

**STEAMBOAT LAKE WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT  
UPDATE TO SERVICE PLAN**

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## SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Steamboat Lake Water and Sanitation District (SLWSD) is located in northern Routt County, about 20 miles north of the City of Steamboat Springs along Routt County 129, (the Elk River Road). The SLWSD's purpose of providing water and sewer for domestic purposes and water for fire protection has not changed, while infrastructure has been greatly improved. Facilities that have been developed are a fraction of the original plans that were approved in 1972 yet the original, and still active, Service Plans have never been amended. The reason for submitting this Service Plan Amendment is to record events that have occurred in the 43 years since inception and consolidate all pertinent information in one place.

### **Brief History of the District**

The economy of North Routt County was initially supported by mining, beef cattle and sheep. These days it is well known for year-round recreational opportunities including Steamboat, Pearl and Hahn's Peak Lakes, BLM and National Forest Service lands.

It is little wonder that developers saw an opportunity to provide housing for the area. A private corporation was formed in 1971 known as the Steamboat Lake Development Corporation. This Corporation encompassed Filings 1 – 8. Filings 1 – 4 are commonly known today as the Willow Creek Pass Subdivision; Filings 5 – 8 are in close proximity to Hahn's Peak Village. At that time of initial development, two separate Special Districts, one for Water and one for Sanitation, were established in 1972 that encompassed all of these filings. Original plans anticipated a potential of 10,000 vacation homes, providing a maximum of 1,100,000 gallons per day in water usage, 3,500,000 gallons of water storage and wastewater treatment of 1,000,000 gallons per day.

By 1976, water and waste water infrastructure was in place to support homes in portions of Filings 1 and 2. One well was supplying all water and a small wastewater facility was built along County Road 129, a short distance from Clark. The developers walked away from the development before completing any other infrastructure or documentation of what was built.

Home construction proceeded slowly in those early years. It was the paving of County Road 129 in 1993 from Clark north to Columbine that triggered acceleration in home building and since then the Willow Creek Pass Subdivision has become a bedroom community for the City of Steamboat Springs and beyond.

In 1994 the two separate Districts were consolidated into one Steamboat Lake Water and Sanitation District. Improvements to the infrastructure became pressing and fortunately, dedicated property owners serving as volunteers on the Board of Directors, have accomplished many tasks needed to keep up with the expanding population.

*See Exhibits A and B for the original Service Plans excerpts.*

***Sections following this brief history specifically address provisions in the Colorado Statute 32-1-202 (2) on what a Service Plan for setting up new Special Districts shall contain.***

## SECTION 2 - SERVICES PROVIDED

(2) (a): A description of the proposed services.

### **Purpose**

SLWSD exists to provide water and sanitation services and to provide water for fire protection. The District is subject to requirements by the State of Colorado, including water supply and wastewater testing, permitting for wells, and regular inspection of wells and treatment facilities, submittal of an annual budget and distribution of an annual water quality report.

District properties fall into four categories

- A lots      Lots adjacent to water and sewer with a home built
- B lots      Lots adjacent to water and sewer, but no home built
- C lots      Lots smaller than five acres, not adjacent to water and sewer
- D lots      Lots on five acres or greater, not adjacent to water and sewer; to develop a home on this property, a well and septic system may be installed that is not part of the District's Water and Sewer system.

Parcels of 5 acres or greater in SLWSD filings 1 & 2 may either build a private well and septic or extend existing water and sewer lines to their property. Properties of 5 acres or greater that are within SLWSD Filings 3-8 may be required to build a private well and septic system.

In 2006, in order to facilitate long term planning, the Board consulted with engineers and formalized where service extensions to the existing infrastructure could realistically be accomplished. It was determined that total build-out in Filings 1 and 2 would be approximately 305 single family homes. This number is an estimate and has the potential to change as the District continues to review and update the Master Plan. Service extensions have been approved on occasion, adding lots adjacent to water and sewer. Currently there are approximately 140 homes tapped into these systems.

### **Administration**

The District has a website at <https://www.colorado.gov/SLWSD>, providing, among other things, Minutes, Rules and Regulations, Newsletters, Water Quality Reports as well as Service and Tap Fees.

