# Moose Lake-Windemere Area Sanitary Sewer District

Message from the Sewer District

The Moose Lake Windemere Sanitary Sewer District held its annual budget meeting in early September. Effective January 1, 2014 the user rate will be increasing from $54.00 per unit to $60 per unit.

It is anticipated that this rate should now hold steady for several years and support operation, maintenance and repair of the system. The rates were held low for many years as Board members chose to use the reserve funds on hand rather than raise the user fees and conducted many improvements/upgrades to the system. In looking toward future projections the $60 rate allows for the District to collect for depreciation of the system as well as fund capital projects to conduct much needed lining of areas of the system, etc. Our sewer system was built back in the late 70’s early 80’s and is an aging system. The District is being fiscally responsibly by having an appropriate rate that not only keeps your system running today but well into the future. As the District bills quarterly and after the sewer use, you will not see the increase on your quarterly bill until April 2014.

Over the past two years the District has looked extensively at the need for sewer around Island and Sturgeon Lake. The consultants reviewed county records and building permits and gathered other information to determine if there were enough problematic systems to warrant construction of a collector system. Based on the information they have collected to date it suggests that there are pockets with problematic systems such as holding tanks, but not at a level to warrant construction of a system at this time. As conditions change in this area, the District may look at the possibility of doing some type of decentralized treatment system to serve more than one home in these pocket areas. Additional areas adjacent to the sewer line have been researched as well but no definite decisions have been made at this time.

As always, if you would like to keep up on what is happening in your sewer district, please check out our website at [www.mlwssd.org](http://www.mlwssd.org). We try to keep minutes updated for the public’s information as well as permit and ordinances information. If you would like to attend a meeting of the MLWSSD those are held the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the District Offices, 304 ½ Elm Avenue, Moose Lake. In closing I would like to say enjoy the beautiful fall weather and winter holidays as they are fast approaching.

Sincerely, Darla Hall, Executive Director

[www.mlwssd.org](http://www.mlwssd.org) **October 2013**

NEWSLETTER

October 2013

Moose Lake-Windemere Sanitary Sewer District Contact information

**Chairperson, Byron Kuster**

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**Vice Chairperson, Cliff Koski**

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Moose Lake, MN 55767 (218) 485-8366

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**Board Member, Henry Gretsfeld**

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Sturgeon Lake, MN 55783 (218) 485-4869

**Board Member, Dean Paulson**

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Moose Lake, MN 55767 (218) 485-0298

**Executive Director, Darla Hall**

MLWSSD (218) 485-8276

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**Superintendent**

**Keith Newman**

(cell) 218-380-6114

Office Hours Mon., Tues., Wed. 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**KEEP EASEMENTS CLEAR**

Moose Lake Windemere Sanitary Sewer District would like to remind residents to keep the utility easements open and free from any buildings or obstructions as it is necessary for the District to gain access to the lines from time to time to deal with repairs and maintenance. MLWSSD has easements along/through many customers’ properties. Before you build or dig on your property, please contact our office to make sure that you do not encroach on our easements.

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***NOTICE TO HOMEOWNERS REGARDING SUMP PUMPS***

**FATS, OIL, and GREASE – FOG**

*As many of you know well, Fats, Oils and Greases, can, and do cause havoc on sewers and lift stations. Grease as a warm liquid may not appear harmful, but as the liquid cools, the grease or fat congeals and causes nauseous looking mats on the surface of settling tanks, digesters, and the interior of pipes. They can cause sewer overflows and backups. Fats, Oils and Grease can enter the sewer from the household drains as well as from poor or more often the case, lack of grease traps in restaurants, schools, daycare facilities, long term care centers and various other points of entry.*

**Put oil and grease in covered collection containers.**

\*Restaurants use commercial disposal and properly install correct sized grease traps.

\*Private homes use empty containers and cover with a lid.

\*Scrape food scraps from dishes into a trash can lined with a garbage bag and dispose of properly. When you generate any amount of cooking oil, reuse it as often as possible and then pour it into a container that can be thrown away.

