

2nd Annual Drinking Water Week Poster Contest

Local students can win \$100 for their creative artwork based on the theme: "There when you need it."

For more than 40 years the City of Grants Pass and the American Water Works Association have celebrated Drinking Water Week as a unique opportunity for communities to come together and recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives.

"Every year during Drinking Water Week, we celebrate, recognize, and protect our great water source, the Rogue River," said Public Works Director Jason Canady.

To help promote the celebration and conservation awareness, the city will sponsor its second annual Drinking Water Week Poster Contest for local students, grades K-12. Students are asked to create an original poster design using the theme: "There when you need it."

Student poster design entries will be accepted in four categories: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Thirteen winning posters will be selected, and each winner will receive a \$100 prize. The entry deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Friday, April 30.

Contest winners will also be recognized at a city council meeting, and be featured in the city's community outreach efforts, including social media recognition campaigns, and Drinking Water Week promo-

tional activities.

Full contest rules and submission information are available at: <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1408/Drinking-Water-Week-2021>

For additional information, contact Public Works Department Support Technician Dianne Phelan at (541)450-6110.

The Dollar Value of Water

National Drinking Water Week will be recognized May 2-8 this year. Consider the value of water in comparison to the average cost of other household services.

The average Grants Pass Utilities bill is \$76.

Water unit charges account for approximately \$26 of each monthly bill.

The average monthly trash collection bill in Grants Pass is \$35 per month.

The average monthly electric bill is \$99 per month.

The average household spends \$110 per month for cell-phone charges, and cable TV/internet charges average \$144 per month.

DID YOU KNOW?

Grants Pass has more than 187 miles of water distribution piping to transport fresh drinking water throughout the city.

The city's eight reservoirs hold 20.5 million gallons of water.

Public Comment Open for Review of Local Wetlands Inventory

When the city added lands to the Grants Pass Urban Growth Boundary, it became necessary under state planning rules to survey the new lands for the existence of wetlands.

The city contracted with Pacific Habitat Services in 2017 to conduct the field survey work and produce a wetlands report and mapping. Information from that survey is now available for public review and comment.

Links to the pertinent documents are available at the city's website: <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1409/Local-Wetlands-Inventory>

Documents include an interactive web map of identified wetlands, probable wetlands, and properties abutting wetlands or probable wetlands; the Wetlands Technical Report; and Individual Wetlands Maps that accompany the technical report.

The Department of State Lands (DSL) is the agency with authority to determine if the wetland survey work meets the requirements of the state plan-

ning rule.

Once the DSL determines the wetland survey meets state requirements the survey and mapping will be added to the city's existing Local Wetlands Inventory (LWI).

When added to the LWI the information will be used to guide city decisions on conservation and development of these lands.

Public comments on this survey work are being solicited before the DSL makes decisions on the acceptance of the work.

Public comments and/or questions can be sent by email to: planning@grantspassoregon.gov. All public comment must be received no later than March 31.

Property owners of lands containing wetlands or probable wetlands and abutting properties will be notified by U.S. mail.

Those persons wishing to speak with a wetlands specialist may call the Community Development Department: (541)450-6060.



DRINKING WATER WEEK POSTER CONTEST

Create a poster showing how our water supply in Grants Pass is there when we need it.

For over 40 years the City of Grants Pass and the American Water Works Association have celebrated Drinking Water Week—A unique opportunity for communities to come together and recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives.
This year's theme is "There When You Need It"

Drinking Water Week
May 2-8, 2021

ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN \$100!

The Categories

- Grades K-2
- Grades 3-5
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 9-12

The Prizes

13 winners will receive \$100

Submissions

Submit your original drawing by mail to:
City of Grants Pass
Attn: Dianne Phelan
101 NW A Street
Grants Pass, OR 97526

<https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/354/Water>

The Rules

- Create an original poster that demonstrates our theme of "There When You Need It".
- Use an 8 1/2 x 11 blank horizontal piece of white paper.
- Use crayons, colored pencils, markers, pens, or water-colors only. Do not use chalk.
- Posters must be drawn free hand. No tracing or prefabricated drawings will be accepted.
- Posters must include the artist's name, grade level, mailing address, and phone number on the back of the poster written in pencil only.
- One entry per person.
- All entries will be judged based on creativity, originality, and theme relevance.
- Entries become the property of the City of Grants Pass. Judges' decision is final.
- Contest winners will be featured in the GPNow, on social media, promotional activities, and recognized during a City Council meeting.
- Complete and submit the Release Form (next page) along with the poster.
- Entry deadline is 5 pm on April 30, 2021.

