

Building a Home at Rimrock

We receive a lot of questions about what it takes to build a house at Rimrock for seasonal or full time residency. I will attempt to cover most of the details based upon my experience. The basic formula is a well, septic, source of power, and a county code approved residence.

1. Due to the amount of rock in our geology, septic is the first hurdle to overcome. If you are off the power grid, you must be able to do a gravity septic. With PUD power, a pressure system is an option, albeit more money. Per state law, a composting toilet will not work for a home and gray water cannot be dumped on the ground. That leaves a code approved septic as your only option. A gravity system will run \$5000 to \$6000 and a pressure is \$10,000 to \$12,000, plus permits. If your lot is mostly rock, septic might not be feasible. The Chelan-Douglas Health District can answer any other questions.
2. Our well history is fairly good with the average depth being about 175 feet. Having said that, water is not a sure thing. A 175 foot well will cost about \$7000 plus about \$3000 for pump related items, plus permits. That will depend upon whether or not you have PUD power and other choices you will have to make.
3. Only about 10% of Rimrock lots are close enough to PUD power to make a connection realistic. After you get past 150 feet from a pole, the cost rapidly escalates. If you are within 150 feet, expect to pay up to \$10,000 for the trench, conduit, meter, and panel, plus permits. If you are looking at solar, wind, and/or generator, expect to pay \$7500 to \$20,000 for your off the grid power package. **Any** electrical work on a house must have an L&I permit. Douglas County PUD can answer any conventional power questions.
4. The house itself will depend on size and amenities. Any structure must be on a foundation, not on wheels! If you have building talents and go for a tiny home in the 300-400 square foot range, expect to pay close to \$30,000. If it is contracted out, it will cost at least \$50,000. Contact the Douglas County Building Dept. for any questions. A geo-tech survey may also be required and that costs about \$800.
5. Some general thoughts: Bank financing will be a challenge at Rimrock as most of the land use is recreational making appraisals difficult. Areas with a lot of surface rock can get very muddy during the late winter/early spring thaw. Winter temps usually stay below freezing. Winter inversions can make solar power impossible for weeks at a time. These are opinions based upon my experience. The authorities can change their policies at any time without notice. As always, please start by reading our CC&R's. All structures must be approved by our Planning Committee and anything over 200 square feet must also have a county permit.

Thank you,
Kevin Danby
GM