



# GP Now

Vol. 2 No. 6

June 2020

Grants Pass, OR FREE

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## 'You Can't Just Do One Thing'

### Dan Kirkman keeps busy sweeping, scooping, and flying flags.

When Dan Kirkman moved to Grants Pass in 1990, he didn't waste time getting to work.

"When you move to Grants Pass, you can't just do one thing. You just start working," said Kirkman.

He started as a painter who could also do sandblasting to remove unwanted surfaces prior to the paint job. He purchased his first sweeper truck to help clean up the sand after blasting jobs were completed.

It wasn't long before Kirkman started providing street sweeping, parking lot sweeping, striping, asphalt repair, and sand blasting to meet his client's needs under the umbrella of his business, Advanced Maintenance Services.

Kirkman said he picked up his first sweeping jobs by offering free striping or free power-washing to new parking lot customers.

In 1996, the City of Grants Pass started efforts to privatize some city services, and it began with city street sweeping.

Kirkman was told he would never get the contract.

"If you tell me I can't do



DAN KIRKMAN HOLDS THE GIANT GOLD SENTRY THAT NOW SITS AT THE TOP OF THE 156' FLAGPOLE AT 300 UNION AVE. IN GRANTS PASS

something, I'm just wired to do it. I've never been afraid to work," he said.

He won the bid and was granted a one-year trial contract.

Today, Advanced Maintenance Services sweeps approximately 5,000 curb miles of city streets each year. The most recent contract renewal for their services was signed April 24, 2017, and runs until June 30, 2022.

It requires three sweeper trucks to cover Grants Pass today. During the fall when the leaves are thick, two trucks must work in tandem to handle the loads. Kirkman said a third truck must be maintained as an alternate in case something

goes wrong.

"The more high-tech the trucks get, the smaller the things that can wrong to shut one down," said Kirkman.

Keeping up with truck maintenance can be just as difficult as keeping up with the leaves, he said.

"It's such a destructive piece of equipment, it can break down," Kirkman said.

That can be a nuisance to Kirkman and city residents all at the same time.

In the fall, especially in the areas of the city with old-growth trees, keeping up with the leaves requires one truck to come through and sweep up the major piles, while the second

(See "KIRKMAN" page 12)

## Grants Pass

### Fountain of Youth

In a recent speech before global leaders, Pakistani student Sania Haider Shikoh called upon adults to discontinue referring to young people as the future.

"We are the present, and we are relevant," proclaimed Shikoh.

Grants Pass is known for its population of retirees, but 24 percent of the community's members are under the age of 18, indicating that here, young people are not just the city's future, but its present.

In the era of social media, activism on the part of young people has become more visible. In Flint, Mich., 10-year-old Mari Copeny became a leading voice in that community's fight for clean drinking water.

In Grants Pass, last month's celebration of Drinking Water Week included high accolades for the city's long-standing commitment to providing clean, reliable drinking water to its residents.

Attention was also given to the preservation and appreciation of the Rogue River as the source of that water, and outreach efforts to emphasize the importance of a safe and secure supply of water to a community.

The mayor issued a proclamation, and local youth were

invited to enter their original artwork in a Drinking Water Week poster contest (see subsequent story). The city's Public Works Department also created a special webpage filled with water-oriented educational resources for parents to use while conducting school from home.

In the interest of further engaging with local youth, GP Now conducted a discussion with some local students to test their "water sense," and receive their input about water conservation efforts. In the theme of the popular television show, "Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?" the students were asked a series of water-sense questions (see sidebar). The students also discussed the importance of water to the community, and ways to enhance water awareness and conservation efforts.

Based on their responses, the students of Grants Pass are a water-savvy group. Each of the students demonstrated an understanding of the planet's scarcity of fresh water, the finite aspect of the resource, and the very real possibility that the water in a drinking cup today may be the same water sipped on by dinosaurs centuries ago.

