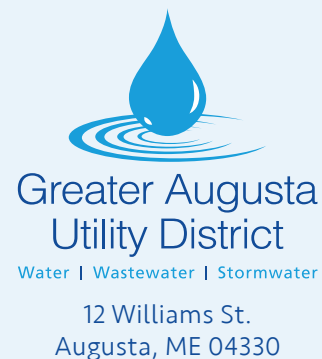


The Greater Augusta Utility District is a standalone quasi-municipal entity. Its roots go back to 1903, when the Augusta Water District was formed to take over a private water company. Today, the District is a regional public utility that owns, operates and maintains the water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure in Augusta; the sewer system in Hallowell; and regional wastewater collection and treatment for the communities of Monmouth, Winthrop and Manchester.



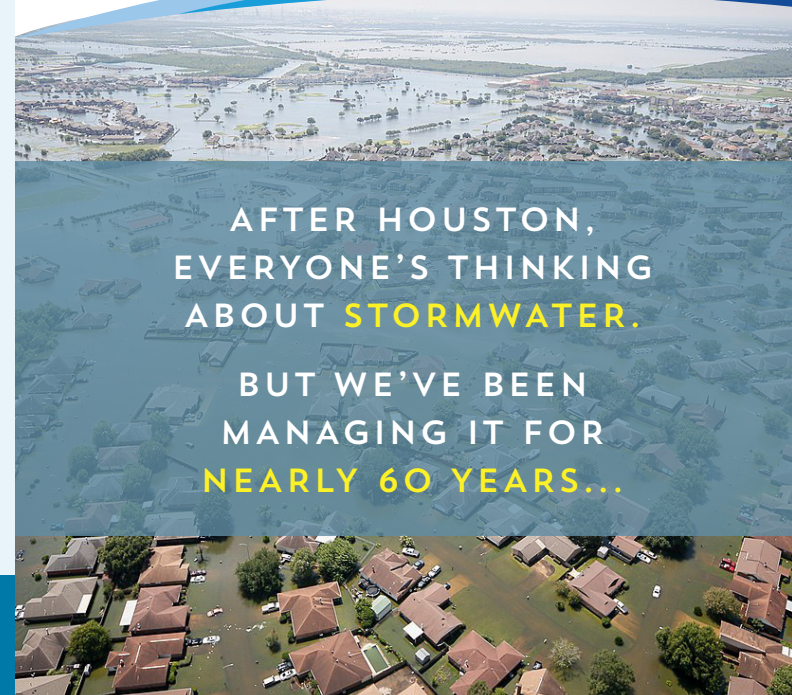
TRUSTEE MEETINGS

The monthly meetings of your Board of Trustees are open to the public and broadcast on TV7. For a complete schedule, visit our website and click on **Trustee Meetings** under the **About Us** menu. You'll also find a link to archived videos of all meetings since November, 2014.



Currents

FALL, 2017



AFTER HOUSTON,
EVERYONE'S THINKING
ABOUT **STORMWATER**.

BUT WE'VE BEEN
MANAGING IT FOR
NEARLY 60 YEARS...

...AND OUR NEW WORKGROUP IS PREPARING FOR A STORMWATERY FUTURE.

After Hurricane Harvey devastated Houston, a lot of people became aware of stormwater as an issue for the first time. But here at Greater Augusta Utility District (GAUD), we've been responsible for proper collection and treatment of stormwater ever since the City of Augusta turned it over to us in 1958. Today, GAUD manages stormwater in the 16.5 square miles of the Augusta Urban Compact Area, and we've made great progress in handling it right.

Currents FALL, 2017



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Tim Wade, Operations Manager

Tim has been with GAUD for four years. His job is to coordinate all operations and maintenance work at GAUD, which involves a lot of skills: supervising 12 people, scheduling, technical work, and interacting with customers and others.

You oversee drinking water, wastewater and stormwater operations. Which is the biggest challenge?

Stormwater is the most complicated from a regulatory standpoint. It often takes a week of preparing paperwork before we can begin on a project, getting easements, for example.

What's the most surprising issue you hear about from customers?

Noisy manhole covers! We encourage residents to report the exact location whenever you drive over a clanking manhole so that we can do what it takes to quiet it down.

What are you passionate about outside of work?

I've been an advocate for childhood cancer awareness ever since my son, Nathan, was diagnosed at age 4. He's been in remission for 15 months, but we're still active in fundraising.

