SPANAWAY WATER NEWS

A NEWSLETTER TO THE CUSTOMERS OF SPANAWAY WATER COMPANY - Spring / Summer 2002

WATER QUALITY REPORT – 2002

The 1996 Congressional reauthorization of the Safe Drinking Water Act required that, beginning in 1999, public water systems must provide their customers with an annual water quality report. This newsletter is your forth annual report and includes information about: your water sources, how to contact your water system, public participation opportunities, and most importantly details of water quality and any detected contaminants.

We appreciate your taking the time to read this annual report and learn about your water supply and Spanaway Water Company, your water utility. We continue to strive to provide you with safe, high quality water that meets or exceeds all federal and state standards. Water quality is regularly tested by Washington State and EPA certified laboratories.

Spanaway Water Company (SWC) is a non-profit mutual water company owned by all the property owners (members) served by the company. SWC serves over 7,200 families and more than 200 businesses in the Spanaway Area. The company's Board of Directors is elected from and by the company membership. Therefore, you can be certain that high water quality and reasonable prices are top priorities.

The annual meeting of SWC is held on the second Monday of November at 7:30 p.m. Members are elected to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting. The Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month, though occasionally the meeting is rescheduled to the second or fourth Thursday. You are invited to participate in all meetings. All meetings are held at the Company office at 17418 5th Ave. E.

If you would like more information about Spanaway Water Company, the information in this newsletter, contaminants, or any other water issues, we will be happy to answer your ques-

WHY AND HOW IS MY WATER TREATED?

As water is pumped from each well, chlorine is added as a disinfectant. The chlorine provides extra protection and insures that no harmful bacteria are present. The chlorine added is the minimum amount needed to maintain a detectable level throughout the water system. Corrosion control treatment with sodium hydroxide began in 1999 to reduce the naturally slightly acid water from six wells. This treatment has dramatically reduced the corrosive nature of the water and has resulted in more than a tenfold decrease in the copper levels found in some homes. At this time we do not add fluoride to your water. However please read the discussion of fluoridation included in this newsletter.

Some of our wells do have the naturally occurring mineral, manganese. This may, even at very low levels, cause "brown" water when large flows are created in water mains, such as when fire hydrants are used for fire fighting or testing. The rushing water picks up the manganese "rust" that settles in the mains. Manganese is not a health related contaminant, rather it is an essential human nutrient with a recommended daily amount (RDA) of 2.0 mg. However, even at 0.05 mg/l (1/40th of the RDA) brown water may occur. The presence of manganese is therefore considered an aesthetic problem, not a health issue. Your water company has installed the first of three planned manganese filters at the three wells that have naturally occurring manganese. Over the next few years the manganese filters should greatly reduce this aesthetic problem. If you should experience "brown" water, letting an outside faucet run for 5 to 15 minutes should clear up the problem. Routine main flushing to reduce the manganese build-up is done on Tuesdays. To reduce the risk of discoloring clothing we ask that you avoid washing clothes on Tuesdays. Your patience as these costly filters are

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF MY WATER?

The Spanaway Water Company draws water from 11 wells located in the Spanaway area of the Chambers/Clover Creek watershed. The wells are all owned by SWC and vary in depth from 99 to 645 feet. The water system has three storage tanks holding 5,100,000 gallons, one booster station to serve the higher elevations at the south end of the water system, well over 100 miles of water mains, and more than 600 fire hydrants. The diagram on the next page gives you an overview of the water system and its components.

SPANAWAY WATER QUALITY TESTING

We are pleased to state that of the 76 primary contaminants only 7 were even detectable in our water. Of those 7, all were well below the EPA's maximum contamination level or action level. As noted earlier, the corrosion control treatment added in 1999 has greatly reduced copper levels within homes plumbed with copper pipes. The next page presents both the EPA's standards and information about the contaminants that were detectable in the water system. We should note that a complete listing of all water quality testing and the highest

WATER QUALITY DATA

The following portion of the newsletter is presented in compliance with the EPA's very specific format and content requirements. Though some of this information may appear complex, it is because public drinking water supply has become increasingly highly regulated and complex. Please call if you have any questions or comments. It should be noted that

