

***Not Enforcement, Reinforcement
Caution! You're about to enter a No-
Swim Zone ☺***



New Wastewater Operators Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3, May 2011

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

My email victims list is now 215 strong and growing weekly. Last month it was 209. Nice to meet you guys and gals, finally. ☺

Monthly, I'll share some great ideas I see or hear of, at plants around Eastern and Central Washington, and elsewhere. If you have an idea you'd like to share, let me know.

By the way, this effort is done on my own time, because it's fun for me to do.

Equipment to for sale or to give away:

Fecal Coliform incubator needed: A Public Works Director (/Operator/all-around-public servant) of a small central Washington town needs to find a free/cheap incubator for doing fecal coliform tests using the membrane filter technique. Doesn't matter if it's a waterbath or dry type. Anybody?

He says by the time he gets his results back from the commercial lab(s), it's too late to re-sample if he gets a high count. He realizes there will be a cost associated with having his lab accredited for fecals, but having control of the tests will help him keep on top of UV disinfection equipment maintenance.

Cool Idea of the Month:

Unfortunately, I haven't picked up any new ideas this month, but I do have a challenge:

Old buddy Lynn Lawson, Lead Operator at the Brewster, WA plant writes: Darrel :

You need to start adding a spot in your news column for the pump plug of the day award . here is a recent "catch" of mine. Lynn



Hey Buddy! You got the harness, but where's your chute? Actually, he was probably down in an enclosed lift station wet well. Boots, gloves, eye protection (sort of), and what remains of somebody's wardrobe in his left hand. All I can say is "Is that your best shot?" 😊

Lynn has been surfing the Web lately, and came up with some good links for me.

Here's an article from TPO (Treatment Plant Operator) by Ron Trygar, about alkalinity's importance in wastewater treatment. http://www.tpomag.com/editorial/2011/05/eye_on_alkalinity

And here's another site, Water and Wastewater.Com, where expert members of the help forum answer a wide array of questions about everything from lab procedures to equipment maintenance and process control. I'm planning on joining this one myself.

<http://www.waterandwastewater.com/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl?board=lab1>

One more: Environmental Leverage, Inc. <http://www.environmentallevverage.com/>
Check out their "mystery bug of the month", how to do a plant audit, and so on.

Hey, Lynn, thanks and a big dam Saaaalute! for the feedback. Be safe, 'K?

Otis Hampton, Lynn, and Don Abel (formerly of the Okanogan plant) used to call each other early in the morning and say nothing. But they'd make sure to leave voicemail with their latest turkey, duck, elk or whatever wild animal call, then hang up. Too funny!

Informal Poll-Last month I asked:

Water/Wastewater Operators: I was asked if I know of any municipal water or wastewater facilities whose budgeted funds had been (partially) hijacked by other departments on occasion, either legally or illegally. I have not witnessed that, so Question #1 is:

“Does (or has) your mayor/council/governing body/director divert(ed) funds from your facility budget for non-revenue generating utilities such as streets and parks?”

Many of us would say that we have “plenty” of governmental oversight (federal and state). But how about a follow-up Question #2:

“Do you think an optional requirement in your water/wastewater permits to report the quantity of funds spent on operations and maintenance annually to regulatory agencies is a good or bad idea?”

Send any replies to these questions to my personal email address: flash@bigdam.net . Or call my personal cell number: 509-846-3493 . If it ain’t in writing, it didn’t happen, right?

The source and municipal entity of any communications about this will be strictly confidential. I’ll report the number of “yeas” and “nays” in the next newsletter.

I got one reply about this. Basically the person said it’s not uncommon to allocate monies from water/wastewater to “shared services” such as admin, IT services, etc.

The answer to the second question was conflicted, quote:

The disclosure of O&M expenditures creates a bit of conflict in my mind (fairly normal in my schizophrenic existence):

Good Idea guy: it is fairly obvious that O&M deferral has put our infrastructure at great risk (think I-35 bridge collapse and the big gasline explosion in California last year) and that this disclosure would at least allow us to define a baseline and, with additional evaluation, maybe even some benchmarks that could be grouped into relevant categories.

Bad Idea guy: once collected, the data would of course be reported and disseminated. In the absence of context, however, it becomes too easy for external groups and policy boards to take the wrong message back home. There is such a wide range of infrastructure age, complexity, level of service goals, and other aspects that I’m afraid any such value obtained would be too easily lost in jump to make conclusions.

Thank you, unnamed person, for the insightful reply. OK, no more informal polls. I’m not wild about them in any case. 😊



Happy Memorial Day Weekend

**Remember those who've made
the ultimate sacrifice for our
nation.**



**Shots I took from a hot air bal-
loon, Memorial Day weekend,
1987—the Aisle of Flags at**

Spring Canyon Cemetery near Grand Coulee...(medium format film scanned to digital)

Hey! Keep up the good work. See you next time.

**All the best,
Darrel Fleischman**

P.S. If you want off this list for any reason, just let me know. And thanks for any feedback—I appreciate you and your opinions.

P.P.S. All previous newsletters are available on request, via email.

P.P.P.S. One parting shot below...



Klickitat River Valley, April 27, 2011 (digital)