



# WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021



## Look Who Has a Brand New Name!

Your old District has a new name: the Olympic Valley Public Service District. The Fire Department's new name is the Olympic Valley Fire Department. After thoughtful deliberation, the Board of Directors approved the name change, effective October 1, 2020. The change was spurred by the acknowledgment that the word Squaw is derogatory and deeply offensive.

The Directors reflected on the emotional decision to change the name of the District. The name Squaw is a positive word for many residents and visitors. It reflects the place people have made their home and have created memorable experiences and has not been used to intentionally disparage Native Americans.

However, the Board also recognized that the historical use and origin of the word Squaw cannot be ignored, especially since it so acutely offends Native American women. One Director explained that those disparaged should have overriding consideration as to whether the District should change its name. The Board heard from Helen Fillmore, Councilwoman of the

Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, who offered a personal perspective on the derogatory nature of the word and requested the Board be leaders in the Valley and make the change.

Research revealed that "the term 'squaw' . . . turned into a slur on the tongues of white settlers, who used it to refer derisively to Indian women in general or a part of their anatomy in particular." (E. Sanders, 2004). Dictionaries characterize the term Squaw as offensive, disparaging, contemptuous, misogynistic, and/or racist and as an ethnic and sexual slur. According to the Oxford Dictionary, "Until relatively recently, the word Squaw was used neutrally in anthropological and other contexts to mean a North American Indian woman or wife."

With changes in the political climate in the second half of the 20th century, however, the derogatory attitudes of the past towards North American Indian women mean that the word cannot now be used in any sense without being regarded as offensive."

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## Water and Sewer Easements

### *What is an easement?*

An easement is a legal right to use another person's land for a specific purpose. District-owned water and sewer infrastructure that runs underground through private property is placed within easements to ensure District personnel can access the infrastructure to complete maintenance, repair, and replacement activities. The easements are attached to the property deed and pass on to the next property owner when the property is sold or transferred.

### *Why does OVPSD need easements?*

The District owns and maintains more than 45 miles of underground water and sewer infrastructure that weaves through public roadways and private property. For the District to provide quality services and ensure the health and safety of our customers and the environment, it is imperative that this infrastructure be well maintained. Infrastructure is placed within

easements to assure that the District has the legal authority to access infrastructure located on private property for routine maintenance and during water or sewer emergencies. Additionally, easements restrict building in that part of the property to prevent damage to infrastructure and ensure District access.

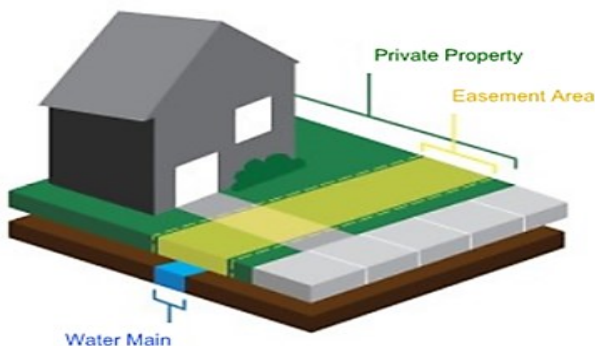
### *What is restricted in a water or sewer easement?*

To allow for access to water and sewer infrastructure for operation and maintenance activities, the District does not permit the installation of any objects (sheds, fences, landscaping, irrigation systems, structures, boulders, fill, etc.) within water and sewer easements. Trees and shrubs planted within water and sewer easements can develop deep and extensive root systems that may grow into water and sewer pipes in search of water. Root intrusion into pipe systems can cause leaks and sewer backups that could result in a sewer spill on or near your property. Per District Code, any such obstruction shall be removed by the property owner at their own cost.