Family members of the City of Grants Pass are encouraged to submit their artwork but will not be eligible for prizes.

Grants Pass

Public Safety Stations:

Parkway Public Safety Center
800 East Park Street
541-450-6200

Hillcrest Public Safety Station
199 NW Hillcrest Drive
541-450-6230

Redwood Public Safety Station
3071 Leonard Road
541-450-6240

Standing On The Shoulders of Giants

The city's Water Restoration Plant is a multi-faceted engineering marvel.

City of Grants Pass Water Restoration Plant Superintendent Gary Brelinski has been working at the WRP since 2008. He came to the plant through an occupational program connected to Rogue Community College.

Brelinski has a firsthand understanding of the importance of vocational programs, and that's why he is working in coordination with Youth Pathways Partnership to create a video tour for students to demonstrate what it's like to work in wastewater management.

"It's an effort to introduce students to real careers in the city, including city government operations," said Brelinski.

The original plan was to provide live, interactive tours of the WRP for students of various age groups, something Brelinski used to do from time to time for area schools.



THE AERATION PROCESS AT THE CITY'S WATER RESTORATION PLANT IS WHERE A "HEALTHY FOAM" IS OBSERVED WHEN THERE IS A PROPER COMBINATION OF OXYGEN AND FOOD TO KEEP MICROORGANISMS DOING THEIR JOB.

"COVID conditions preclude that now," Brelinski said.

The video tour concept is the best available alternative. Brelinski will work in conjunction with the city's public information office to create what may become a small series of tours aimed at different audiences.

"I've learned to tailor my tour to my audience – anywhere from K-6 graders and college students, to city council members and new employees," said Brelinski.

Some groups require more details than others, he said.

"You learn how much your audience truly want to see and what they're interested in," said Brelinski.

He said younger kids aren't as interested in the specific details of how the systems work, while college students are most interested in the biology behind the treatment processes.

"Our goal is keeping the microorganisms alive and happy."

"Middle schoolers want to learn about the icky stuff," he said.

Tours generally begin in the lobby of the plant, which has been at its location since 1934. In the lobby is where the brain of the plant resides. Known as the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, or SCADA system, the complex computer allows plant operators to make many changes and corrections to the overall system directly from the terminal.

Five pump and lift stations pump the city's wastewater to

the highest level in the system.

"It's all gravity from that point," said Brelinski.

On average, the plant processes a flow of 3-4 million gallons per day (MGD). During heavy winter rain events, that total can increase nearly five times to more than 15 MGD.

The plant is able to treat up to 15 MGD of processed flow per day with enough ultraviolet light to release it safely back to the river, but when the flows increase beyond that maximum, a second channel has to be operated requiring 24-hours manned supervision of the plant.

All plant operators are certified with the state. State certification must be maintained through each operator completing 20 hours of continued education every two years.

The treatment process is completely biological, using microorganisms to digest the solids in the wastewater.

"We're glorified ranchers," Brelinski says in jest.

"Our whole goal is keeping the microorganisms alive and happy," he said.

(See "PLANT" page 11)

Follow The Progress Of WTP Project

On Jan. 15, 2020, the Grants Pass City Council adopted a resolution declaring a public need to acquire property for a new water treatment plant. With this action, the council took another important step to secure the nearly 90-year water legacy of Grants Pass.

With property now secured, city staff and consultants are securing the final details to begin the multi-year project and construct a replacement water treatment plant. This plant will provide a plentiful supply of clean, safe drinking water for the next generation of Grants Pass residents.

Plant design activities will begin in late spring and are anticipated to last for about a year. Construction will begin early in 2023.

In the meantime, there will be a flurry of activity on the site as work is carried out to complete subsurface investigations, mitigate any potential hazards, install stormwater facilities, and secure the site.

The city invites its water users and other interested parties to follow the project at the following website: <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1171>. This website will be updated frequently with current project schedules, photos, and videos of this historic Public Works project.

Technical details about the new plant will also be posted, including water treatment technology, capacity information, and more. Viewers can also sign up to receive project updates through email by subscribing at the following link: <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/list.aspx>.



THIS MAGNIFIED IMAGE SHOWS A "HAPPY" MICROORGANISM DOING ITS WORK DIGESTING SOLIDS AT THE CITY'S WATER RESTORATION PLANT.

