

Woodbury CleanWater

A special edition about water in Woodbury

November/December 2020

State announces draft options to protect East Metro's drinking water

Public comment period open through Dec. 10

On Sept. 10, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced a \$700 million long-term drinking water protection plan for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the Twin Cities East Metropolitan Area, including Woodbury. The agencies revealed three draft options that would provide safe and sustainable drinking water.

The city provided feedback on several items in the state's draft options in October. While this input is technical in nature, there are two items the city is requesting be addressed that are critical and may be of particular interest to residents:

1. Treating the water to the lowest feasible PFAS health index threshold possible should be a priority; and
2. Settlement funds should be properly directed and prioritized first to capital and long-term operations and maintenance for drinking water treatment and to keep local water bills affordable for residents and businesses.



The public can learn more about the options at 3msettlement.state.mn.us. Private well owners can use an MPCA interactive map to see the draft long-term drinking water options for individual private wells.

"We are thrilled to see the state making progress on potential long-term water treatment solutions," Mayor Anne Burt said. "We've been highly engaged working alongside them on this for many months and the draft options represent positive movement. The state sought our input about these options and we shared our concerns with them."

We continue to strongly advocate for the long-term best interests of our residents and businesses and we hope we can work with the state agencies to resolve these issues in the coming weeks."

The city's extensive policy input provided to the state is available on the city's website at woodburymn.gov/pfas.

"We are grateful the state was able to obtain the settlement dollars from 3M on our behalf," Burt added. "We are responding to the state's request for feedback and we feel all three draft options do not fit the long-term best interests of our community, which encompasses about half the total population impacted by PFAS in the East Metro."

The state's draft options were originally open for public comment through Oct 26. However, given the complexities of the draft long-term drinking water options, along with feedback from the 3M Settlement working groups requesting additional time, the MPCA and DNR are extending the public comment period until Dec. 10 to ensure there is adequate time for those living and working in the East Metro area to review.

"The city is doing an outstanding job advocating for Woodbury residents and businesses in meetings with the state agencies and other East Metro communities," explained Mike Madigan, one of two residents representing Woodbury on the working groups studying this issue with the state for last two years. "Now, we need our residents to help by providing feedback to the state before the deadline. It is critical the state hears our concerns about the draft options at this time."

How you can help

Share your thoughts about the state's long-term drinking water treatment solutions for the East Metro.

1. Complete the survey available online at 3msettlement.state.mn.us and be sure to share your concerns in the open-ended question No. 5 by Dec. 10.

continued other side

Protect water bodies and soils by limiting winter salt use

Clean water and healthy soils are vital for human survival. Here are five suggestions from city and state experts for protecting water and soils during the winter:

1. **Drive slower and wear appropriate shoes when it's snowy and icy outside.** This helps to support road maintenance crews, as well as large parking lot owners, in their efforts to reduce salt use.
2. **Use less salt on driveways and sidewalks.** One pound of salt (one heaping coffee mug) is enough to clear a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares (250 square feet). Always shovel before using salt.
3. **Skip the salt when it is colder than 15 degrees.** Salt works by lowering the melting temperature of ice so that it melts when the temperature is below freezing (32 degrees). However, traditional road salt (sodium chloride) doesn't work when it's colder than 15 degrees, so it is a waste of time and money to apply salt on very cold days. Magnesium chloride and calcium chloride work at colder temperatures (minus-10 and minus-20 degrees, respectively), but can be more expensive.
4. **Sweep up and reuse leftover salt after the ice melts.**
5. **Stop using your water softener if your water hardness is less than 120 mg/L CaCO₃.** If you do need a water softener, switch from a timer-based to a demand-based system and install a bypass for your outside spigot so that the system is not softening water for irrigation.

Learn more about the impacts of chlorides on local lakes and streams at pca.state.mn.us/water/chloride-salts.

City to construct stormwater basin in Seasons Park



A new stormwater basin will be constructed along the Seasons Park trail and creek. This image has been altered to illustrate what the area will look like after completion.

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) is working with city staff to understand the water quality in the city's lakes. This work includes identifying the contributors of excess nutrients in the lakes and creating a plan to remove these nutrients before they reach the lakes. One major nutrient that affects the lakes in Woodbury is phosphorus, which leads to algae growth and decreased water quality.

To help improve the water quality of Wilmes Lake, SWWD will be constructing a stormwater

filter basin (see image) along the Seasons Park trail and creek (southeast of the intersection of Radio Drive and Seasons Parkway). The basin will work to remove phosphorus from the water before it travels downstream to Wilmes Lake. Wilmes Lake is upstream of Colby Lake, Bailey Lake and countless wetlands, which will also benefit from decreased nutrients traveling downstream.

More information, including a story map, is available at swwdmn.org.

East Metro drinking water...from front

2. Questions about the draft options should be directed to pfcinfo.pca@state.mn.us.
3. For clarification on items identified by the city in Mayor Burt's letter to the state, view the letter online at woodburymn.gov/pfas or contact Public Works at 651-714-3720 or publicworks@woodburymn.gov.

The MPCA and DNR expect to finalize the East Metro drinking plan in early 2021. The city will provide updates as more information becomes available.

The draft Conceptual Plan and supporting documents are available on the 3M Settlement website at: 3msettlement.state.mn.us/DrinkingWaterSupply.

In February 2018, the State of Minnesota and the 3M Company settled their lawsuit regarding natural resource damages associated with a group of chemicals known as PFAS.

For more information about the settlement, visit 3msettlement.state.mn.us.

"The water the city delivers to customers continues to meet all state and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS," explained Jim Westerman, the city's utilities manager. "The temporary treatment facility constructed earlier this year will help the city meet water demand over the next five to seven years until Woodbury's long term solution is implemented."

Watch for thin ice on Battle Creek and Colby Lakes

Thin ice and areas of open water may be found all winter on Battle Creek and Colby Lakes in Woodbury due to aeration systems operated by the city. The aeration systems circulate the water in the lakes to oxygenate them, keeping the fish alive through the winter.

The lakes were selected for aeration because their shallow depth results in low oxygen levels. All neighboring residents and recreational users of Battle Creek and Colby Lakes should note the location of the aeration systems and stay clear of the area posted for thin ice.

The aeration system in Colby Lake will be located in the southeast part of the lake near Edgewater Park. The aeration system in Battle Creek Lake will be operated adjacent to the fishing pier, north of the public access area in Shawnee Park. The perimeter of each aeration system will be posted with orange and white reflective signs that warn: "Danger - Thin Ice."



The aeration systems will be turned on in early January, weather permitting, and remain in operation until the ice is out. For more information, call the Parks Division at 651-714-3720.