### *What if my property has existing improvements that encroach on the easement area?*

The District works hard to be proactive in maintaining our easements and understands that each encroachment is unique. These encroachments are handled on a case-by-case basis in which the District will work with the property owner to determine the most appropriate way to handle obstructions located within an easement. District Code grants the District the authority to remove any obstruction(s) at the cost of the property owner, however, the District will make every

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# Fire and Safety Notes

Winter 2021

## FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFF NEWS

As most of you probably noticed by now, we have changed our name to Olympic Valley Fire Department. Please have some patience as we get all of our logos and signs updated and changed over.

OVFD is doing our best dealing with Covid-19; the fire station is closed to the public as we try to mitigate the challenges with operations and responding to emergencies.

OVFD hired 3 new seasonal firefighters for the winter season. Congratulations to new seasonal firefighters: **Luke Daum**, **Nicholas Kushner** and **Jerrad Minnor**.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT REMINDERS

A reminder to all homeowners to keep your propane tanks and regulators, as well as heater vents clear of snow during the winter months. Also see the Adopt a Hydrant program to help keep our hydrants accessible to the Fire Department during the winter.

## AVALANCHE SAFETY RESOURCES

Parts of our community are in avalanche prone areas. You can keep informed through the Sierra Avalanche Center, an excellent resource for avalanche information, including advisory by elevation, current avalanche problems, conditions, observations and weather.

[www.sierraavalanchecenter.org](http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org)

There is also a recorded avalanche advisory at : (530) 587-3558 x258. We will continue to update the community when concerns are high through Nixle. If you have not yet subscribed, see the next column.

Remember if skiing in the backcountry to always ski with a (trained and equipped) buddy, carry a beacon, shovel and probe and let someone know where you're going and when to expect you back.

## Adopt a Hydrant

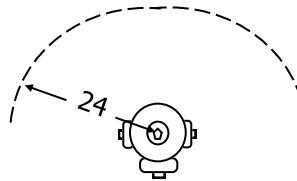
During the winter months, maintaining access to fire hydrants is very important. It's also a real challenge. In Olympic Valley, access is generally maintained by the water purveyor, sometimes with assistance from the fire department. Sometimes, the job is practically overwhelming, requiring the better part of a week before all of the hydrants have been shoveled out.

This is an area in which citizen involvement and assistance are most welcome. Do your firefighters and yourself a favor by adopting the hydrant closest to your home - make it **your** hydrant.

The time that it takes to locate and dig out a hydrant seem like an eternity during a fire, but it won't take long to shovel out your hydrant before it is needed. No complicated paperwork is required and you can do your bit for neighborhood fire safety under cover of darkness for anonymity or at high noon to earn the approval and gratitude of your neighbors.

Do your part for winter fire safety in Olympic Valley, adopt a hydrant today!

When digging out a hydrant, please keep in mind that we need at least 24" clearance in all directions from the center of the hydrant - see the diagram below for an ideal job!



STREET

## 2020 Summer Wildland Fires

OVFD had a busy wildland season. Our crews and equipment spent 67 days outside of the local region. Last summer (2019) OVFD only had one engine out of our local area for a total of 7 days, as part of the mutual aid system.

Please get your defensible space work done early this spring and maintain it throughout the summer! Defensible space is your home's first line of defense against forest fires!

It is also important to keep informed of important information from local and State government agencies. We encourage all homeowners to sign up for **Nixle** (text 96146 to 888-777) and sign up for **Placer Alert System** through Placer County ([placer.ca.gov/2426/Placer-Alert](http://placer.ca.gov/2426/Placer-Alert)).

## Knox Box Program

A Knox Box is that little key box mounted on your home that provides emergency access without breaking in. We love breaking things (and we're very proficient at it), but if we need to access your home in an emergency, it is faster, easier and much less expensive to use a key than an axe. If you would like to install a Knox Box or if you need to change out the key in your existing box, we can be reached at 530-583-6111. You can also send an email to: [prevention@olympicvalleyfire.org](mailto:prevention@olympicvalleyfire.org).