The SLWSD has a Board of Directors comprised of five members, with alternating terms. The Special District Act provides that terms of office for special district directors are 4 years in length (Section 32-1-305.5(3), C.R.S). Board terms are staggered so that seats on the board expire at alternating regular elections. Those serving on the Board receive a discount on service fees, in accordance with Section 32-1-902(3)(a), C.R.S., but for all intents and purposes, it is considered a volunteer Board.

The Board has two part-time operators, each works approximately 20 hours per month. Both have certification from the State of Colorado; one manages the water system and one manages the wastewater system. A part-time assistant has also been hired to help with necessary administrative activities. The Board also retains private consultants for engineer, legal and accounting services.

Details of the powers of a Special District can be found under Section 32-1-1001 et seq. of the Colorado Statutes.

### **SECTION 3 – FINANCIAL PLAN**

*(2)(b) A financial plan showing how the proposed services are to be financed.*

The District receives income from the following sources: User Service fees, Availability of Service fees, new taps into the water and wastewater system, interest income and property taxes.

- Water and Sewer fees: \$200 for Water and \$200 for Sewer, billed quarterly.
- Tap fees for new homes: tap fees are a one-time charge of \$16,000 for Water and Sewer combined.
- Availability of Service fees: for lots with access to water and sewer but no home developed. This \$300 annual fee is for the sole purpose of contributing to interest on debts for capital improvements. It will be removed when all debt is retired.
- Interest income is earned on the District's capital reserves.
- Property taxes are derived from a 6.661 mill levy.

Of course, the budget varies from year to year; Exhibit C2 is the current budget and will serve to give an order of magnitude of the District's financial resources.

#### **Audits**

Only if expenditures exceed \$500,000 annually, does the Colorado Statute Local Government Audit Law, Section 29-1-601, require an audit. When the District's expenditures are less than \$500,000 per year, which is most typical, the requirement for an audit is waived. Audits are then performed every 5 years. The most recent audit is contained in Exhibit C1.

### **SECTION 4 – WATER FACILITIES**

*(2) (c): A preliminary engineering or architectural survey showing how the proposed services are to be provided.*

Preliminary engineering was included in the original 1972 Water and Sanitation Service Plans, planning for 10,000 vacation homes projected over a 25 year period from 1972 to 1987. Obviously, most of these improvements did not happen. The following reflects the infrastructure that is actually in place.

#### **Wells**

The geography within the District boundaries has created an enormous challenge to providing adequate water supply for the District. The original development had two wells, one in Filing 1 (Well #13) and one in Filing 2 (Well #1). The Filing 2 well was never brought on line due to a bend in the well casing and high iron content. Subsequent attempts to repair this well were futile. For 31 years, the sole source of water for the District was the well in Filing 1 that produced 25 gallons/minute.

Extensive efforts have been made to find additional sources of water. In 2000, a monitor well was drilled on a lot owned by the District, but was not brought on line due to poor water quality. In 2002, a drilling attempt was abandoned after drilling down 900 feet. Also In 2002, tests for an alluvial well at Willow Creek proved unsuccessful. In late 2002, three wells were drilled that yielded about 8 gallons/minute. The most promising of those three (Lot 84, F2) was brought on line in 2003. The other two wells have not been brought on line due to low productivity; however, they are maintained as monitor wells with the State of Colorado.

In 2009, the original non-functioning well in Filing 2 (Well #1) was replaced, adding an additional pumping capacity of 25 gallons/minute to the system; it required construction of a water treatment plant, built on the same site to treat for iron. In 2015 a replacement for the other original well in Filing 1 (Well#13) was brought on line increasing water production from 20 to 40 gallons/minute; chlorination is the only treatment necessary for this well. These two projects can provide adequate water supply for many years to come.

To summarize, there are three wells in the District being used for water supply:

Filing 1 replacement well (Guest Well):	40 gallons/minute
Filing 2 replacement well (Lot 78 Well):	25 gallons/minute
Filing 2 Lot 84 (Doubec Well):	5 gallons/minute

*See Exhibit I for active well permits*

### **Storage Capacity**

The water distribution system is designed such that water is pumped from the wells to the storage tank and then fed to homes by gravity. In 1979, a 25,000 gallon underground water storage tank was installed in Filing 2. In 1996, two additional 50,000 gallon water storage tanks were installed at the same site, bringing total storage capacity to 125,000 gallons. One of the best options to compliment water supply is to add additional storage capacity; this can be done on the lot where the current tanks are located and the District Engineer has recommended finding a site in Filing 1 to bring more flexibility to the system.

