

# SNOQUALMIE VALLEY RECORD

SOUND PUBLISHING, INC. SNOQUALMIE | NORTH BEND | FALL CITY | CARNATION SINCE 1913 • VOL. 107 NO. 26 VALLEYRECORD.COM \$1.00 FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2020

## Water use restrictions coming for North Bend

The city council voted to approve the conservation measures.

By Aaron Kunkler  
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North Bend will have annual water restrictions beginning on Aug. 15.

An ordinance enacting and outlining the water conservation efforts was approved by the North

Bend City Council on June 16. It is a phased approach, that escalates restrictions depending on how severe the water shortage is during the late summer months.

Beginning August 15, the first phase automatically kicks in and homeowners can only water their yards at night. Water runoff is also prohibited. Hoses will be required to have automatic shut-off devices for all uses like watering lawns, washing cars or watering animal troughs.

The city will use water levels at the Masonry Pool - which partially runs off into the Snoqualmie River - to decide when to enact further water restrictions levels.

Further levels restrict what days lawns, landscapes and pastures can be irrigated.

The ordinance was approved 6-0. But some residents expressed their concerns about it.

Jean Buckner, president of Friends of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail and River, said her

organization was opposed to the water conservation ordinance.

"This ordinance is not conservation in our opinion. This plan is really a water transfer plan. It appears you're taking water from current residents so you can fuel future over-development," she said.

The water restrictions would apply to customers of both North Bend and the Sallal Water Association, which has customers within city limits. Buckner said she viewed

the city's decision as part of a push for more development.

An investigation by this paper last year confirmed that the city had nearly met its development targets through 2031. While these aren't upper limits, they do impact how the city and surrounding areas plan for growth.

She wants to see more attention paid to leakage. According to a report by Golder Associates from

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## This is Snoqualmie's mine-resistant armored vehicle



FROM THE ALGONA POLICE DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK PAGE

Snoqualmie Police Department houses a surplus military mine-resistant armored personnel carrier. They acquired it as part of an equipment sharing program from the federal government. It is utilized by a coalition of small-city police departments. It is seen here during a 2016 parade in Algona, one of the coalition member cities.

The city acquired it in 2013 from the federal government and has used it a handful of times.

By Aaron Kunkler  
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Media outlets in 2014 were confused as to why Snoqualmie, with a population of about 12,694

at the time, would request a vehicle designed to withstand a mine blast in a warzone.

The military truck has been deployed a handful of times as part of a SWAT team, and in rescue

operations. However, it sits largely unused, in the Snoqualmie Police Department's vehicle lot.

Snoqualmie's Mayor Matt Larson, who said he views it as a necessary evil, wants to keep it.

"It's not what we want to convey of what our police department is, or what it represents, but it's a good tool to have in the toolbox," he said.

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## State braces for huge budget holes

Inslee cancels pay raises for some executives and orders furloughs for workers as special session looms.

By Jerry Cornfield  
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A new report issued June 17 shows a crushing drop in tax collections amid the COVID-19 pandemic could sap state reserves and leave the governor and lawmakers with a billion-dollar hole to plug in the budget.

Receipts from sales, business, property and other taxes are expected to be \$4.5 billion less than had been counted on for

the current budget which runs through next summer, according to the revenue forecast issued by the state's chief economist.

Even if the state drains its reserves, there will still be a \$1.5 billion shortfall to erase in the coming months.

"This is a massive shortfall," Gov. Jay Inslee said at an afternoon news conference. "We know we have many tough decisions ahead of us as a state as a result of our revenues falling off a cliff."

And the picture doesn't get much better for the ensuing 2021-23 budget. Collections are projected to be down another \$4.3 billion with a potential deficit exceeding \$6 billion, the report

says.

The dour fiscal forecast spurred Inslee to block pay hikes for some executives and begin furloughs for state workers, and ignited a partisan row on when the 147 elected members of the Legislature should be summoned into special session to hash out solutions.

Inslee cancelled scheduled raises for nearly 5,600 executives and managers in agencies under his control and ordered the start of furloughs for tens of thousands of front-line workers in those departments. The moves will save an estimated \$55 million, according to the governor's budget office.

"We're not waiting to deal with this shortfall. We're acting," he said.

If other statewide elected officials and leaders of public higher education institutions followed suit, it would save another \$91 million, he said.

Meanwhile, Republican lawmakers renewed their call for Inslee to summon lawmakers into an immediate special session, arguing that the sooner bigger programmatic decisions are made, the greater the potential for savings. And acting now could ease the degree of pain later, they contend.

"I see no reason why we are not doing that right now. We don't have to solve this all at once," said Sen. John Braun, R-Centralia, the lead

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# Vehicle

From Page 1

Snoqualmie requested the BAE Caiman tactical vehicle as part of the federal 1033 program administered by the Law Enforcement Support Office. It was requested by former police chief Steven McCulley, who has since taken a job as police chief in Atherton, Calif.

The federal program gave local law enforcement decommissioned military gear beginning in 1997. It has roots in 1988 legislation that let the Department of Defense temporarily transfer excess military gear to law enforcement to wage the "War on Drugs."

The program has greatly expanded following the Iraq War. Since its inception, the program has given local law enforcement more than \$7.4 billion in gear to more than 8,000 agencies across the U.S.

The discussion of demilitarizing the police has again made headlines nationwide after weeks of protests over the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes.

Police agencies across the country responded to protests and unrest by filling city blocks with tear

gas and rubber bullets. Defunding the police has become the basis of a growing movement across the country, as communities ask elected officials to direct more money toward social services and communities of color that have suffered from the effects of racism.

