

Happy January. 2025 was a typical eventful year for the Squaw Creek Water District. We've come through challenges and made progress in improving and upgrading our aging water system.

### **Challenges**

"Man makes plans and God laughs" This could easily be the motto for the water district. Thanks for everyone's patience this fall when an exploratory mission to identify the extent of end-of-life galvanized pipe in our system resulted in a line break, water outage and boil order. With a water system like ours, every time we go into the ground there are risks of something unanticipated occurring. In this case, digging around the supply line near the pump house at the bottom of Squaw Creek, shifting ground caused the pipe to unknowingly rupture and drain our storage water into the ditch we had just dug. Then, when the booster pump kicked in, it pushed against the pressure of the water in the pipe and essentially mule kicked the pipe apart at the joint between the galvanized pipe and the PVC pipe. While the boil order was inconvenient, a positive outcome was that our water operator, Clearwater Operations, was able to swiftly coordinate all of the necessary contractors to immediately replace the in ground galvanized pipe which will reduce the chance of a failure in that area in the future, a feat that might have been nearly impossible without an actual emergency.

The rest of the summer was the usual combination of fixing leaks and repairing severed communication lines from the summer digging. Hopefully we won't have so much neighborhood-wide digging for a long time since SilverStar and LVE have both completed their projects.

If you are planning to dig, please call One Call of Wyoming by dialing 8-1-1 before you do.

### **Improvements**

Last year, we were dealing with a lot of "ghosts" in the system that were making communications between the various working parts of the water system challenging. Those issues were difficult to identify but we appear to have those problems sorted out and have also upgraded our communications so our water operators can be notified remotely when problems with water supply or pumping arise, resulting in more rapid response times and reducing the likelihood of running out of water or having to issue a boil order due to loss of water pressure in the lines.

We completed a mapping project with the help of Midwest Assistance to GPS locate the known meters, valves, water storage and other system features. The details from this effort will soon be available on the Teton County GIS system.

In late summer, we launched a new website - [SquawCreekWD.gov](http://SquawCreekWD.gov) - where you can find SCWD budgets, meeting agendas, minutes and financials and annual water quality reports and other information about your district. It's a work in progress and any input is welcome.

### **Plans**

We are fortunate that there are local, state, and federal programs that provide matching funds and grants for water system upgrades and improvements. SCWD is currently working with Midwest Assistance on a federal grant to replace the galvanized steel within our pumphouse (Public meeting re project February 4th at 6505 Forweal Drive at 5:30. Please come.)

With the help of Midwest Assistance and due to our improved financial situation, SCWD just received approval for a Homeland Security grant of \$40,000 towards the c. \$100,000 cost of a backup generator for the pump house facility.

Teton County appears to have significant water quality resources through the SPET and have expressed interest in helping improve SCWD system resiliency, quality, and supply. We are currently working on a plan to present to them that could help us with many of our outstanding needs.

### **Finances**

Thanks to your taxes, Squaw Creek Water District is in a better financial position than it has been for several years. Last year at this time, SCWD had c. \$175,000 on hand (plus an additional c. \$33,000 held in reserve per the terms of an existing low interest loan with the State of Wyoming). Today we have \$322,510 in reserve. This money in the bank provides us with a good cushion should unanticipated emergencies arise, a single one of which can cost many tens of thousands of dollars in just a couple of days.

We are now focused on building our reserves so we can undertake capital improvements using federal, state, and local grants and matching funds ultimately stretching our dollars and making improvements to water quality, system redundancy and reliability. An example of this referenced above is the Homeland Security backup generator grant of \$40,000 which requires our participation with an additional c. \$60,000.

We also recognize that we need to be good stewards of your money. The budgeting process begins in February and runs through our June meeting. We encourage anyone who is interested to attend a budget session to learn more and make their opinions known.

Because planning and implementing water projects can be a slow process with considerable lead time, we invested \$260,000 of our reserves in the Wyoming Government Investment Fund, an approved vehicle in which water districts are permitted to invest, to earn a low risk, higher rate of return on your funds.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for putting your trust in us. We're here to answer questions so please feel free to reach out at any time. And, if you're interested, the SCWD is always looking for individuals who would like to give of their time and talents to help run the district. Just an hour or two a month.

Sincerely,  
Chip Marvin for the SCWD Board