# Sewer Overflow Protection and FOG Program

Please be aware that your toilet and sinks are not trash cans. Disposing of anything other than human waste or toilet paper down your toilet or drain can contribute to blockages within sewer pipes which can result in sewage overflowing out of your pipes or the sewer system. Sewer overflows pose a serious public and environmental health risk.

Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) present in sewer pipes are one of the main causes of sewer overflows. When these cooking byproducts get washed down the drains by homeowners and restaurants, they build up on the inside of the pipe and restrict the flow of wastewater through the pipe. FOG can accumulate to such a degree that the sewer water backs up and overflows inside your home, restaurant, onto public streets or easements, or into Squaw Creek or the Truckee River.

Garbage disposals, hot water, and dish soap do not grind up or wash away FOG. The hot soapy water only serves to carry the FOG a few feet further down your drain – usually somewhere between your house foundation and the property line. Once the water cools, the FOG solidifies and sticks to the inside of the sewer lateral.

Here are steps you can take to help prevent FOG accumulation, clogging, and sewer overflows:

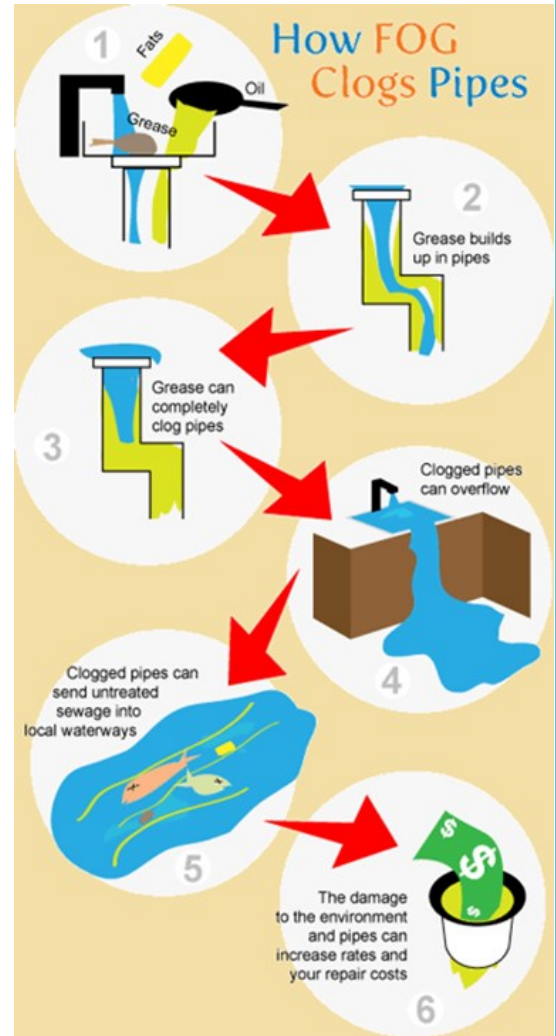
- Pour cooking fats, oils, and grease into a container with a tight-sealing lid and store it in a safe, dry area for it to cool. Dispose of the container in your trash receptacle on your designated trash day.
- For greasy pans that need to be soaked, pour the grease into a container then dry-wipe the pan with a paper towel or napkin before placing it in the sink to soak.
- Keep dairy products, fats, grease, or greasy foods out of the sink and garbage disposal. Garbage disposals only break up food into smaller pieces that can easily stick to the FOG that collects inside of your sewer pipes.

Restaurants and commercial-sized kitchens in the District are required to install FOG removal devices such as grease interceptors to avoid sewer overflows. Additionally, kitchen best-management-practices are encouraged to help prevent grease-related overflows. More information on the District's FOG Program can be found on our website at:

<https://www.ovpsd.org/sewer-overflow-protection-and-fog-program>

Let's keep our environment clean: NO Fats, Oils, or Grease Down the Drain!