"It's so cool that we're drinking water that dinosaurs could (See "YOUTH" page 8)

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## Drinking Water Week Poster Contest Winners

**FOG**  
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Flushing things like baby Wipes can cause clogs in plumbing systems. There is no such thing as a flushable wipe! Just throw them away!

Things like: • Cooking Oil • Fat • Shortening • Gravy • Sauces • Mayonaise

Can cause severe clogs and backups, Ew! Put it in the trash!

**Wipes**

**Saving Water... Top 3**

- 1 Turn Off Taps - Save 6 litres of water a minute
- 2 Only Boil the Amount You Need - It is easy to use too much
- 3 Shower With Less - 1 Minute = 12 Litres

Protect the **Rogue River!!!**

GP

**PICK UP TRASH**

I will help clean the river

**Save Water**

Save water... Skip showers. No one can smell you 6 feet away. 😊

**SAVE The River**

- Limit the fish you catch
- Don't use to much boat with engins
- throw away trash
- Don't pour chemicals in the river

**The Rogue River**

- Nearly 45% of Oregonians rely on the river for drinking water.
- Millions of gallons of water are used in a day in GP alone.
- The river is polluted due to runoff from the cities, harmful logging, and overuse.
- The river flows through forests, industrial timberlands, cities, and farms/ranching land.
- In order to keep the river flowing, people should follow the "multiple barrier public health protection" rules.

**TAP WATER**

IT means the world to my community

**WATER**, Such a big part of us. Literally! And, It is always there for when we need it.

In the Shower, at the Sink, Toilet, for fun and to Drink!

**How you can protect your drinking water:**

- Picking up trash when seen to prevent the wind from blowing it in the river.
- Try not to dump harmful substances in the storm gutters. It gets dumped in the river water.
- Purchase sunscreen without the harmful chemical oxybenzone before swimming in the river! It pollutes the water and can be toxic to fish.

Be kind to your community

I ♥ The Rogue River

Wash hands well each day, to keep germs away, When you scrub turn off the sink, cause that will save more water to drink!

**\*Soap\***

**Protecting the Rogue River**

- Take Shorter Showers
- Let's Save The Rogue River!
- Don't Pollute
- Recycle all your trash
- The Rogue River is so beautiful, so let's help the Rogue River stay beautiful forever!

Non-Polluted water

Polluted water

## Frequently Asked Questions: A New Water Treatment Plant

As the city moves forward with the crucial process of building a new Water Treatment Plant to serve its residents, many residents have contacted City Hall with questions about the need for the new plant, the overall process used to determine the best location for the new plant, and the future process of constructing a plant that will serve Grants Pass for the next 100 years.

The staff of GP Now, compiled a list of frequently asked questions, and went to Public Works Director Jason Canady for the answers. Canady spent nearly 20 years working at the current plant and he is the city's preeminent expert on the status of the aging facility.

GP Now: Do we really need a new Water Treatment Plant?

Canady: The existing Water Treatment Plant will turn 90 years old next year. As the

building ages, the concrete is beginning to fail because the minerals that make the concrete strong are deteriorating. The building is at a high-risk of failure in even a moderate earthquake, not considering a Cascadia Subduction zone scale event.

If that were to happen, the community would likely be without a supply of safe drinking water for years. Staff would likely be able to implement emergency strategies which would allow the population to collect safe drinking water at limited distribution points, but it would take extensive work to be able to return to distributing water to each home and business.

GP Now: Why was the J Street property ultimately selected as the location for a new plant?

(See "PLANT" page 11)

## Duckling Rescue!

Grants Pass Public Works received an urgent call Wednesday, May 13, from a citizen who reported that a mother duck had been standing near a city storm drain inlet for two days. The citizen reported the mother duck had lost her ducklings through the grate of the inlet, and they were trapped inside.

The inlet is located at the intersection of Prospect and Manzanita avenues.

City Streets Crew member Craig Kight and Streets Superintendent Shelly Stichter dispatched to the location to assess the situation. They discovered 13 little ducklings trapped inside the inlet.

"Fortunately, the inlet was shallow, and we were able to remove the grate," said Stichter.