Special considerations for at risk people: *Some people may be more vulnerable to contamination in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDs or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).*

About Bottled Water: *Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).*

Terms and abbreviations used in the following table:

Maximum Contamination Level Goal (MCLG): the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum Contamination Level (MCL): the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Action Level (AL): the concentration of a contaminant which, when exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

ND: not detectable at testing limit. **N/A:** not applicable. **mfl:** million fibers per liter. **ppb:** parts per billion or micrograms per liter. **ppm:** parts per million or milligrams per liter. **pCi/l:** picocuries per liter (a measure of radiation)

Contaminants with designated Maximum Contaminant Levels

Inorganic Compounds	MCL	MCLG	Spanaway Level	Range of Detection	Sample Date/s	Viola–tion	Typical Source of Contamination
Asbestos (mfl)	7	7	0.171	0.171	9/96	No	Decay of asbestos cement water mains; Erosion of natural deposits.
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.3	ND-0.3	8/99-9/01	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	4.4	ND-4.4	8/01-9/01	No	Runoff from fertilizer use: Leaching from from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposit
Organic Compounds							
Trihalomethane Potential	100/80	n/a	39.4	15.0-39.4	8/01-9/01	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Chlorine	4	n/a			Daily 2001	No	Water additive used to control microbes.

Contaminants with action levels rather than MCLs

Copper	AL	MCLG	Spanaway Level	# of sites above the AL	Typical Source of Contamination
Copper (ppm)	1.3	1.3	ND-0.74	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems.
Lead					
Lead (ppb)	15	0	ND - 1.7	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems.

Possible future contaminants with no established MCL or AL

Radon (pCi/l)	N/A	N/A	645	170-645	1993-95	No	Erosion of natural deposits.

About Radon: *Radon is a radioactive gas that you can't see, taste, or smell. It is found throughout the U.S. Radon can move up through the ground and into a home through cracks and holes in the foundation. Radon can build up to high levels in all types of homes. Radon can also get into indoor air when released from tap water from showering, washing dishes, and other household activities. Compared to radon entering the home through soil, radon entering the home through tap water will in most cases be a small source of radon in indoor air. Radon is a known human carcinogen. Breathing air containing radon can lead to lung cancer. Drinking water containing radon may also cause increased risk of stomach cancer. If you are concerned about radon in your home, test the air in your home. Testing is inexpensive and easy. Fix your home if the level of radon in your air is 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/l) or higher. There are simple ways to fix a radon problem that aren't too costly. For additional information, call your state radon program or call EPA's Radon Hotline (800-SOS-RADON).*

About Water Sources and contaminants: *The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.*

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

Inorganic chemical contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

A Summer Home Water Conservation Check List:

Please take a few minutes to think about this check list, talk about it with your family members, consider your water use and how you might be able to conserve. This saves both water and your water dollars.

Inside Your Home:

___ We only run full loads of laundry and dishes.
___ We turn off the water when brushing teeth and shaving.
___ We turn off the water when washing dishes except for rinsing.
___ We try to keep showers brief.
___ We check for leaks and fix faucet/toilet leaks as soon as possible.
___ We do not use the toilet as a flushing trash can.
___ We have installed flow restrictors or low flow fixtures throughout the house.

Outside Your Home: (Consider letting your lawn go dormant over the summer.)

___ We check and repair leaking hose bids.
___ We only water on even or odd days based on our house number.
___ We hand water shrubs and special planted landscaped areas.
___ We landscape with rockeries and native drought resistant plants.
___ We make sure that when watering, we don't water the walks or road.
___ We only water the lawn with one inch of water per week.
___ We turn off any sprinkler system when it rains.
___ We water the lawn for less than an hour and only between 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., not during the heat of the day. (The best for the lawn is in the early morning hours.)
___ We fertilize the lawn to help keep it green.
___ We raise the mowing height when the weather gets warmer and drier.
___ We turn the water off after the children have played in the sprinkler.
___ We use an automatic shut off nozzle when washing cars.
___ We use a broom to clean walkways and driveways, not a hose.

