

# SPANAWAY WATER NEWS

A NEWSLETTER TO THE CUSTOMERS OF SPANAWAY WATER COMPANY

Spring / Summer 2004

## WATER QUALITY REPORT – 2004



Welcome to your sixth annual water quality report. This report presents information to you in the format prescribed by the Safe Drinking Water Act. The report includes information about many topics including: 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 the time you take to read this annual report and learn about both your water sources and Spanaway Water Company. We continue striving to provide you with safe, high quality water that meets or exceeds all federal and state standards. Water quality is tested daily by water company employees and on a regular schedule that includes weekly, annual, and tri-annual analysis 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 7,470 families and more than 330 businesses in the Spanaway Area. Because the company's Board of Directors are elected from and by the company membership, you can be certain that both high water quality pumped from 11 wells and reasonable prices are their 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 of Directors meets monthly on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Occasionally the meeting may be rescheduled to the second or fourth Thursday. You are invited to participate in all meetings at the Company office at 17418 5th Ave E, the current office. The new office/shop facilities, located at 18413 B St E, are anticipated to be completed in September, at which time meetings will be held at this new location.

If you would like more information about Spanaway Water Company, the information in this

## HOW AND WHY IS MY WATER TREATED & CURRENT FLUORIDATION STATUS

As water is pumped from each well, chlorine is added as a disinfectant providing extra protection to insure that no harmful bacteria are present. The minimum amount of chlorine is used to maintain a detectable level throughout the water system. Corrosion control with sodium hydroxide is also used to reduce the naturally slightly acid water from six wells. This treatment reduces the slight natural acidity of the water, decreasing the copper levels found in some homes. These treatment requirements are mandated under federal law.

On May 13, 2004, the Washington State Supreme Court invalidated the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health mandate requiring public water system fluoridation. Therefore, water system fluoridation is not planned at this time. SWC and several other water systems had challenged this county mandate in 2003. The challenge was based on the board of health's authority to require fluoridation and did not argue for or against fluoridation itself. The utilities participating in the legal challenge believed that fluoridation should be decided by the users of the water system not the un-elected board of health. The fluoridation issue has not concluded however. On June 2nd the board of health filed a motion for reconsideration by the Supreme Court. Whether the Court will reconsider its earlier ruling is uncertain, though generally motions for reconsideration are denied. Once the issue is finally resolved we will inform you of the final decision in a future Company's newsletter

Of note, some of our wells have naturally occurring manganese. Even at very low levels, "brown" water may occur 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 a manganese filter at well 4 with additional units planned for the Yakima and Buckeye Grove wells. The company's main flushing program has improved water quality and reduced brown water calls. Should you experience "brown" water, letting an outside faucet run for 5 to 15 minutes should clear the problem. Routine main flushing is done on Tuesdays. To reduce the

## **WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF MY WATER?**

Spanaway Water Company draws water from 11 wells located in the Spanaway area of the Chambers/Clover Creek watershed. The well depths vary from 99 to 645 feet. The water system has three tanks holding 5,100,000 gallons, one booster station serving the higher elevations at the south end of the water system, well over 120 miles of water mains, and over 720 fire hydrants. The diagram below provides an overview of the water system.

## **SPANAWAY WATER QUALITY TESTING**

In 2003, of 192 contaminants, including 94 new unregulated contaminants, only 8 were even detectable in our water. Of those 8, all were well below the EPA's maximum contamination level or action level. 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 levels ever found in the water system is available on request at the company office.

## **WATER QUALITY DATA**

The following portion of the newsletter is presented in compliance with the EPA's format and content requirements. Please call if you have any questions or comments. It should be

**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

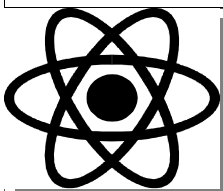
Inorganic Compounds:	MCL	MCLG	Highest Level	Range of Detection	Sample Date/s	Violation	Typical Source of Contamination
Arsenic (ppb)	10	10	0.4	ND-0.4	7/02-7/03	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
Asbestos (mfl)	7	7	0.171	0.171	9/96	No	Decay of asbestos cement water mains; Erosion of natural deposits.
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.3	ND-0.3	7/02-7/03	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	4.2	0.3-4.2	6/03-10/03	No	Runoff from fertilizer use: Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; or Erosion of natural deposits.
<b>Organic Compounds</b>							
Trihalomethane Potential Chlorine	80	n/a	39.6	17.9-39.6	12/03	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
	4	n/a	1.2	0.06-1.2	Daily 2003	No	Water additive used to control microbes.
<b>Radionuclides</b>							
Gross Beta (pCi/l)	50	50	2.0	ND-2.0	8/00-6/03	No	Erosion of natural deposits

### 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.
<b>Lead</b>					
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.
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**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 pro-

## ***CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE – Road Projects, Sewer Projects, and Water Mains***



It seems that every road in Spanaway is seeing some kind of construction. The following update is intended to give you a heads-up about what construction to anticipate.