**Never, never, pour it down the drain.**

\*Remove oil and grease from dishes, pans, fryers and griddles. Cool first then skim, scrape or wipe off grease.

\*Pre-wash dishes and pans before putting them into the dishwasher- this not only keeps the food from being ground and sent into the sewer lines but also prolongs the life of your dishwasher.

\*Cover kitchen sink with catch basket and empty into garbage as needed.

\*If you generate large amounts of used cooking oil, reuse, or recycle it.

**WIPES CLOG PIPES!**

The past few years have seen the introduction of more and more disposable wipe products for a variety of household uses. Many of these products are labeled as not only disposable, but also flushable.

While marketed as convenience items, these products may potentially become a huge inconvenience because they may clog not only the sewer on your property, but also cause blockages and backup problems in MLWSSD sewer system and pump stations.

To understand how these wipes can become a problem, it’s important to know how the sewer system works. Every home has a sewer connection that runs from the home to the public sewer system. This sewer service line is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain so there are no backups of wastewater into the home. From there, the sewage moves into larger collector lines, and pump stations help lift the wastewater across different elevations in the sewer system.

Why are household wipes a problem? Unlike toilet paper, these products do not break down once they are flushed. They can then cause blockages in your home sewer lines, resulting in the backup of sewage into the home. A repair of the service line can leave the homeowner with a nasty repair bill – often not covered by homeowners’ insurance – and an even nastier cleanup.

On a larger scale, when these products make their way into the public sewer system, they collect together and cause clogs in the collector lines and get tangled in lift pumps. When pump stations are clogged, they stop working and require cleaning and repair – or even replacement – in order to get the sewage moving again.

Avoid a nasty cleanup in your home and help protect the MLWSSD sewer system by never flushing any consumer item, other than toilet paper, down the toilet, regardless of what the packaging promises. Put these items in the trash instead:

 Disinfecting wipes, baby wipes or “flushable” wipes

 Cotton swabs and cotton balls

 Feminine hygiene products

 Paper towels

 Facial tissue

Not sure what should or shouldn’t be flushed? Here’s an easy reminder: **If it’s not toilet paper, and if you didn’t eat it or drink it first, it shouldn’t go in the toilet**

***Are you aware that sump pumps are NOT allowed to discharge into the sanitary system by the MLWSSD Ordinance and that severe fines could be imposed.***

In accordance with our ordinance, no person shall discharge or cause to be discharged any unpolluted waters such as storm water, groundwater, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, unpolluted industrial process water, or cooling water into the District Sewerage System by means of a sump pump, or otherwise.

If you are aware of anyone currently on the District’s system who uses a sump pump remind them that sump pumps are not allowed and report the information to our office. **Use of sump pumps increase the treatment fee costs which the MLWSSD pays to the City of Moose Lake and ultimately ends up increasing the cost for everyone on the system.**

MCj02405870000[1]What You Should Know and How You Should Protect Yourself

Occasionally a blockage in a sewer line will result in a backup of sanitary sewage into a private home. If you experience a backup, and you are on our sewer line, immediately contact the Moose Lake Windemere Sanitary Sewer District at 218-485-8276 or if its afterhours contact our Superintendent at 218-380-6114. The following information will answer the basic questions about what to do if you experience a backup and how to begin cleaning.

**INSURANCE**

The Sewer District is not automatically responsible when a sewer backup occurs. There are many reasons for backups which the District cannot control. For example, people dumping inappropriate items such as grease or diapers into the system can create a blockage. Tree roots can grow into and obstruct the lines. Generally, the District is responsible only if it was negligent in maintaining the main sewer lines.

Sometimes, your homeowners’ insurance will pay for sewer backups. Not all policies have this coverage and you should check with your agent.

If you feel damage occurred as a direct result of the District’s negligence, you can file an insurance claim by calling the District.