The Law Enforcement Support Office keeps a list of all military gear delivered to police departments across the country. In addition to the mine-resistant vehicle, Snoqualmie Police Department also has six 7.62 mm rifles, three unmanned robots that can be used for bomb disposal, and various other gear like headset microphones and radio sets. Other agencies in King County and across the state also requested similar gear, though many did not ask for armored vehicles.

Snoqualmie is part of a regional Coalition of Small Police Agencies, which operates its own SWAT team. It's comprised of 14 King County cities including Snoqualmie, Issaquah, Mercer Island, Normandy Park, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point and Black Diamond.

Capt. Nick Almquist, Snoqualmie Police Department's spokesperson, said the Caiman's cost, training and use is spread between all the cities in the coalition. The vehicle is housed in Snoqualmie because they

could store it more easily, he said. It's primarily used to deploy SWAT officers into hot zones.

Almquist said the vehicle has only been used about five times for SWAT calls. The Caiman regularly goes on parade at coalition cities for the holidays, and is deployed for natural disasters to reach places regular vehicles can't reach.

"We were able to drive the rig out and pick people up from their porches," during one flood, Almquist said.

The six-wheel vehicle was stripped of most military gear. Among its current gear is a winch on the front, along with ladders, tools and a radio. It deploys from Snoqualmie when needed by the Coalition's SWAT team, which is comprised of officers from the 14 agencies.

"It's definitely a valuable asset to handling a situation of crisis just because of the specialized training that SWAT officers have that are over and above a regular patrol officer. And they obviously have heavier armor, more specialized weaponry to be able to handle room clearing or breaching," Almquist said.

Some question whether small cities need their own SWAT team. The King County Sheriff's Office also has a SWAT team and has significant amounts of equipment from the federal

government. Alison Holcomb, political director for the ACLU of Washington, said acquiring heavily armored vehicles has been justified by local officials through an increased emphasis on enforcement stemming from the "War on Terror" and the "War on Drugs."

Officers having military gear — whether it be armored vehicles or AR-15 rifles — can emphasize an armed response to a crisis instead of serving as community partners, she said. Even simply deploying the equipment can change the relationship between communities and police.

"Everything about equipment, uniforms, the training they receive that comes from a military source is by definition designed to prepare a soldier that's going into a combat zone rather than a peace officer who's patrolling a neighborhood," Holcomb said.

Almquist said when there's a call that has the potential to escalate, officers do a threat assessment and decide what level of response is necessary. When normal means of defusing a situation won't work, a SWAT team can be called in, and the military truck deployed, he said.

Holcomb said visual cues like armored vehicles can be viewed as an escalation

of force. "If you drive up in an armored car at any scene, any situation, you are automatically conveying that we think that there is a serious threat of significant damage to life and limb and that we need to have very powerful weapons at the ready, which is a display of force," Holcomb said.

Mayor Larson said militarization of police is an issue he's been concerned with throughout his tenure. But he pointed to the North Hollywood bank robbery as an example of when police may need heavy gear. The 1997 robbery saw two heavily armed men shoot it out with police, who were only able to stop them after going to a civilian gun store to buy AR-15s.

Larson said he would like to see more restrictive gun laws before agreeing to get rid of the armored vehicle.

"This notion that any sort of regulation and background checks, or the banning of military assault rifles is somehow taking our guns away, is a salacious argument," he said.

The armored vehicle is Snoqualmie's way of contributing equipment to the Coalition of Small Police Agencies. Larson said he wants to keep the vehicle out of sight. The image of armed police officers hanging off the side of

an armored vehicle isn't one he wants associated with the police department.

Larson said he hasn't heard concern from the community in Snoqualmie about the vehicle. It wasn't deployed at a recent protest in North Bend, a city the Snoqualmie police also serve.

Almquist said the Caiman armored vehicle costs little to maintain, mostly consisting of oil changes and tire repairs. He said it can be useful in some situations.

"I also know that this is a tool to keep citizens safe, and just like any other profession, they have unique tools that they need to have in order to do their jobs well," he said.

Holcomb said small cities should ask their elected representatives why the federal surplus is providing surplus military equipment instead of more funding for other services.

"What small towns and big cities are looking for right now are solutions for the opioid epidemic, solutions for the housing crisis, solutions for our lack of mental health care services," Holcomb said. "We don't need you to spend any more money on armored vehicles and AR-15s and other military equipment for our police. We need you to be investing in healthy communities."

# Water

From Page 1

last October, the city's total system leakage has been as high as 32 percent in recent years.

"Right now North Bend is hemorrhaging water,"

Buckner said. Council member Chris Garcia said at the previous meeting, the council approved a \$600,000 a year package to fix and prevent

leakage. Both the state Department of Ecology and Department of Health are monitoring the city.

"We don't really love the fact that our leakage has gotten to this," he said.

Since it exited a development moratorium in 2009 when the Centennial Well came online. The moratorium was enacted in 1999 due to the city exceeding its permitted amount of water. The city has been required to find two mitigation sources. These sources would be used during dry years, when the city exceeds the amount of water they're permitted for.

The city still has not found a secondary mitigation source. It and the Sallal Water Association have been in negotiations for years trying to hash out a deal.

It has prompted concerns that North Bend is trying to take over service for the Sallal customers who reside in city limits.

At a June 2 city council



ASHLEY HIRUKO/STAFF PHOTO

Citizens are concerned with what continued development means for the health of the Snoqualmie River. Three forks of the river converge north of the city.



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