

Nordic Ranches Community Water and Sewer District

Meeting: Etna Community Center April 22 2025 at 6:30 pm

FAQ related to possible acquisition of current Nordic Ranches Water System

Question: Why is there a Nordic Ranches Community Water and Sewer District?

Answer:

The district was established in 2019 to create a state-recognized entity for the eventual acquisition of the domestic water system in the Nordic Ranches Subdivision.

The district's mission is to prepare for and facilitate the future operation of the water system, ensuring long-term access to high-quality water for the subdivision at an affordable rate.

The district is operated by volunteers and has been funded by donations. Donations have covered Insurance, legal fees & all other expenses.

Question: What are some benefits of being a District?

Answer:

As a Water District, the subdivision members have control and elect the board members. This structure operates more like a non-profit, unlike the current ownership of the water system, which is held by Nordic Ranches Water, LLC, a private, for-profit company.

The state of Wyoming's statutes regulate and recognize public utilities in the form of municipalities and districts. By becoming a Wyoming Special District (in our case, a water district), we qualify for state and federal grants, as well as low-interest loans for improvements and acquisitions. For example, in 2022, we were able to qualify for a Level 1 Water Study of the system. When forming the district, the best 'Special District' option for our needs was a Water and Sewer District.

Question: What has the district done for me?

Answer:

1 – in 2019 board members were intervenors on behalf of the homeowners when Nordic Ranches Water LLC proposed a rate increase. We were able to influence the Public Service Commission to reduce the proposed \$135 base rate to \$78.39

2 – As a district we were able to acquire a State funded (\$65,000) Level 1 Water Study. By doing the water study the homeowners now know the state of our domestic system.

3 – The board has been negotiating with Nordic Ranches Water LLC for some time to determine the best way to transfer control of the domestic water system to the homeowners.

Question: Are the Nordic Ranches CC&R's enforceable with regards to the transfer of the domestic water system?

Answer:

The board has sought legal advice and were informed that while we could sue, the covenants were written too loosely. The developer could argue that they are still in the process of developing, and there is no clear provision stating that the system would be transferred for free. A lawsuit would be costly with a high probability of failure.

For the benefit of everyone in the subdivision, an amicable transfer of the system is the best path forward

Question: How is the system to be acquired?

Answer:

The board reached out to several local and national banks to explore financing options for the acquisition. After careful consideration, the board believes that applying for a loan through USDA Rural Development would provide more competitive interest rates and favorable repayment terms.

One of the requirements for this loan is to hold this meeting to inform District members and gather their input.

Question: What is the plan for running the water system if acquired?

Answer:

If the homeowners acquire the water system, the plan for its operation would likely involve:

1. Governing Body – Nordic Ranches Water & Sewer district board would oversee management, decision-making, and compliance with regulations.
2. Licensed Operator – A certified water system operator would be employed or contracted to handle daily operations, maintenance, and regulatory requirements.
3. Securing Funding – The plan is to use the current fee structure. Revenue from homeowner water usage fees would cover operational cost and maintenance. Loan repayment would also be factored into the financial plan.
4. Major improvements, in the future, may be eligible for grants and low-interest loans through the state because we are a district not a private company.
5. Ensuring Compliance – The system must meet state and federal water quality standards, including regular testing, reporting, and infrastructure maintenance.
6. Planning for Repairs and Upgrades – A maintenance and capital improvement plan would be developed to address aging infrastructure, potential expansions, and emergency repairs.
7. Community Involvement – Homeowners would have a say in system management through board meetings, public input, and electing board directors.

Question: Why is sewer in the name?

Answer:

When deciding which type of Special District to become the “Water and Sewer District” best fit our needs. Partly because of financial programs available to this category.

Discussions have taken place at the county level regarding the potential future need for a sewer treatment plant to replace septic systems.

To learn more details please visit our web site at: nordicrancheswaterdistrict.org

The process of purchasing the water system will involve legal and accounting expenses. If you support this purchase, we kindly ask you to consider making a donation to help cover these costs.