All was well when the mother duck led her rescued ducklings to the nearby creek (rescue photos to the right show Kight reaching into the inlet to retrieve the ducklings).

***"Be like a duck, paddling and working very hard inside the water, but what everyone sees is a smiling and calm face."***

— Manoj Arora

### Poster Winner Art

Opposite page:

Top row, left to right - Atticus Frost, Ava Phelan, Ethan Brayman.

Row two - Holly Sedivy, Ivy Elseth, Juliet Saldivar.

Row three - Kaya Cowles, Mark Astry, Morgan Wehmann.

Row four - Natalie Astry, Olive Elseth, Peach Gerber.

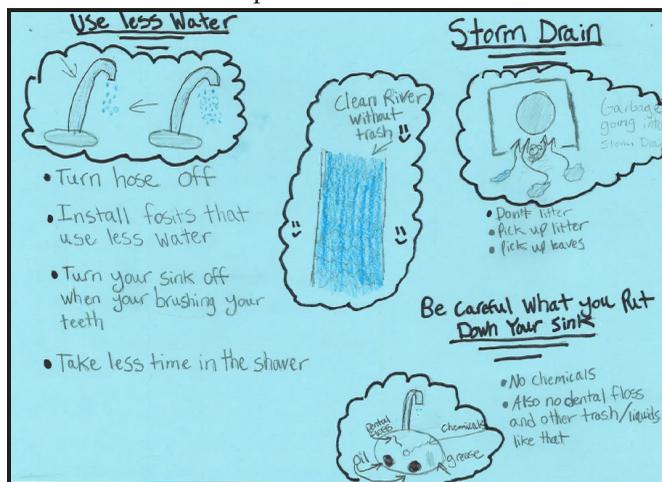
This page: Preston G. M.

## Drinking Water Poster Contest

As part of National Drinking Water Week celebrations, Grants Pass youth were invited to submit hand-drawn, original art posters celebrating the Rogue River as the city's water source, building water awareness, and promoting water conservation.

The contest was open to stu-

dents, grades K-12. Prizes and gift cards were awarded to the participants. This summer, the winners will also have their art featured on Josephine Community Transit buses. In addition, each participant will be invited to attend a recognition ceremony at a meeting of the City Council.



## Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

GP Now asked some local students a few basic questions to test their knowledge of water resources and conservation:

1. When is the best time of day to water your lawn?
  - a. Morning/evening
  - b. Afternoon
  - c. All day long
2. Which of these ways to wash a car saves the most water?
  - a. Driveway wash with hose
  - b. Drive it into a lake
  - c. Car wash that recycles water
3. It's not important to save water because there is so much of it on earth.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Which uses less water washing dishes?
  - a. Fully loaded dishwasher
  - b. Washing under the tap
5. It's okay to flush some trash down the toilet like tissues or cotton balls
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. Which of the following uses less water?
  - a. Taking a 5-minute shower
  - b. Taking a bath

ANSWERS: 1. a, 2. c, 3. b, 4. a, 5. b, 6. a



CHLOE DECOURSEY, GRADE 7.

## Youth...(from page 1)

drink," said Chloe DeCoursey, grade 7.

The students indicated hydration and handwashing were at the top of the list of their uses of water, followed by recreational uses and other forms of personal hygiene, such as baths and showers. Using water for animals and gardens joined washing cars and doing laundry as other major uses.

Josiah Saldivar, grade 1, and his sister, Juliet Saldivar, grade 6, said they like to use water for filling water balloons.

Oregonians are fortunate to have easy access to some of the safest treated water in the world. The young respondents expressed deep appreciation for their access to safe water after learning that in some developing countries, families get their water from a community well.

In those countries, it is often the children's job to transport water from the well to their home.

"If we had to do that, we'd have to go every hour to get water. We wouldn't be able to go to school," said Mark Astry, grade 8.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that more than 780 million people across the globe do not have access to an improved water source. Approximately 35 percent of those also lack improved sanitation.