One childhood cancer initiative I've been involved with is Go Gold—if you've seen the gold ribbons hanging from mailboxes in the area, that's what they're for.

We're also avid skiers in my family. I like to think my older son, Connor, is the best 10-year-old skier at Sugarloaf, but I recognize that I am biased as his Dad!

For more information about childhood cancer awareness, visit: ChildrensCancer.org/Childhood-Cancer-Awareness-Month

While extremely heavy rains have always caused flooding and damage, the problem is magnified by the extensive paving of our modern cities. Rainwater falling on natural terrain used to soak into the earth or run into rivers and eventually the ocean. Which was fine before we added oil, chemicals, and other pollutants to our environment—things we do not want running into our waterways.

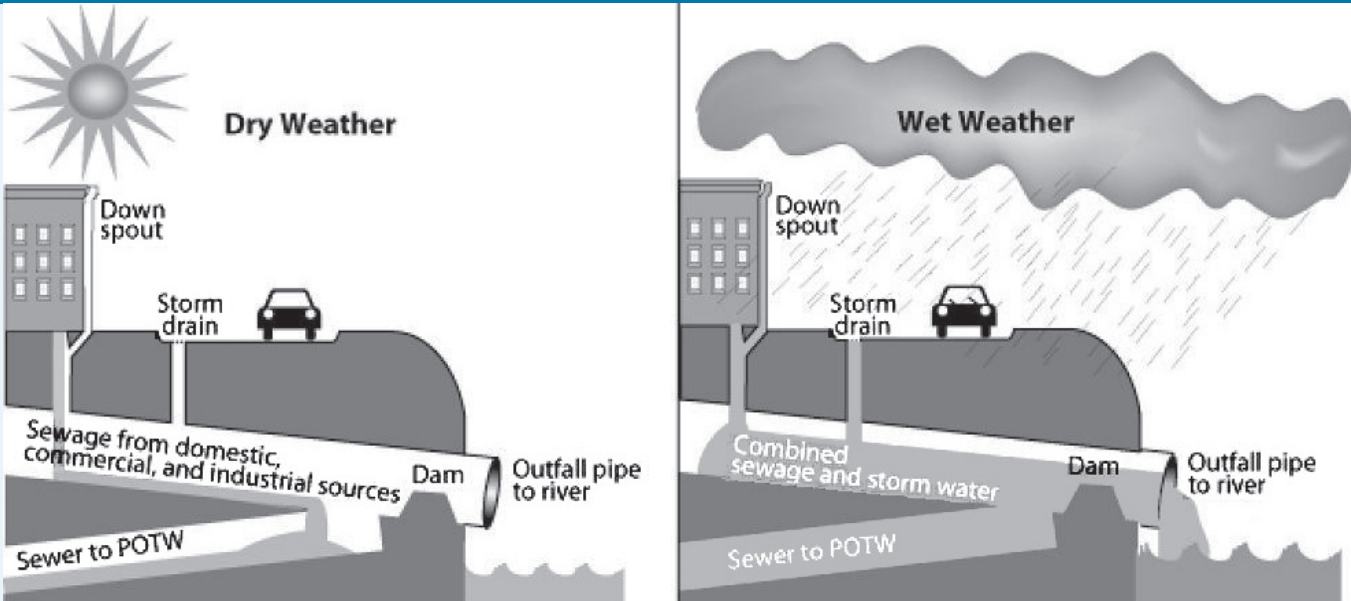
Augusta has a long history of draining water from structures and streets. Back in the day, to avoid the high cost of installing separate pipes, wastewater and stormwater (rain/snowmelt) were often combined. This made good sense...until it rained a lot and the pipes overflowed into homes, streets or the river, carrying sewage along with the stormwater. This is now called "combined sewer overflow" (CSO), and is prohibited by environmental regulations. **(See drawing on page 2, inside.)**

Over 100 years later, we are still working to prevent CSO by either separating combined sewer and stormwater systems, or capturing the "first flush" before it overflows to the river. Once the storm passes, we then pump the "first flush" water to the wastewater treatment plant so it can be cleaned.

(continued inside)



Parking lots are an example of an impervious surface: rain water cannot soak into the ground as it would naturally. To prevent the water from flooding into other areas, including the watershed, catch basins are required to hold and divert the water for treatment.



Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO): During dry weather (and small storms), all flows are delivered to the publicly owned treatment works (POTW). During large storms, however, some of the combined stormwater and sewage overflows through an "outfall pipe" to an adjacent water body, without proper treatment.