Over recent years as pipelines have been replaced or repaired, the District has also installed shut-off valves that can isolate sections of pipe that have broken. This has been a major improvement because prior to these valves, a break or major leak would drain all three tanks and the distribution piping, leaving the entire Subdivision out of water. These valves are well documented and have saved a lot of water and much inconvenience.

### **Fire Hydrants**

A system of 22 fire hydrants is now on the water distribution system. The Board has a program of replacing hydrants at the rate of 2 per year. All hydrants are flushed on an annual basis. The system is available to the North Routt Fire Department for firefighting in surrounding areas; the Department also uses the system for training purposes.

*See Exhibit D for a map of the Water Supply Infrastructure.*

## **SECTION 5 – WASTEWATER FACILITIES**

*(2) (c): A preliminary engineering or architectural survey showing how the proposed services are to be provided.*

In the original 1972 Sanitation District Service Plan, it was anticipated that a total of 83,200 linear feet of pipe, 213 manholes, and 8 lift stations would be installed to service the Sanitation District. Only a fraction of that system was built and is still in use today. Originally, a wastewater treatment plant capable of processing 25,000 gallons of wastewater per day was built, along County Road 129, two miles south of the Subdivision.

In 2001, the State of Colorado mandated that the plant be upgraded to accommodate the increased District population. Phase 1 of this upgrade started in the fall of 2004, an outfall pipeline was installed from the Treatment Plant to the Elk River. In the summer of 2006, at the site of the existing plant, work began on Phase II and the upgrades were brought online in the summer of 2007. As part of the upgrade the sole lift station (in Filing 2, on Jupiter) was upgraded. Current capacity of the plant is now 110,000 gallons/day, adequate for the projected build-out.

*See Exhibit E for a map of the Waste Water Infrastructure.*

## **SECTION 6 – DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

*(2) (d): A map of the proposed special district boundaries and an estimate of the population.*

As previously described, the District is comprised of Filings 1 – 8 with approximately 780 lots, varying in size from .06 of an acre to 5 acres or more. This number will occasionally decrease as lots are consolidated into larger parcels. The lots are all in Tax District 17 and a portion of the Property Tax, allocated per the 6.661 mill levy, is an important source of income for the District.

The District's Rules and Regulations have been updated to include Section 9, Petition for Exclusion from the District. Exemption from the District is a process defined in Colorado Statutes, C.R.S Sec 32-1-501. Section 9 explains the procedure and provides appropriate forms.

*See Exhibit F1 for a map of current District boundaries, F2 for a snapshot of Filings 1 – 8, F3 for Assessor Detailed Maps by Filings (1 – 8) and F4 for District Boundaries legal descriptions.*

## **SECTION 7 – ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER ENTITIES**

*2) (g) A description of any arrangement or proposed agreement for the performance of any services within the District.*

The SLWSD has an informal arrangement with the North Routt Fire Protection District. The District's fire hydrant system is maintained for fire protection in the local area; the Fire District conducts training using the fire hydrants. There are no Inter-governmental agreements with any other entity, except for the financial agreements with DOLA, referenced in Section 3 of this Service Plan.

### **SECTION 8 – MASTER PLAN**

In 2014, the Board commissioned McLaughlin Water Engineers (the District's engineering consultant) to compile a Master Plan. Documentation from the original developers was sparse and often did not reflect what was actually built. Over the course of the last fifteen years, our engineers have been recording all that was learned while doing capital improvement projects or making repairs. The Master Plan includes recommendations from the engineers on future capital improvements.

*See Exhibit G for the Master Plan.*

### **SECTION 9 – WATER RIGHTS**

The original developers were planning for a large resort community and developed water rights accordingly. The District has both Conditional and Absolute water rights, many of them quite senior to other water users in the Elk River Valley. In 2014, the District commissioned HRS Water Consultants, Inc. to evaluate all of the District's water rights and to make recommendations on how best to manage them. At this time, water rights are adequate to serve the District's needs.

*See Exhibit H for the Water Rights Evaluation. Appendices of Court Decrees for all water rights are lengthy had have not been included. They are on file at the Routt County District Court.*