

Frequently Asked Questions

Water delivery schedule

How soon will there be water at my place?

Home owners along County Road 509 from Bayfield Parkway to CR 510 can expect to see the main pipeline completed and ready for connection by the end of October 2013. Home owners along CR 510 between CR 509 and CR 511 can expect to be able to connect by the end of November 2013 and those along CR 510 from CR 511 to CR 513 should be able to connect by early 2014.

How quickly will the first homes be brought online?

The first homes should begin receiving service by Fall 2013.

Where will the first pipelines be built?

The first phase of the pipelines connected to the Town of Bayfield's distribution system. The town will provide treated water to the district for this portion of the system. The next phases will construct pipelines along CR 509 to CR 510, west on CR 510 to Hwy 160 and then back east along Hwy 160 to CR 509 to create a loop.

How did the Board of Directors decide where to put the first pipelines?

A looped pipeline was recommended by LAPLAWD's consultant on the west side of the Pine River as the initial phase of the project. This loop crosses through higher population density areas, which allows more customers to hook up to the system. The loop will include a water storage tank on the north side to help regulate pressures and act as an emergency supply if needed. After the loop is complete, other pipelines can branch off it to serve other areas.

Cost of water service

How much is it going to cost me to get water from the main line to my house?

LAPLAWD directors and volunteers from the district developed rates, later adopted by the Board of Directors. The Capital Investment Fee (CIF or tap fee) starts at \$5500 for a 3/4" x 5/8" meter, which is a typical residential meter.

A meter pit is included in the CIF and will be set in the right- of- way adjacent to your property. The service line will likely be \$5 to \$10 per foot installed, depending on whether you hire a contractor or do the work yourself. Service line to the house is each homeowner's responsibility.

Minimum water use fee is \$30 up to 2000 gallons per month. Use from 2001 to 5000 gallons per month will cost \$6 per 1000 gallons. The entire chart is Exhibit 1 to Rules and Regulations, under the Public Records Tab.

What if I can't get hooked up for year and years?

The Policy Granting a Credit Against the Capital Investment Fee for Property Taxes Paid to the District while Water Service was not Available to the Property explains that up to 100% of tax paid to LAPLAWD may be applied to a property owner's CIF (tap fee) at the time of service.

Read the policy in the Rules and Regulations, under the Public Records tab of the website for exact information.

How much will the Capital Investment Fee (CIF or tap fee) be?

CIFs range from \$5500 for a 3/4 inch meter to \$44,400 for a 2" meter. The entire schedule is part of Exhibit 1 to Rules and Regulations, under the Public Records tab. The Board of Directors adopted a resolution crediting the amount paid to LAPLAWD in taxes to the CIF at the time water is available to your property.

Water sources

Does LAPLAWD plan to use wells?

No.

LAPLAWD water rights are direct diversions from the Animas, Pine, and/or Piedra Rivers. Though excellent sources, they do not include water from any reservoir.

LAPLAWD has secured stored water from Vallecito Reservoir, which will be diverted from the Pine River and is actively working to acquire water from Lake Nighthorse (Animas La Plata Project).

How many treatment plants will the system have?

Project planning indicates that using water from the Animas and Pine River Basins would provide the best long-term secure supply, so the system will eventually use two treatment plants. The best quality sources

of water are Lake Nighthorse and Vallecito Reservoir. LAPLAWD will either build and operate its own treatment plant at Ridges Basin Dam or partner with the City of Durango to construct a joint treatment plan to treat water released through the dam, and LAPLAWD will pay to expand Bayfield's treatment plant so the town can treat water released from Vallecito and deliver it to LAPLAWD. About half of the water supply for LAPLAWD would be provided from the Animas Basin and half from the Pine River Basin.

The Piedra River source will be considered if or when the water system is extended into Archuleta County.

For further explanation please see Master Plan Section IV-L. Preferred Water Sources.

If LAPLAWD purchases Animas La Plata Project water, how much will it cost?

