

Edelweiss Maintenance Commission

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Fall 2012 - Newsletter

President's from John Kirner

We're reaching the end of the year and I'd like to say a few words about the major efforts your Board has been involved with during the year. Water and sewer infrastructure have been a major focus of the Board's effort. Financing operations, maintenance and capital improvements are a necessary concern whenever we have to address these utility issues.

Edelweiss shares responsibility for the O&M and capital needs of the community sewer system with Okanogan Co. Dept. of Public Works and all of the connected property owners. Each of the involved parties plays a key role in making the system work the way it needs to. Each property owner on the system must ensure that their septic tank functions properly. This requires regular inspection and repairs when necessary, to avoid passing solids, preventing excessive solids buildup, and maintaining proper operation of the tank. County DPW operates pump stations and sewer lines to bring the septic sewage to the community drainfield. Edelweiss is then responsible for operation of the drainfield and expansion of drainfield capacity when necessary.

Dick's discussion (below) of our work with WA DOH (a key regulator of this kind of system) shows you the type of activities we are periodically involved in to assure that the community sewer system is kept up to required standards. In the coming year we will make a significant capital improvement to the drainfield system to provide capacity for future residents. We believe there is adequate money in our drainfield account which has been set aside for this work.

The water system is another major source of concern and focus of effort for the Board. There are a number of lots on the system which will have difficulty getting adequate water pressure due to their elevation. The system was designed to provide a minimum pressure to all lots as required by state law. Unfortunately it appears that the system was not installed according to the plan, which leaves us with some challenges. In addition, the water system is reaching an age where increased maintenance costs are to be expected.

The Board has decided that the best way to be sure that in coming years, our water system expenditures are most effective, is to update our water system plan. This will include both technical evaluation of the system and financial feasibility of any required work. The Board has contacted several firms with experience in this type of work, and we intend to develop a contract with one of

them - we hope by the end of the year. The report prepared by the selected firm will form the basis for future Board proposals to the Edelweiss membership for water system improvements.

Roads are another major issue for the Board and the efforts in this area revolve around patching holes, dealing with wash boarding, dust suppression, and snow removal. These are largely maintenance issues and will continue in future years.

While the Board addresses numerous other issues in a year, these are the big ones for this year. Thanks for your interest in reading this far, and if you want to discuss any of these issues with the Board, our email is edelweiss@edelweissmethowvalley.org.

Managers' Message from Dick Volckmann

Break out the snow tires! Winter is on the way. On October 22nd, we had our first snow of the season. Well, the first flakes anyway. A few days later we had enough to cover the ground and evergreen trees. And we had almost 4 inches on the night of November 11th. In between those dates we had two weeks of rainy gloom with the clouds hanging heavy over the face of Lucky Jim Bluff. But, no complaints here! The wet weather has resulted in gorgeous color on the aspens and cottonwoods along the river. The trees seem to give off their own light, even under the cloudy skies. And, after the very dry summer, with forest fires burning all over the state, the moisture is welcome. Of course the nay-sayers will warn that the extra moisture will provide further growth which will, in turn, provide more fuel for next fire season. I guess there's no way to win this game. But right now, the dampness is welcome. And real snow is not far into the future.

Going Wireless: So what's new? Well, one of the biggest bits of news is that if you are a Verizon Wireless customer, you can now use your cell phone in Edelweiss (this is not a product endorsement, by the way!) The long-anticipated cell tower, situated just behind the Mazama fire station on route 20, is up and operational. It provides a Verizon signal to the entire upper end of the valley - a welcome convenience and an added measure of security for emergency communication. I've tested the signal pretty much everywhere in Edelweiss and have not found a dead spot so far.

Water System: Craig and I have accumulated elevation, distance and pressure data related to the Edelweiss water system. The Edelweiss Long Range Planning Committee has presented these

data to several engineering firms who have expressed an interest in updating a computer model of the system. As John mentioned, the committee hopes to develop a relationship with one of the firms that will give us the ability to determine methods of balancing the pressures in the system. Additionally, we hope that relationship will give us consistency that we can depend on to develop the modeling necessary for future upgrades and additions to the system.