The County's final phase of the Spanaway Loop Road extension to 176th St. is scheduled to have begun by the mailing of this newsletter. The replacement and widening of the Spanaway Creek culvert will be completed during a 25 day complete road closure planned for August 23 through September 17th. If you travel Spanaway Loop Rd. watch for construction and closure notices. Like prior phases of this project, the existing 8" water main must be relocated and will be replaced with a new 12" ductile iron main. As a replacement for existing system facilities not related to growth these costs will be paid from general water rates.

A sewer extension planned for 22nd Ave. E. from 183rd to 192nd St. E. is under going final review at the county with construction expected this summer. It is anticipated that 22nd Ave. will be closed during this construction. Concurrent with the sewer installation, two new 12" water mains will be installed. The first connects the existing lower pressure zone 22nd Ave main to water storage tank 3. A second parallel upper pressure zone main will be installed to serve the growth at the higher elevations near 192nd St.E. Because these mains are related to growth, new connection fees will pay for the main extensions.

Finally, the relocation of the business office and field shop facilities to a single larger site at 18413 "B" St. E. is progressing quickly with the actual move to the new facilities planned for September. This project is required to allow redevelopment and capacity increase at well #5, located at the current shop site. This 1962 well has lost production due to the well's age. The well site is too small under current standards to permit replacing the well while keeping the shop facilities on site. Similarly, the current business office was designed to support about 7,500 members. We now have nearly 8,500 members with platted growth to 10,700 and Growth Management Act projections to 15,000 members by 2015. In addition to a larger facility, the new "B" St. site will provide an additional well site. The funding for the new consolidated office/shop



*When the well is dry, we know the worth of Water. - Benjamin Franklin*  
***Its up to each of us – Use Water Wisely!***

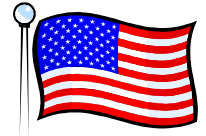
***2004 Annual Water  
Quality Report, Fluoride***

**SPANAWAY WATER COMPANY**  
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Spanaway, WA 98387-1000

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## HOMELAND SECURITY – A Community Concern

Like all utilities, we rely on the public to assist in facility security. Should you notice any unusual activity at any utility facilities, including water system wells, tank sites, or fire hydrants please contact the office at 531-9024 and/or the sheriff at 911. Tampering with a water system is now a federal crime with penalties up to \$1,000,000 and 20 years of jail.

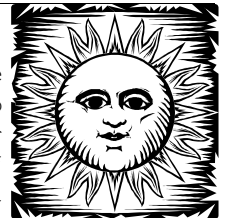


## WASHING MACHINE HOSES – A Potential Plumbing Nightmare

You leave for work, your children are off to school, all is quiet, and the washing machine is not even running. All is fine until one of your washing machines hoses bursts. When you come home water is running out your garage door. A nightmare that happens all too often. Even when the washer is off, the washer hoses are at full pressure, just like all plumbing. Unlike your plumbing however, washing machine hoses are like your car's radiator hoses and break-down over time. A broken radiator hose is a major inconvenience, a broken washer hose can mean thousands of dollars in damage. Reinforced washer hoses are available at

## ?GLOBAL WARMING? & CONSERVATION

Is this really Washington? Two springs with 80 degree weather in June and well below normal rainfall? Maybe global warming is beginning to show; regardless the lack of rain and early heat truly highlights summer water demands. Through early June our annual rainfall is only 2/3rds of normal, 13.37 inches of the normal of 19.34 inches. Currently we do not anticipate any problems with well aquifer levels though the region's large surface water systems and in-stream flows for salmon may be impacted by the lack of rain and rapid melt of the mountain snow pack.