The exact price of water cannot be known until final cost allocations for the Animas La Plata Project are complete, which is estimated to be in 2012; however, purchase estimates are now approximately \$3500 per acre-foot plus annual operation and maintenance.

If my property is excluded now, can it be included in the future?

Yes. Please see the inclusion policy for details.

Water Usage

How much water will I be allowed to use at my home?

There will be no limit on usage, but a rate structure will be developed to promote water conservation. The purpose of the LAPLAWD water system is to provide an adequate supply of good quality water for domestic needs. The purpose is not to promote lawns. The rate structure has been set to make in- house and a small amount of outside use affordable; large outside use will be expensive.

Does LAPLAWD have enough water to serve the whole district?

Yes. The water rights are adequate, but more reliable stored water sources are also being secured (Vallecito Reservoir and Lake Nighthorse) to ensure the most secure source of water for the cost.

Please see the Master Plan Section III. Water Supply for further explanation.

What are the water quality problems in the district? What research has been done to identify these problems? Are there simple solutions to the water quality problems (water filters, etc.)?

LAPLAWD has not done independent research; however, US Geological Survey has conducted studies concerning groundwater quantity and quality.

USGS Water Resource Investigations Report 95-4190 – Groundwater Resources of the Florida Mesa Area, La Plata County, Colorado USGS Water Supply Paper 1576-J, Titled: Availability and Quality of Ground Water, Southern Ute Indian Reservation, Southwestern Colorado

USGS paper 1576-J found many groundwater wells that have elevated levels of arsenic, fluoride, selenium, sulfate, dissolved solids, nitrates, iron and manganese, and others. Under-sink water filters, reverse osmosis for example, can be used to remove some of the contaminants. However, whole house filters installed on the supply line are recommended in lieu of the drinking water system, as some of the contaminants can also be absorbed through the skin or inhaled in the shower.

Please see the Master Plan III-I. Water Quality Information for further explanation.

Will water conservation be incorporated?

Water conservation will be a major component in the water system through the water rate structure and a conservation plan. Since most of the homes served are existing homes, the Board of Directors will likely develop some type of program to assist customers in replacing old fixtures with newer water efficient fixtures.

What happens to the aquifer in our part of the county when more irrigation sprinklers are installed? What might this mean for my well?

Many of the local aquifers are recharged from the irrigation water. As open ditches are converted to pipe and flood irrigation is converted to sprinklers, less water is soaking into the ground and recharging these aquifers. Irrigation sprinklers are also more efficient than flood irrigation making less water is available to recharge the aquifers. LAPLAWD addresses a major concern for the future, a reliable source of domestic water without depending on a diminishing groundwater supply.

What is the cost to drill a residential well?

Drilling a well for an individual home will cost \$8000 to \$15,000.

Subdivisions of five lots or more will additionally bear an additional cost to demonstrate sufficient water quantity to meet LPC LUC requirements.

If I recently drilled a well why would I want LAPLAWD water?

To receive a reliable, treated water supply. If the well permit allows, the well water could still be used for landscaping purposes. You are not required to buy a tap, and if your well is adequate, the LAPLAWD system potentially will leave more water in the aquifer to sustain your well. The taxes you pay allow you the opportunity to connect to the system in the future.

My well is working fine right now. Can I be in the district and not take water when the pipeline is built? Will I be able to keep my existing well and use LAPLAWD water in conjunction?

Yes. When the pipeline gets to your neighborhood, it is your option whether to receive water. Depending on your well permit, you may be able to use your well for outside water needs and use the LAPLAWD system for indoor water. However, there cannot be any kind of physical connection between the well and water received from LAPLAWD.

Please see Division of Water Resources Well Statement for further clarification.

Distribution System

Who will build the service pipeline from the main pipeline to my house?

LAPLAWD will construct the service pipeline from the main to the meter pit, which will be located in the right-of-way adjacent to the property and each individual property owner will be responsible for building the supply pipeline from the meter pit to the home.

Who pays to operate and maintain the project once it's built?