Sewer System: As you may remember from the last two newsletters, in April, Edelweiss was ordered by a representative of the Washington Department of Health (DOH) to cease making connections to the common sewer system. It was his opinion that the drainfields in the upper and lower meadows are not adequate to handle the amount of effluent currently entering the system, let alone adding any more. His directive was such that no further hook-ups would be allowed until new drainfields have been designed and constructed. Currently, of the 80 properties that are certified by the County for connecting to the system, 39 are already connected.

Well, we have some good news! Beginning last spring, we undertook an exhaustive investigation, including detailed measurements of effluent outflow, sampling of soils at the drainfields, field measurements of the drainfield pods and analyses of the sizes and uses of the homes that are connected to the system. This data was presented to the DOH, and based on the evidence presented, the DOH, recently has determined that our capacity was not deficient, as they had assumed. The upper meadow has enough capacity for all future connections of the properties assigned to it. And although the lower meadow drainfield is *approaching* maximum capacity, it is not there yet. As a result, the DOH has granted permission to allow further connections to the upper and lower meadow drainfields with a few provisos. One is that Edelweiss agrees to construct an additional set of drainfield 'pods' in the lower meadow - sometime within the next year. This will be a relatively easy fix (the space is already allocated and we have the funds to pay it) and will provide enough capacity for hook-ups for several years to come. We will also need to monitor flows into the drainfields, something that we have been doing already. And finally, we will be required to monitor the composition of the effluent flowing into the drainfields. (Any volunteers?) We are in complete agreement with all of these requirements, and plan to continue with them going forward.

Water Tanks: In our last newsletter, we mentioned that we intended to contract with a company to clean the insides of our water reservoirs. Most of the tanks were cleaned in early October, with the exception of those whose openings are too small to enter. These were inspected from their openings, and were found to be free of contaminants. Our water continues to be pure, safe and unsurpassed in clarity and taste.

Edelweiss Accounts: As of today's date, despite late fees and interest, two property owners are still in arrears as to their Edelweiss fees. And, thank you to all of you who pay your fees promptly. We need the funds to keep Edelweiss running smoothly.

Snowplowing: Once again we have contracted with Jerry Palm to do the plowing and snow blowing of the roads for the coming winter. He and his crew did an outstanding job of keeping our roads clear last year, and we are looking forward to another winter of the same.

Architectural Control Committee: In September, the ACC approved the plans for a home to be built on Quaking Aspen Road. Construction is underway, and the contractor claims that the homeowner will be able to move in by Thanksgiving. Fast work indeed!

Other Activities: As always, Craig and I keep busy with all the everyday activities - phone calls, emails, collecting and authorizing payments of invoices, dealing with contractors, servicing the pool in summer, rolling out the garbage bins on Monday mornings, monitoring the water pumps daily, etc. Recently Craig has been filling potholes in the roads in anticipation of the winter months, limbing trees near the roads for better visibility, reinforcing the sides of the sand shed with angle irons. And there are always some unexpected emergencies to attend to. One such situation occurred when one of the booster pumps at the Highland station stopped working. We had to take the pump to Wenatchee for service, and while it was not in place, we had to start the other pump by hand every day so that the Highland reservoir would not run out of water. There's always something!

In Conclusion: Craig and I wish you all well during the coming holiday season. Keep in mind that we work for all of you, and we welcome your feedback as to conditions in the community. And think snow! I just bought my cross country season pass, so I'd appreciate it if you would speak to the snow gods about providing a bountiful snowpack! Have a great winter!

Dick Volckmann, General Manager
509-996-9897



The look of East Fawn Creek Road very soon.

P.S. Emails: If you received this in the mail, It's because I don't have an email address for you, the one I have is not correct, or your server rejected it.. It's much more time consuming and expensive to send out communications by snail mail. Please please, let me know what your email address is, if you have one. I don't give it out to anyone - really!