2004 is following 2003 with a warm spring and summer but with even less rain. Last summer, daily water use peaked at 6,230,150 gallons, nearly a million gallons more than 2002 and 2,065,329 gallons more than 2001. The average individual home's use increased to 792 gallons a day from 710 and 569 in 2002 and 2001 respectively. This is more than twice a home's average year round daily water use. This demand for water results in the need for additional "seasonal wells" some of which only run a few weeks per year. Hopefully this helps you understand why water rates increase as more water is used. Simply stated, when you use more water additional wells are required and their related costs are allocated to those who use the higher volumes of water.

Most summer water increases relate to lawn sprinkling. It is worthwhile to consider WSU's recommendations for lawn care.

**1. Give your lawn some fertilizer.** Application of slow release fertilizer in April, June, September, and November/early December will keep lawns green throughout the growing season. A 3-1-2 fertilizer ratio of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P2O5), and potassium (K2O) is best. The addition of moss control products with iron as the active ingredient will also help provide a deep green lawn.

**2. Raise mowing height.** Mowing height affects water use. Using a higher mowing height deepens root systems, strengthens lawns and reduces water loss through evaporation.

**3. Control thatch build-up.** When thatch is greater than one-half inch dethatching is needed. This is best done in early spring or early fall.

**4. Aerate compacted surfaces.** Heavy use areas or compacted soils should be aerated to provide improved water absorption and air flow within the lawn. Again, spring and fall are the best times for aerating.

**5. Improve your soil by topdressing.** This is spreading a thin layer of soil, not more than one-half inch, over an existing lawn. WSU recommends at least six inches of settled topsoil to maintain a healthy lawn.

**6. Water sparingly.** A healthy lawn only requires one inch of water per week, including rain! Deep watering once or twice per week is best and encourages deep root growth. Generally, a total of 60 to 90 minutes per week of sprinkling will provide necessary water for healthy lawns. This watering can be broken into two sessions of 30 to 45 minutes each for lawns that may be lacking top soil to retain water from a weekly irrigation. A tuna can is a simple way to measure watering amounts. Place the can on the lawn and water until the can is half full for twice a week watering or full for weekly irrigation.

**7. Water during cooler times of day.** Water either late in the evening (after 8:00 p.m.) or early in the morning (before 10:00 a.m.) This reduces possible fungal infec-

Please trim along this line and use as a family home check list, Thank You!

## **A Year Round Home Water Savings Check List:**

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



### **Inside Your Home:**

- Check your water meter monthly when all water is off to check for unseen leaks.
- Run full loads of laundry and dishes.
- Turn off the water when brushing teeth and shaving.
- Turn off the water when washing dishes except for rinsing.
- Try to keep showers brief.
- Check for leaks and fix faucet/toilet leaks as soon as possible.
- Do not use the toilet as a flushing trash can.
- Install flow restrictors or low flow fixtures throughout the house.
- Insulate your hot water pipes.



### **Outside Your Home:** (Consider letting your lawn go dormant for the summer, it will come back in the fall.)

- Check and repair leaking hose bibs.
- Only water on even or odd days based on your house number.
- Hand water shrubs and special planted landscaped areas, or considering installing a drip irrigation system.
- Landscape with rockeries and native drought resistant plants.
- Make sure that when watering, we don't water the walks or road.
- Only water the lawn with one inch of water per week.
- Turn off any sprinkler system when it rains.
- 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 time is in the early morning hours.)
- Fertilize the lawn to help keep it green.
- Think about adding top dressing to our lawn areas.
- Raise the mowing height when the weather gets warmer and drier.
- Make sure the water is turned off after the children have been playing in the sprinkler.
- Use a car wash that recycles water; or use an automatic shut off nozzle when washing cars. Consider washing the car on the lawn.
- Use a broom to clean walkways and driveways, not a hose.



## **CUSTOMER SERVICE & New Billing System**



We're sure you have all noticed the new billing form with attached return envelope. The change of billing systems has been a slow and involved process with a lot of credit going to the customer service staff! They have dealt with a lot of headaches while running two systems concurrently and making sure the transition went smoothly. We hope that the new format is convenient for you and will help prevent the loss of bills in the mail system.

We do have two requests of you - please include your account number on your payment checks. And finally, if you make your payments at the office counter or drive up window **please bring both portions of the bill stubs with you, it makes processing a lot easier for the staff. THANKS!!**

(P.S. For your convenience we have a drive-up night drop box at the office and will

Please trim along this line and use as a family check list, Thank You!

# **HAVE A GREAT SUMMER, that's safe, Water Wise!**