

Woodbury WaterSupply

February 2020

A special edition about water quality and quantity for peak demand days



The City of Woodbury is constructing a temporary water treatment facility to bring three of the city's water wells back into service that were previously shut down due to health risk advisories related to per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The purpose of this newsletter insert is to share the answers to the most frequently asked questions city staff receives about PFAS and the quality of the city's water. For additional background information, read the mayor's column on page 2 of this newsletter.

1 What is PFAS and how did it get in the water?

PFAS stands for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. The 3M Company made PFAS at its Cottage Grove facility from the late 1940s until 2002. They were commonly used in household and industrial products such as stain repellents, lubricants, fire retardant and suppressants and more. PFAS wastes were disposed of at various locations in Washington County. The source of PFAS in the Woodbury's groundwater has been identified as these disposal sites.

2 Can I drink the water?

Yes, the water the city delivers to customers meets all State of Minnesota and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS.

3 I have a private well. How do I know if I am impacted by PFAS?

Private wells are the responsibility of private landowners. Private landowners should consider having their well tested. Complete the Private Drinking Water Well Sampling Request Form on the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) website at health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfas.html.

4 How many Woodbury municipal wells exceed PFAS water quality standards and guidelines?

Six of the city's 19 wells currently exceed PFAS water quality standards and guidelines, with a seventh well trending toward exceeding a standard or guideline in the future. The temporary treatment effort will treat three of the six wells for the next five to seven years and allow the city to meet water demand while the city continues to work with the State of Minnesota to identify a long-term treatment solution. The six impacted wells are currently taken out of service.

5 Which well is serving my home?

The City of Woodbury has a one-pressure-zone system. This means no one particular well serves a specific area. The water is distributed throughout the system and well usage is rotated frequently as part of regular operation.

6 Why did the city declare an emergency?

The City Council voted to declare a local emergency at its Jan. 8, 2020, meeting, as required by state law. This action is needed to expedite the construction of a temporary water treatment facility. It is critical the city implement temporary treatment options as soon as possible to allow the city to meet water demand on peak use days in summer 2020. The water the city delivers to customers meets all State of Minnesota and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS.

7 How much will the temporary treatment plant cost and how will the project be funded?

The cost is expected to be around \$8 million. There are currently two funding sources: the 2007 consent decree and the 3M and State of Minnesota Settlement Agreement. The 2007 consent decree funds more urgent items such as the temporary treatment plant while the 3M and State of Minnesota Settlement Agreement will fund long-term solutions. Both funds are a result of lawsuits the state filed against 3M and are not taxpayer money. The State of Minnesota manages how the funds are used. The City of Woodbury is not paying for the capital cost of constructing the temporary treatment plant.

8 When will the temporary water treatment plant be operational?

It is the city's goal to have the temporary treatment plant operational in summer 2020.



9 What took so long for Woodbury to start building a temporary treatment plant when we knew PFAS was in the water more than 10 years ago?

The levels of detected PFAS in the water were below State of Minnesota and federal water quality standards and guidelines until some of the standards and guidelines were lowered in 2017. At that time, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) issued health advisories on five of the city's 19 wells for PFAS and the city immediately changed operations to reduce the use of those five wells. Then, in October 2019, MDH issued a health advisory on a sixth well. It wasn't until these six wells were off-line was the city able to secure funding from the State of Minnesota for temporary treatment.

10 Why have neighboring cities been able to implement temporary PFAS treatment options and Woodbury is just starting?

Woodbury has been coordinating with the MDH and monitoring for PFAS since it was discovered in its source water in 2007. Detected PFAS levels were higher in neighboring communities, detected in a higher percentage of wells in those communities, and/or impacted their system and its operation more based on their system design.

11 What type of private, at-home treatment options are available?

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has information on its website regarding the effectiveness of home treatment options at health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfcs.html.

12 Why is the temporary treatment plant being constructed near Valley Creek Road and Tower Drive?

This is the most viable location. The property has been identified as a potential location for a water treatment facility for decades and is in close proximity to the three impacted wells that will be treated. State funding for the project is predicated on the facility being located on this property.

13 Will the construction of the temporary water treatment plant impact the nearby Tamarack Nature Preserve?

There is no anticipated impact on the preserve. Staff is working with several agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources and the Ramsey-Washington Watershed District, to ensure the natural areas surrounding the temporary water treatment facility are appropriately protected.

15 I didn't know PFAS was in the water or that a temporary water treatment plant was under consideration. Where can I learn more?

The city has been sharing updates about PFAS in the water since 2007 in the City Update newsletter, on the city's website at woodburymn.gov/pfas, via its InTouch email notification system at woodburymn.gov/intouch, on its YouTube channel at youtube.com/cityofwoodburymn and through the local media. Information also is provided in the annual Water Quality Report. Updates will continue to be provided through these channels. There also have been more than 30 public meetings on this topic since the beginning of 2019.

Information also is available on the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) PFAS sites webpage at health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/sites.html#WCmaps and PFAS page at health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfcs.html, and the State of Minnesota's website dedicated to the settlement with 3M and the process for identifying long-term treatment solutions (3msettlement.state.mn.us).



16 What is the long-term solution on treatment for PFAS and when will it be implemented?

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Department of Natural Resources are leading the effort with the impacted communities under the 3M and Statement of Minnesota Settlement Agreement in identifying the long-term treatment solutions. The state has indicated that in the first quarter 2020 they will be providing initial results of the effort for long-term treatment. The Woodbury City Council passed a resolution on Oct. 9, 2019, declaring the community's goals for a long-term water treatment solution. This resolution is available on the city's website.

14 I live near the future temporary water treatment facility. How can I get involved?

Neighborhood meetings will take place in mid-February. Watch for a meeting notice in your mailbox. Questions about the neighborhood meetings should be directed to Eric Searles, city planner, at 651-714-3532 or eric.searles@woodburymn.gov.

17 Who will pay for the long-term solution for treatment of PFAS?

Long-term solutions for treatment of PFAS in drinking water are to be paid for from the approximately \$700 million 3M and State of Minnesota Settlement Agreement. For details, visit the State of Minnesota's website dedicated to the settlement with 3M and the process for identifying long-term treatment solutions (3msettlement.state.mn.us).