"We need clean water to keep people from getting infected from dirty water. We need clean water to live," said Astry.

After adding up how much water their own families might need (300-600 gallons per family per day), the students calculated how long it would take them to carry buckets of water back and forth to their homes.

They observed that water conservation would become essentially important. Daily



JULIET SALDIVAR, GRADE 6, AND BROTHER, JOSIAH SALDIVAR, GRADE 1.

activities most families take for granted would no longer be possible. It was difficult for them to even imagine following public health recommendations for consistent handwashing.

"Just talking about it makes me more appreciative," said Natalie Astry, grade 11. "Knowing that we have clean water helps me know I won't get sick."

Chloe DeCoursey, grade 7, agreed. She emphasized how important it is to take care of freshwater resources and eliminate pollution. She and the other respondents came to the conclusions that without fresh water, local restaurants and businesses simply could not operate.

"Access to clean drinking water is essential to Grants Pass," said DeCoursey.

Next, the students were asked about the importance of building public awareness about clean water and water conservation. All agreed that it is a conversation more people should be having.

"Water can help you grow," said Josiah Saldivar.

Each of the respondents had their own ideas about questions to ask adults to help raise their awareness of the importance of water. Most of them wanted to ask adults if they were aware of how much water they actually use each day. They also had some important advice to give.

"Think about how much water you're using. Don't waste water. Use it wisely," said Juliet Saldivar.

"Don't be wasteful. Don't overwater your lawn, and don't take 40-minute showers," said DeCoursey.

Maintaining the city's water infrastructure was also important to the students. The cost of water was another major topic they discussed.

It is important to invest in a new water treatment system, said Natalie Astry. "Even if it costs a little extra money, it's important that it's safe for us. We should focus on fixing it," she said.

"Don't overdo using water. Just because you're paying doesn't mean you can over-use it," said Mark Astry.

Additional questions from the students were directed to staff at the city's aging Water Treatment Plant. Respondents were invited to take a tour of the 90-year-old plant once state-mandated social distancing requirements are lifted and tours of the plant can resume.

In the meantime, these young residents of Grants Pass proved to be strong advocates for improving water awareness and conservation efforts.

"All the water on earth is all we have," said Josiah Saldivar.

## Faszer...(from page 3)

we've had to make," said Faszer.

That weight is a heavy burden, he said, and the level of scrutiny that comes with it, isn't something he was used to.

"It's sink or swim when it comes to decisions," he said.

"At some time, that decision has to be made and you have to do your research in order to make the best decision you can," said Faszer.

Another challenge of the role comes with the criticisms delivered after the decisions are made, and "accepting that you're not going to please everyone," he said.

One such decision is the recent council vote to move forward with the process of eminent domain in order to acquire a suitable location for a new water treatment plant to supply water to the city, said Faszer.

As a builder, Faszer said it was something he knew he was experienced to measure.

"I deal in real estate. This is right up my alley," Faszer said.

As a councilor, it was a different story, he said.

"It's the challenge of coming to the realization that the good of the entire community has to come before the individual," said Faszer.

This time of year presents an additional challenge to Faszer. The city council is deep into the budgetary process, and he says that is the time when things can get overwhelming.

"The budget process can just swamp you. There are so many ins and outs," he said, clarifying that there are numerous different specific funds requiring specific uses which all must be understood.

Of all the funds to be considered every year, Faszer said the process of allocating the city's Community Development Block Grant Funds is one of the

most rewarding aspects of serving on the council.

"Helping other organizations that help other people – that feels nice," he said.

The public comment portions of city council meetings can also pose some challenges from time to time, said Faszer. Some suggestions can be "odd," and some comments are "strange" in their appeal to the council when they are outside the purview of municipal government, he said.

"Sometimes it can be difficult to keep a straight face during contentious public comment," Faszer said.

Other times, it can be hard not to take the comments personal, he admitted.

"We're all volunteers trying to guide the city in the best way we see fit," said Faszer.

Even though people can sometimes be "very passionate about the things we talk about," Faszer said he hopes that they will try to think about what is best for Grants Pass.