Since the early 1990's, GAUD has invested millions of dollars to comply with EPA and Maine DEP CSO requirements.

The most visible project is along the Rail Trail in Augusta, where you can see above ground concrete boxes that help flush a storage tank buried beneath the trail. In Mill Park, the buried tanks are invisible and have helped spur interest in improving this area. Our compliance efforts have made great progress, reducing sewer discharges to the Kennebec River by 90%, from 73 million gallons (MG) per year in 1989 to 7 MG per year in 2016.

We have one major CSO project left, the installation of a one million gallon tank near our office on Williams Street and the Augusta Kennebec River boat landing. This project will be done by 2020.

We are working with the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and Maine DEP to finance the project in such a way that the debt payments will start when other debt payments stop. We are pleased to have complied with expensive CSO regulations without litigation.

How do we currently charge for stormwater?

GAUD is the only district in Maine that handles water, wastewater and stormwater, so we have had to figure out how to bill for these three functions equitably ourselves, without reference to neighboring districts.

GAUD is also one of very few utility districts in the U.S. that still charges for catch basins (once the sole source of revenue), at \$50.89 per month. In addition, we collect a monthly fee of \$8.30 per ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit, the runoff impact of a typical single-family residential home's footprint) from customers in the Augusta Compact Urban Area—residential, commercial, nonprofit and governmental. One ERU represents 2,700 square feet (SF) in Augusta.

The cost of compliance, operations and maintenance, however, is projected to exceed our current stormwater fees in the near future, unless we reduce projects or increase revenues. We project a shortfall by next year in our stormwater budget, and need to take action to alleviate it.

(continued on next page)



REPORT LOOSE MANHOLE COVERS

Manhole covers shouldn't be noisy. They should silently protect you from holes that are large enough to swallow a man whole.

This fall, we are working on securing loose manhole covers around the District. If you hear a noisy manhole cover as you drive, make note of where it is, and report it to us so we can silence it.

Call (207) 622-3701 or email us at Contact@GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org



KEEP CATCH BASINS CLEAR OF LEAVES, PLEASE!

As the leaves begin to fall over the coming weeks, please keep an eye on catch basins to make sure they're not getting clogged.

If you can safely unplug the basin by raking leaves off the grate, feel free to do so—our crews can't be everywhere at once! If you need help, or have questions, please call (207) 622-3701.

Above all, please don't rake leaves into storm drains or catch basins, as they can clog the pipes, leading to flooded streets and homes. Thank you!

FALL WATER TIPS

With summer over, thoughts start turning to the beautiful colors of autumn...and raking leaves. While you're at it, consider adding to your "to-do" list the following items, which will help you save water, money and the environment, and protect your home from possible basement flooding:

Lawn

- **Over-seed your lawn** with ryes and fescues to thicken-up your grass for next spring. This will help reduce the amount of water your lawn needs next year.

Basement

- **Help prevent basement flooding by clearing eaves, troughs and downspouts** of leaves and other debris. Be sure to seal window wells and fix leaks in basement walls.
- **Disconnecting downspouts** from the sewer system will also help prevent basement flooding and the release of polluted rainwater into local waterways.
- **Consider installing a backflow valve and a basement sump pump** if you have experienced basement flooding. Be sure to maintain your equipment once it's installed. Please do not hook sump pumps up to the sewer system.

Plumbing & Appliances

- **Toilet leaks** can waste a lot of water and are a common cause of unexpectedly high water bills. Some leaks cannot be seen or heard. Check for a toilet leak with a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank; if water in the bowl changes color, you've got a leak that needs fixing.
- **Back to school means more laundry!** Use a high-efficiency clothes washing machine, and run only full loads.
- **Run the dishwasher** only when it's full.
- **Don't pour grease and oil down the drain.**



STORMWATER WORKGROUP (CONT'D.)

