

Profile: Jayme Wantowski



Photo courtesy Jayme Wantowski

With nine years experience billing water utilities, bookkeeper Jayme Wantowski is bringing her expertise to the Welches Water Company.

Our board is the decision maker, she says, and she is the first line as far as billing, usage, trends and keeping our water manager informed. Together, the team of board, bookkeeper and water manager will work to keep our precious water and the system that delivers it in the best shape possible. She is currently the bookkeeper for seven water systems.

Born in and raised at the family home along the river in Sandy, Jayme understands and values the mountain community and focuses on small-town customer service.

She and her family live in Damascus where they have a small-scale farm with chickens, goats, dogs and cats. With three children, two of whom are grown, they go camping, boating, paddleboarding and to concerts on a regular basis. Their favorite spots include camping at Three Rivers and Lake Merwin.

“We’re an outdoor family,” Jayme said.

Jayme’s customer service includes answering questions from users. One of the frequent ones she gets is where the system responsibility lies for homeowners and the district. The outside water meter is the key.

Everything from the meter to the house is the responsibility of the property owner. The rest is the water district’s department. She can offer suggestions. For example, if your toilet continues to run after flushing, it seems a small thing, but can have a big effect.

“You would not assume that a toilet would make your water bill quadruple in a month until you become familiar with water billing,” Jayme said. “If you see toilet is running, you should do something about it. It’s small but cumulative.”

She said that she would like to streamline our bookkeeping after doing several billings and attending board meetings to see

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Board Meeting Dates 2025

- 📅 **Wed, January 15, 7 p.m.**
Hoodland Community Center
- 📅 **Wed, March 19**
- 📅 **Wed, May 21**
- 📅 **Wed, July 2**
- 📅 **Sat, Aug 23, Location TBD**

**Regular board meetings
are open to all**

Board Notes

Dear Welches Water Company Members:

We are slowly but surely moving along with our project to place new storage tanks and install back up infrastructure using the State of Oregon loan. This project is part of our master plan and will give us plenty of back-up water storage in case of drought conditions or demand on our water if there is a home or wildfire. The process has been a challenge for our small board of directors and the need for more volunteers to help carry the workload.

Looking ahead – WWC is working in a different world, even from just five years ago.

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Plant Highlight

Common Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*

With bright white orb fruits, the snowberry accents the late fall landscape and then shines as the plant drops its leaves in winter, leaving the berries hanging on bare branches.

A native shrub, the snowberry thrives in our forests, along streams and north-facing slopes. It grows from southeast Alaska to southern California and in British Columbia. A food source for mice, rabbits and deer, the flowers attract pollinators and songbirds.

With deep roots, snowberry has important uses in slope stabilization and erosion control and is valuable



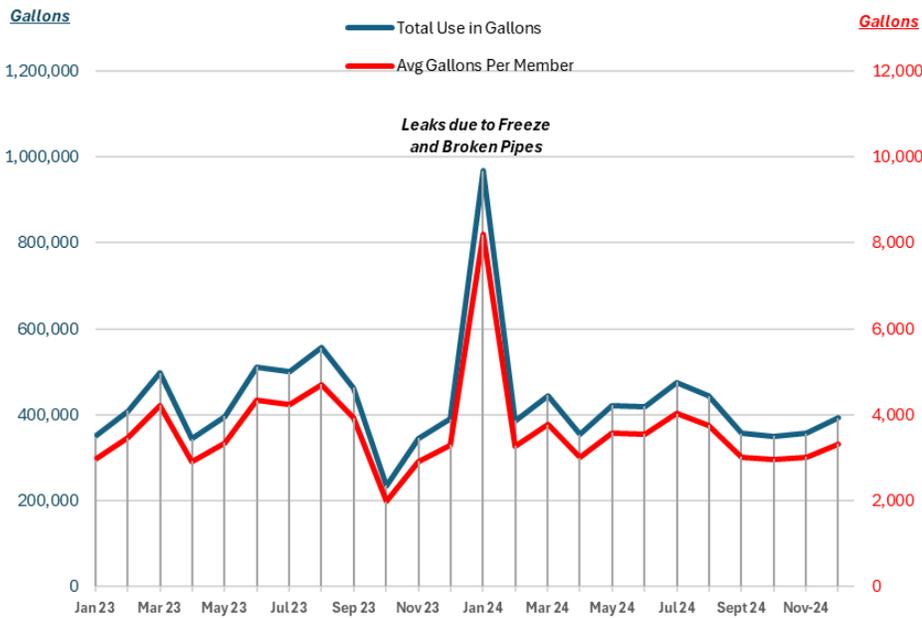
Photo: Oregon State University

in restoration projects.

The plant's berries contain saponin, a soapy substance with antioxidant and antimicrobial properties. They can be crushed and rubbed on the skin to clean and to calm rashes and burns. Indigenous people had many uses for this humble plant including cleaning hair and treating fevers and stomach ailments,

Don't eat the berries because they are not good, but do give a nod to this winter gem when you're out and about.

Welches Water Company - Total Water Use by Month



Monthly water use for the Welches Water Company from Jan 23 to Dec 24. The total monthly use has been near average levels (~400k gal/month) since Jan 2024 when use was unusually high (950k gal) due to freezing temperatures and leaks from broken pipes. Note: fortunately 2024 water supply was abundant with no risk of shortage or use of storage capacity.

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With our use-based water rates, online bill payments, and new federal and state regulations for drinking water providers, WWC needs to operate at a higher level of expertise than in the past.

In October, we successfully submitted an initial inventory of our system under the required EPA Lead Copper Rule Revision. We don't have an update on what will be needed next but will keep you posted as new information becomes available.

We continue to make progress streamlining our banking processes, creating more accurate budgets and refining some of our operations. These improvements will be reflected in your experience as you pay your annual and usage bills. We'll be sending out more information as this develops. With only 118 member households to draw from, it is proving to be difficult to keep our seven-member board of directors seats filled with folks who are willing and able to take on current tasks like project management, website maintenance, data management, and regulatory compliance. We are looking at the possibility of hiring additional help to cover some of these important tasks. We still need WWC Members to serve on our board of directors, so please consider volunteering.

We hope that you find the quarterly newsletters helpful and interesting. Please let us know what you think and if there's specific topics that you would like us to cover.

All the best –

Maggie Skenderian, WWC Board President



"Fox Glove Back Nine " Photo courtesy Lucas Moore

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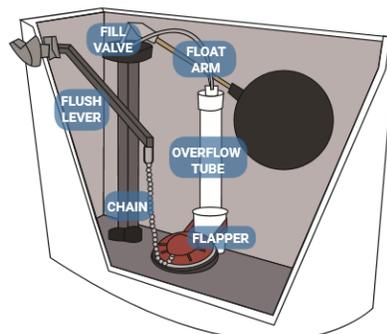
how things work and see where efficiencies can be implemented. Being user-friendly with our billing statements is important and Jayme notes that payment options are a part of that. Online payment is the trend everywhere, but the merchant fees are a consideration as are postal rates for mailed statements. She will present options and the board will make the decision that takes into account our members' needs.

"I'd like to make sure everyone is on the same page and that we are user friendly and simple," Jayme said.

Members can reach Jayme at (503) 680-3411 or wellnessandwaterllc@gmail.com

In a single day a running toilet can use as much water as taking 15 showers. Check this link for repair tips.

<https://www.savingwater.org/indoors/toilets/toilet/>



The photo on this page is courtesy of member Lucas Moore. See his work at Instagram:

@Lucas_MtHood and contact for print sales and photography work. <lucasneillmoore@gmail.com>

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