Each year water use more than doubles in July, August, and September. This year more than ever we all need to work at saving water (and power).
Hopefully, this checklist will help you save water while enjoying the summer sun!

When the well is dry, we know the worth of Water. - Benjamin Franklin

It's up to each of us – Use Water Wisely!

Annual Water Quality Report &

SPANAWAY WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 1000
Spanaway, WA 98387-1000

WATER SYSTEM FLUORIDATION ?

Is fluoridation of the water system in our future? At this time it appears to be so. On March 6th, after less than a month's notice to utilities, the Tacoma / Pierce County Board of Health proposed that all water systems serving more than 5,000 people be required to fluoridate their water systems by January 1, 2004. This proposal was adopted by the Board of Health on April 3rd. The intent of the required fluoridation is to improve dental health, especially for children. Your water company was represented at these Board of Health meetings to testify about the financial impacts of fluoridation and the short timeline for implementation.

The Tacoma / Pierce County Health Department is currently working with affected water systems to develop a plan for fluoridation implementation. Spanaway Water Company and most of the affected water systems are seeking input from the public they serve to help in developing how the utilities should address fluoridation.

We need your opinion and comments on this matter!

We ask that you take a few minutes to complete the following survey. Once completed drop it by the office (night drop available) or mail it back.

1) Please rate how much you know about the addition of fluoride to community water supplies - called water fluoridation.

"Know a lot" _____ "Know a little" _____ "Know nothing" _____

2) Do you believe community water supplies should be fluoridated?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____

3) Do you believe fluoridating community water supplies helps prevent cavities and other dental problems?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

4a) Do you believe fluoridating community water supplies is a safe practice?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

4b) If you feel community water systems should not fluoridate, what are the reasons for your concerns? (check all that apply)

Causes health problems _____

Bad taste _____

Infringes on personal freedom and choice _____

Cost is expensive _____

Harmful to the environment _____

More research needs to be done _____

Would rather go through my dentist _____

Other _____

5) How would you rate the effectiveness of the following items as contributing to good dental health with 1 being the most effective to 8 being the least effective.

Daily tooth brushing and flossing _____

Reducing eating high sugar products like candy and sodas _____

Regular dental check-ups _____

Topically applied fluoride treatments by dental assistants _____

Fluoride received through public water supply _____

Please trim along this line and return to Spanaway Water Company, Thank You!

6) Did you know that all forms of fluoride that might be used for public water system fluoridation will contribute heavy metals to the water provided by the public water system?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

7) Do you believe that the members of a community should have a voice in the decision regarding fluoridation?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

8) Do you believe that the decision to fluoridate a water supply should be by a vote of the community members served by the water supply?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

9) Whom should pay the cost of public water system fluoridation?

County Board of Health _____

Washington Dental Association _____

Public water system customers _____

10) If you support fluoridation of public water systems how much per water bill do you consider an appropriate cost?

$.50-$1.00/bill _____ $1.00-$2.00/bill _____ $2.00-$4.00/bill _____

11) Do you believe that public water systems should challenge the current Tacoma/Pierce County Board of Health's fluoridation mandate based on either the public's right to vote on fluoridation or your right to make personal health choices?

Legal Challenge:

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

Legislative Action:

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

Though firm numbers have not been finalized, fluoridation for Spanaway Water Company is anticipated to have initial capital cost of about $310,000, or $42.00 per home/unit. These initial capital and on-going treatment costs would likely be reflected in a two year billing surcharge of $5.25/bill/residence/unit served. After two years the surcharge would be reduced to reflect the on-going treatment costs of approximately $1.75 per bill per residence/unit served. This is very much like the EPA mandated corrosion control requirement that resulted in the current $5.00 EPA treatment charge on each resident's/unit's bill. It should be noted that the existing EPA treatment charge will likely be reduced in January 2003 to approximately $2.00 per bill to reflect on-going corrosion control chemical, and operations and maintenance costs.

12) Considering the multiple factors related to fluoridation including: the potential dental benefits, the limited public input in the current fluoridation mandate, and the costs to water system customers, do you support fluoridation of your public water system?

Yes _____ No _____ No opinion _____ Do not know _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Please trim along this line and return to Spanaway Water Company, Thank You!