Augusta Stormwater Work Group Formed

In order to determine the most equitable and sustainable way to charge for our increased stormwater costs, the GAUD Board of Trustees has formed a Stormwater Work Group (SWG), which include the following members:

- **David Rollins** *Mayor, City of Augusta*
- **William Bridgeo** *City Manager, Augusta*
- **Ralph St. Pierre** *Assistant City Manager, City of Augusta*
- **Ken Knight** *Board Chair, GAUD*
- **Cecil Munson** *Trustee, GAUD*
- **Sherry Kenney** *Finance Director, GAUD*
- **Andy Begin, PE** *Assistant General Manager, GAUD*
- **Jan Patterson** *Director, Property Management Division, State of Maine Bureau of General Services*
- **Roger Pomerleau** *Developer*

They are charged with reviewing GAUD's and the City of Augusta's respective stormwater responsibilities, and then recommending to the GAUD Board of Trustees options to stabilize the budget. The SWG began meeting in May and will continue to meet monthly over the next few months. They will carefully explore the following possible options:

1. Leave stormwater fees as they are, i.e., charge both catch basin and ERU fees.
2. Change to ERU-based fees only, i.e., eliminate fees for catch basins.
3. Include in the collection system all 59 square miles in the City of Augusta, rather than just the Urban Compact Area.
4. Stormwater that does not end up in GAUD's system would be exempted (by application).
5. Reallocate costs 50/50 to stormwater/wastewater.

Next Steps:

The SWG will make recommendations to the GAUD Board of Trustees by the end of 2017. The Board of Trustees will review the recommendations and hold a Public Hearing during the first quarter of 2018. GAUD will share the proposed plan and publicize the Public Hearing to all ratepayers and the general public. For updates, please visit: **GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org/SWG**

JASON SOUZER COMPLETES WATER/ WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT CANDIDATE SCHOOL



Jason Souzer, Utility Worker 2, received a diploma for his participation in Management Candidate School (MCS) at the Maine Water Environment Association Fall Convention, held on September 21 at Sunday River in Newry.

Souzer, who has been part of the GAUD team for three years, is one of 19 graduates in 2017. The School, which began in 2009, prepares drinking water and wastewater personnel for career advancement in utility management. It is an extensive 11-month, 65-hour training program that covers personnel management, supervisory skills, labor relations, budgeting and engineering basics.

The School is run by the Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC).

ASK RANDI



Randi Taylor, *Administrative Supervisor*, answers your questions about your utility.

Q: *Where can I get the dollar amount I have paid GAUD for a year for tax purposes?*

A: *Call the office at (207) 622-3701 for an easy-to-read report we've recently created. Or, if you are signed up for online bill pay, you'll have instant access to that information—and a lot more— 24/7/365! To create an account, go to our home page and click on "PAY MY BILL—CREATE ONLINE ACCOUNT" in the blue bar near the top.*

**Contact Randi at (207) 622-3701 or
RTaylor@GreaterAugustaUtilityDistrict.org**

A PIECE OF 130 YEAR-OLD-HISTORY REMOVED FROM UNDER CONY TRAFFIC CIRCLE

The 130 miles of water pipe that lies beneath the streets in our District sometimes throw us a curve. In early August, we became aware of a water leak that gave all of us at GAUD a good challenge. Try as we might, we were unable to isolate and cut off the flow.

By August 11th, standing water started to appear at the edge of the heavily traveled Cony Traffic Circle (at left). “Four pipes converge in that area, and each time we were sure we had the correct combination of valves, the water resolutely continued to flow. It was the most frustrating leak in my nearly 20 years,” said Brian Tarbuck, GAUD General Manager.

The timing of the repair work was dictated by considerations of public safety, commuter traffic, and the neighborhood. We worked with the City’s public works and public safety officials to determine repair times that reduced impact on response times. Normally, we are in and out quickly, but that just wasn’t possible in this case. So we waited until very early Sunday morning, August 13th, to begin our work. We also had to bring in a specialist to install valves under pressure.

When we began digging, the leak unexpectedly got much worse as the material around the valve was removed, which presented an immediate safety hazard. In short, the amount of water coming out of the broken valve, with limited means of escaping the hole, created the potential for soil subsidence and an engulfment risk. This made our plan to insert valves under pressure impossible.



We discussed options and determined that shutting down a grid in the area was objectionable, but required. The work began at 4:30 AM and was completed by 5 PM that afternoon—a very long day that continually tested our creativity and perseverance.

Early estimates showed that the leaking valve (at left) was 114 years old. But we were wrong: the date stamp on the cast iron pipe showed 1887, making it 130 years old! In 1887, Grover Cleveland was president, Groundhog Day was established, Daimler invented the first automobile, and Maine’s own Chester Greenwood invented earmuffs.

During the work, we found what we believe is an abandoned gas line from the 1800’s and an abandoned sewer line. The trench box butted up against an active 10” drinking water pipe. These pipes were there before the rotary was ever imagined, and moving them has required a lot of work and expense. Today, we’re wishing our predecessors had moved the valves, at least.

