and fire officials continue to raise the alarm about what's ahead. Many of us are already taking steps to clear defensible space and reduce risk. But there's one major vulnerability: our water system was not built for and is not equipped for fire suppression.

The Sun Mountain Water System was designed for residential use—not for fighting fires. During the summer, our storage provides only about four hours of supply, compared to the four-day emergency supply considered ideal. And with utility companies increasingly likely to cut power during high-risk fire weather, our wells would stop replenishing tanks at the moment we'd need them most. The California fires taught us that poor planning of water management can quickly overwhelm water systems. If a fire should occur in our area please **do not run our system dry**. **Conserve water** so the fire fighting professionals can have the water resource to use it in the most effective manner. Turning your sprinklers on in your yard before being evacuated would be a bad choice for all concerned.

We are working on identifying solutions, including increased gravity-fed storage that could function during power outages. These are costly and complex changes, but essential for long-term safety. Until then, water conservation is our most immediate line of defense.

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## Stay Connected

One final reminder: If you haven't already, please send us your **email address** and a **textable phone number** so we can reach you quickly in an emergency. You can:

- Email your info to: **sunmountainwater@gmail.com**
- Include it with your next payment
- Or call us directly at **541-382-7309**

We've also updated our **website**, where you'll find additional info and news throughout the year.

Thank you for being thoughtful stewards of our water system. Please continue to conserve water, follow the odd/even watering schedule, and be fire-aware as summer approaches. Give Jerry a wave and a smile when you see him!

**Thanks – Jamie 541-408-1804**

Steward, Sun Mountain Water System