

Fisherman Bay Sewer District

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2021 Annual Letter

April 2021

Dear Sewer District Customer:

2020 was a challenging year for FBSD, as it was for the world. Our staff worked through the fears of unknown dangers integral to the nature of their work during the pandemic. They kept the plant and district operational while social distancing and staying healthy. They showed a courageous commitment to their essential jobs at a critical time and the board is proud of them and their work.

The past year slowed our work on challenges already facing the district. We find ourselves with an aging system, a plant nearing capacity, and few reserves. The other concern facing the district is exploding growth and increased use of vacation homes which is putting excess pressure on the plant during peak times.

We are preparing for the future in a systematic way aligned with a Master Plan from Stantec Engineering. We have acquired a low interest loan for planning from the Department of Ecology. Our work will benefit the whole district by expanding plant capacity and upgrading aging components in the district.

We are very aware that any upgrade or repair is expensive. To mitigate the impact on our customers we apply for any funding grants available. In 2020 we received a grant through the San Juan County Public Facilities Financing Assistance Program to help pay for the replacement of a failing line in the district. We completed a confidential income survey that will allow the district to qualify for future grants.

Part of our response to being underfunded is to raise rates. Our customer base is small, just 184 customers so any change affects everyone. We instituted an increase in January that applies to both commercial and residential customers. For commercial customers you can reduce the impact of the increase by being careful in your use of water. Prudent use of your septic system saves water, saves plant capacity, and reduces your costs. Residential customers are also encouraged to be very aware of their use of water. Fixing leaking toilets and faucets is especially important. Small problems at multiple sites in a small system like ours can lead to large excess flows. Please help us keep this under control.

Our mission includes protecting the environment here on Lopez. Let's all work together to make that happen.

Sincerely,

Fisherman Bay Sewer District Board