**And, please, absolutely NO wipes in the toilet – EVEN IF they say they're "Flushable" (they're not!). Throw them in the trash! Spread the word!**



## Consumer Confidence Report: Now Available Online

The Olympic Valley Public Service District is proud to supply safe, reliable and healthy water that meets or exceeds State and Federal public health standards for drinking water. Annually, the District publishes a water quality report titled "Consumer Confidence Report" (CCR) as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The purpose of the CCR is to raise customers' awareness of the quality of their drinking water, where it comes from, what it takes to deliver water to their homes, and the importance of protecting drinking water sources.

In recent years the District has mailed its customers a printed copy of the CCR to comply with the SDWA. The California Department of Public Health has expanded its interpretation of the SDWA to allow for electronic delivery of the CCR. To view our 2019 CCR and learn more about your drinking water, please visit the following URL:

<https://www.ovpsd.org/consumer-confidence-report-2019>

If you would like a paper copy of the 2019 CCR mailed to your mailing address or would like to speak with someone about the report, please call (530) 583-4692 x207.

## Name Change — Continued from Page 1

The compelling reason to change our name was the pejorative use of the word Squaw over time and how its current use dehumanizes Native American women. Of course, with this information, the Board considered it untenable to keep the term in the District's name. Staff and the Board also felt it made sense to have the District's name be consistent with the community's name and the post office, especially since Squaw Valley is a census-designated place in Fresno County.

The Directors understood that while difficult, the name should be changed and that doing so does not change the District's ability to provide high-quality public services and honor its mission. The Directors agreed fiscal impacts incurred for the name change should be minimized where possible.

For more information about the District's name change, please see staff's report here:

[https://www.ovpsd.org/sites/default/files/F-2\\_Name%20Change.pdf](https://www.ovpsd.org/sites/default/files/F-2_Name%20Change.pdf)



## We Want to Hear From You!

### Look out for the District's new E-Newsletter

Would you like to receive periodic emails from the District with information similar to what is in this newsletter? Join our email list, we promise not to bombard your inbox!

Sign up at [ovpsd.org/email-signup](https://ovpsd.org/email-signup)

If you would like to update your contact information, or sign up to receive our monthly emails regarding board meetings, please email [info@ovpsd.org](mailto:info@ovpsd.org) or call the office at (530) 583-4692 x207.

### Board of Directors Meeting

Regularly scheduled meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend! Currently, Board Meetings are held via GoToMeeting, and once we can go back to being within six feet of one another, they will be held in our community room, located at 305 Squaw Valley Road, Olympic Valley. Agendas with the link to the meeting can be found at [ovpsd.org](https://ovpsd.org).

### New Junior Engineer: Alexa Kinsinger



Alexa started working at the District in August 2020 as the new Junior Engineer (filling the position left vacant by Tyler Trojan).

Alexa grew up in Reno, and spent a lot of time skiing and playing in the Tahoe area throughout her childhood.

After graduating from Colorado State University in 2017 with a degree in Environmental Engineering, she moved back to the area. She lived in both Tahoe City and Reno for a couple years where she worked for local engineering firms in Reno. She is working towards obtaining her Professional Engineer (PE) License.

In her free time, she enjoys skiing, hiking, beach days, spending time with family and friends, and taking her dog, Rango, for walks. She moved to Tahoe City in the fall, and is very excited to finally live *and* work in Tahoe! Welcome, Alexa!

### *Easements— Continued from Page 1*

effort to work with the property owner before exercising this authority.

*What should I do if I am planning a project that may impact the easement area or if I have any questions about easements on my property?*

If you are planning on landscaping or building any small structures or decks on your property, please contact the District beforehand so that we may review your plans and mark up the location of water and sewer infrastructure and easements. District review of plans is required by District Code and early review will help speed up the permitting process and avoid easement encroachment issues. Please refer to our website ([ovpsd.org](https://ovpsd.org)) for more information on the plan review process and please contact our engineering department at (530) 583-4692 ext. 210 if you have any questions about easements potentially located on your property. We appreciate your patience and understanding and look forward to working with you to maintain the pristine mountain environment we call home.