"I care about this area. My family has been here for generations. I came back here after I got my education because this is the place I want to be," Faszer said.

**According to Federal Estimates, Grants Pass has 15,927 Housing Units.**

**1-Unit Detached: 10,492**

**1-Unit Attached: 563**

**3-4 Units: 905**

**5-9 Units: 553**

**10-19 Units: 172**

**20+ Units: 1,102**

**Mobile Homes: 884**

**53 percent of the current housing units are owner occupied. 47 percent are renter occupied.**

## Plant...(from page 7)

Canady: The J Street property was selected because of its ideal location, and the owner of the property expressed an early willingness to negotiate selling the property to the city.

GP Now: Why wasn't the Peterson property or 12th Street properties selected for the new plant?

Canady: The Peterson property was considered. The property owner was approached, and unlike the owner of the J Street property, the Peterson property owner had no interest in selling at any price.

Other properties that were considered included the city's Skate Park, the City Yard, a group of commercial properties around the J Street location, and properties in the Spalding area. These properties were deemed inappropriate for various reasons.

Skate Park: Too small, built on a pond, and a perennial spring.

City Yard: Too expensive. A new site for the water treatment functions would need to be acquired and facilities would need to be constructed, including crew quarters for various city divisions such as Collections, Distribution, Streets, Fleet, and Property Management.

Additionally, the city would have to build a new Fleet shop, including covered and heated storage for specialized vehicles.

This was a very expensive proposition.

Spalding Property: was thoroughly explored, as well as other areas outside the immediate vicinity of the existing water intake, but these were also determined to be far too expensive, adding as much as \$12 million to the cost, as we would have to run very expensive piping from the Rogue River to the new plant, and then all the way back again to our distribution

points.

Delivering the water to the plant for treatment, and then delivering to homes and businesses requires a very extensive distribution system. The further the water has to travel, the more expensive it becomes.

GP Now: Who made these ultimate decisions?

Canady: Staff and consultants provided multiple reports as to the desirability of various aspects of the many subject properties, but ultimately the decisions were largely made by the city council.

GP Now: Why has the location on the J Street property and number of acres required at the property changed so many times?

Canady: It began as a request for the back two parcels of the property, totaling eight acres. That was undersized, and because of the configuration of the parcels, would have made future expansion very difficult if not impossible.

The seller suggested we purchase the entire property, and we changed the request. When negotiations for the entire property came to a stand-still, we initially moved forward with the idea of exercising eminent domain for the entire property.

When that was proposed to the city council, they opted to reduce the amount of property to a size that would ensure this process will only be required once, so that in 20 years or so, we will have room to expand at a reasonable cost to the ratepayer.

The council opted to seek the east portion of the property, currently used as tractor-trailer storage, rather than the west side of the property where the owner conducts their landscape supply business. This will leave that business property intact.

GP Now: Why is the city

"taking" the J Street property from the property owners?

Canady: The city is not "taking" the property from the owner. Eminent domain is the process of asking an unbiased court of law to help decide the fair-market price of the property so that the property owner is adequately compensated for the land, while the city taxpayers do not overspend for the land.

The J Street property is the best property for construction of the new Water Treatment Plant. It is in the correct location with regards to accessing the current water intake on the Rogue River, and it will serve the residents of our community for 100 years into the future.

GP Now: Why won't the city just give the property owners the money they want?

Canady: It would be a very poor stewardship of the ratepayers' money to pay 3-4 times more for the property than what fair market value determines it is worth.

GP Now: Why wasn't this decision put to a public vote?

Canady: Decisions such as these are not generally subject to public vote. It truly comes down to calling upon the elected officials to make the decisions with regards to the greater public good.

We need a new plant. That is not in question. The best location for the service levels and future expansion needs of the city's water filtration and distribution system, at the best price to the ratepayers, is the J Street location.

Ultimately a solution will be found to move forward, whether that be through continued negotiations, or the decision of the court.

***"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water."  
- Benjamin Franklin***