The operation and maintenance costs will be paid primarily through water sales.

In the early years when there are not enough customers to support operation and maintenance (O&M), property taxes received by LAPLAWD will pay most of the O&M. As more people connect to the system, O&M costs will be paid primarily through water sales.

Will LAPLAWD provide fire protection?

The pipelines will be sized to provide approximately 1000 gallons per

minute for fire flow at most locations. Depending where your home is within the system, the flow could be significantly greater. The cost estimate for the system includes an average of one fire hydrant every mile with the locations determined in consultation with fire districts. Homeowners are encouraged to consult with their home insurance agent to determine potential savings by having a fire hydrant within a certain distance from their home.

Has the Master Plan been prepared?

Yes. Please click [here](#) to be directed to the Master Plan and attachments.

Cost Related Answers

How much does the 5 mill property tax cost me?

Look at your property tax notice. The amount is listed there. If you don't have a copy of your tax notice, go to the La Plata County GIS and see what the assessed value of your property is, multiply this amount by 0.005. That is the amount of taxes paid to LAPLAWD.

Who pays for construction of the Project?

Building the project will be funded primarily by property taxes with a small amount from capital investment fees (CIF or tap fee).

Is this a new tax to oil and gas producers?

Only a small portion, 12.5%, of the tax on oil and gas producers is new. It is primarily a change in where the tax is spent. Oil and gas production pays a severance tax to the State of Colorado. For every dollar of property tax paid locally for schools, fire districts, water systems, etc., oil and gas is allowed to deduct 87.5 cents from their severance tax.

How does private property value compare with gas market value, and how does this affect me?

LAPLAWD's assessed valuation for 2010 was \$517,893,590. That includes 19% private land and improvements—your home and land, 80% oil and gas production, and 1% oil and gas personal property. That will produce \$2,589,467 in property tax for LAPLAWD in 2011. In proportion to the assessed values, private land and improvements pay less than a fifth of that tax.

Total tax revenue to LAPLAWD may vary significantly from year to year based on the amount of gas produced and the price paid for it.

If oil and gas valuations are significantly reduced, what could happen in terms of the tax impact?

Although natural gas production has historically trended upwards with time, the price for which the natural gas produced is sold can vary significantly from year to year. For this reason, the Board of Directors expects that LAPLAWD's property tax revenue may vary significantly from year to year. This requires that the construction of new facilities be conservatively financed to anticipate these variables.

Did Ballot Measure 5-A require a tax increase?

No. Voters approved a five-mill property tax in 2010. Measure 5-A allowed LAPLAWD to borrow against future tax revenue in order to build critical parts of the water distribution project without increasing the current tax rate.

What will this bond pay for?

Money from the bond is limited to paying for treatment plants, pumps, pipelines, tanks, water loading stations, meters, excavation and pipe installation equipment, and other items necessary to operate the water system. LAPLAWD has bonded only for \$5,000,000 to pay for expansion of the Town of Bayfield treatment plant.

Background answers

What is the historical growth rate in southeast La Plata county?

Before 1977, there were about 10 structures (something with a roof on it) per year built in southeast La Plata County; from 1977 through 2000 the rate was about 90/year; the rate decreased to about 70/year for 2001– 2008.

Is the water system dependent upon new growth?

No! This water system is needed for existing homes. The water system can function for the foreseeable future even if no more homes are built within LAPLAWD.

Will farmers benefit from the project? If yes, how?

Farmers will receive household water if they are in the LAPLAWD service and have not opted out. Farmers who are members of Pine River Irrigation

District will benefit indirectly from LAPLAWD's payments to PRID for lease of water.

Is LAPLAWD involved in any water court cases regarding its water supply?

No.

How can LAPLAWD reduce concerns regarding over- development within the district?

LAPLAWD has no authority to determine land use. La Plata County has jurisdiction over land use. Its Service Plan binds LAPLAWD to sell only one tap to each legally formed lot. LAPLAWD is not allowed to presell taps to subdivisions.