**CLEAN UP**

For large clean ups, you should call a cleaning service. Your insurance carrier might have suggestions on which service to use or you can look in the Yellow Pages. For smaller backups you can clean yourself, use a solution of two tablespoons chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. To reduce health hazards, thoroughly clean the areas affected by the backup as soon as possible. The Minnesota Department of Health suggests the following:

* Use outside air to dry your home.
* Open windows and doors and use an exhaust fan to remove moist air from the house.
* If available, use a room de-humidifier. Empty it often.
* If your basement is flooded, pump the water in stages – about one-third per day. Make sure the level of floodwater outside is below the level of the basement floor. If not, do not pump the basement all at once because the saturated soil could cause the basement walls to collapse.
* Wear a mask to prevent inhaling contaminated dust, especially if you have allergies. Consult your physician if you have questions.
* Open, clean, decontaminate, and thoroughly dry cavities in walls, floors, and ceilings.
* Release any water or mud that has been trapped in walls, ceilings or floor cavities.
* Allow walls to dry from the inside out.
* Remove moisture and debris from all surfaces and get surface materials dry within 24-48 hours.
* Remove all interior wall finishing materials and insulation.
* Throw out any wet insulation, moist plaster, wallboard and paneling.
* If you think you might have materials containing asbestos in your home, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-4620.
* If any materials are still wet or moist after 24-48 hours, you should assume they have mold growing on them.

**FOOD**

* Throw out any opened food or packaged foods that are not waterproof. Commercially canned foods can be salvaged if the labels are removed and the cans thoroughly washed. The cans should be disinfected by wiping the entire surface with a laundry bleach and water mixture and rinsed in clear water. Home-canned foods require additional care. After the jars containing home-canned foods have been washed and disinfected, the jars should be boiled for ten minutes before using.

**CLOTHING/HOUSEHOLD**

* Line-dry all articles before attempting to clean or treat them.
* After drying, brush off loose dirt and debris.
* Send “Dry Clean Only” items to a professional cleaner.
* Wash clothes several times in cold water. Add up to a cup of bleach per load of wash if it will not harm the clothing.
* Rinse and dry all items as soon as possible.
* Throw out mattresses and pillows.

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**WET CARPETING**

* Pull up waterlogged carpet immediately to prevent further floor damage.
* Carpet pads cannot be saved. Remove the pads and throw them away.
* Attempt to save carpets or throw rugs only if they would be very expensive to replace.
* Clean and dry your floors thoroughly before re-carpeting.

**WET FLOORS OF HARDWOOD**

* Remove all moisture or debris.
* Scrub floors and woodwork within 48 hours using a stiff brush, water, detergent, and disinfectant.
* Allow all wood to dry thoroughly.

**WET FURNITURE**

* Discard upholstered furniture if it has been exposed to water or contaminated material.
* Clean, rinse and disinfect wood furniture.
* Place wood furniture outside in a shady area so it will dry slowly.

**WET APPLIANCES**

* If your hot water heater became wet due to flooding, it should be discarded. The insulation typically can’t be replaced and the burner or heating element might become damaged and could cause an explosion or fire if used. If in doubt consult a service professional before using.
* If the furnace was flooded, have it inspected and serviced by a professional furnace service before using.

**RECORD KEEPING**

* Take pictures of damage for your records.
* Keep all receipts for all work done.
* Write a description of the extent of damage.
* Record date and time of occurrence and note which sewer areas surcharged– floor drain, lower level toilet, laundry tub and the like.

**HELP PREVENT BACKUPS**

The following items should be disposed of in your trash can, NOT in the sanitary sewer system:

* Diapers
* Paper towels
* Cooking grease
* Food (do NOT use the disposal for all food items)

**REMINDER**

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance, repair, and cleaning of the service line from the house to the District main line. For more information on clean ups, visit the Minnesota Department of Health’s website at [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

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| MLWSSD  Moose Lake – Windemere Sanitary Sewer District  304 ½ Elm Avenue PO Box 588  Moose Lake, MN 55767 |  | Third Class  US Postage  Paid  Moose Lake, MN 55767  Permit No. #73 |
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