Plant...(from page 7)

A tour of the plant continues through the lab. Built in 1974, it looks like something out of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" filled with beakers, incubators, gas nozzles, and resting samples.

Operators pull samples of the effluent discharge all day to make sure it is clear before it returns to the river. Modern computer technology helps them keep a close eye on their microbiological farm of hungry critters.

In order to help people understand the process of converting influent (wastewater arriving to the plant) into effluent (clear water returning to the river), Breliniski's tour follows the flow of the water, which begins three stories down at the very bottom of the plant.

Four giant pumps serve as the heart of the plant, pulling influent from the wet well and pumping it straight up. One of the pumps is a classic from the 1950s, while the three more modern pumps were installed in 2001. Each pump is composed of several tons of steel.

Two giant blowers are the lungs of the plant, supplying important oxygen to the microorganisms. Internal airflow at

the plant is also crucial to prevent build up of methane and other gases.

A gas-fired boiler heats the building and the digester to the tune of \$4,000 to \$6,000 in natural gas per month. A new digester project recently approved by the city council will help recycle gas burnoff and save approximately \$20,000 per year.

All of this heavy equipment requires regular maintenance and repairs. For that reason, the WRP has its own fully equipped repair shop for taking care of hydraulics, plumbing, electrical, machinery, and more.

"My team has to know their stuff," said Breliniski.

Part of the regular schedule of maintenance includes testing and maintaining the massive diesel generator at the plant for use in case of a major emergency or power outage. When operating, the generator can consume as much as 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel per day. Diesel fuel must be kept on hand, but also cycled through, as it has a shelf life that expires from time to time.

The first stage in treating the influent involves removing all of the solid trash and debris that arrives in the water to the plant.



THE LAB AT THE CITY'S WATER RESTORATION PLANT CAN LOOK LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF MARY SHELLEY'S "FRANKENSTEIN."



Extracting inorganic material is the crucial first step, as it cannot be properly treated.

Breliniski reports an astounding array of items that are regularly pulled from the filters, including adult and infant diapers, articles of clothing, plastics, and other debris.

A series of long conveyors help separate the sludge from the scum and moves the sludge to the filters, where non-treatable material is removed into bins to be taken to the landfill.

"Sludge sinks. Scum floats," Breliniski said.

The most important phase of the treatment occurs when the influent is introduced to the microorganisms in the aeration process. That's where plant operators monitor the tanks to make sure there is "healthy foam" resulting from the proper combination of food and oxygen.

On either side of the aeration process are the primary and secondary settling tanks. After secondary settling occurs, there

is final filtration process before the effluent is channeled past racks of UV lights set to a very specific wavelength.

"The wavelength of the UV is designed to disrupt the DNA of viruses and bacteria," said Breliniski.

The tubes the bulbs rest in have an automated cleaning system that scrapes past on a regular basis to avoid any build-up and maintain light exposure to the effluent for proper disinfection. After that, the treated water is released back into the river.

Breliniski is looking forward to sharing the plant's complex operations and massive machinery with students through the video tour project. He is passionate about his work and the astounding amount of engineering that has been required to create the processes and construct the facilities.

"We're standing on the shoulders of giants," Breliniski said.

GP City Social Media

The City of Grants Pass has four active social media accounts, with the number of followers and subscribers to each account growing every day.

The most popular platform is the city's Facebook account with more than 4,600 followers. There are more than 3,200 members of the city's Nextdoor account, representing 80 different neighborhoods.

Residents who wish to remain informed of city activities can visit the city's social media pages.

<https://www.facebook.com/grantspassoregon>

IG: @grantspassoregon

Nextdoor:<https://nextdoor.com/agency/city-of-grants-pass>

Sign Up For Digital News

Members of the public who wish to be notified about breaking city news, can join the city's email subscriber list, where preferences regarding the receipt of notices can be personalized by each recipient.

Choose to receive information regarding COVID updates, street closures, public safety information, street sweeping, burn windows, city agendas, job postings, press releases, committee openings, public forums, community surveys, requests for proposals, and so much more!

<https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/list.aspx>

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

— George Bernard Shaw



THIS MASSIVE PUMP, BUILT OF STEEL IN THE 1950S, IS ONE OF FOUR SERVING AS THE HEART OF THE CITY'S WATER RESTORATION PLANT.