

Spring 2013

Protecting the Planet - and your Pocketbook

Fairfax Water strives to be a good steward of the resources we manage. Our efforts to protect the environment are also designed to help us operate more efficiently. Here are a few examples:

The quarry provides natural filtration.



- ◆ Fairfax Water utilizes an energy management program that has consistently reduced our energy use each year since the program was put in place.

- ◆ All mobile field workers are equipped with mobile-computing resources, which reduces travel time and mileage and increases our efficiency.

- ◆ Residuals from the water treatment process are captured at both of our treatment plants to prevent them from entering the receiving streams. The Corbalis plant in Herndon removes the water from the residu-

als, which are then re-used as filler on agricultural land. The Griffith plant in Lorton takes advantage of an adjacent quarry that acts as a giant clarifier to remove residuals before they can enter the river.

- ◆ Fairfax Water has less unaccounted-for water than the national average. Accurately measuring water usage against the amount of water produced is critical in identifying water loss in the system. We've determined the point at which meters tend to lose accuracy and replace them before they reach this point, increasing the accuracy of this comparison. Our leak detection program uses state-of-the-art electronic equipment to identify leak sounds within the distribution system and precisely pinpoint the location of the leak even before it surfaces. Identifying leaks early reduces the amount of water lost and allows us to repair leaks efficiently with minimal disruption to our customers.

The beauty of these programs is not only do they protect the environment, they also help us control costs and operate more efficiently. 💧

2013 Annual Water Quality Report

Paper or . . . ?

In June it will be time once again for our annual water quality report. This report provides important information about your water quality and about Fairfax Water's services. Under federal law, we are required to provide it to our customers every year before July 1.

This year, the law allows us a little more flexibility in how we provide the report to our customers. So in an effort to reduce costs and save trees, we will mail

the report only to those customers who request a printed copy. If you would like to receive a copy by mail, send an e-mail to waterqualityreport@fairfaxwater.org or call 703-289-6285, TTY 711, and provide your name, mailing address, and phone number. A report will be mailed to you the week of June 2.

We'll have the report available on our Web site, as always, beginning on June 2, at www.fairfaxwater.org/waterqualityreport.pdf. 💧



In This Issue

Page 1

- ◆ Protecting the Planet and your Pocketbook
- ◆ Paper or . . . ?

Page 2

- ◆ Spring Announcements

Page 3

- ◆ TapIt™ and Save
- ◆ Drinking Water Week
- ◆ Got Drugs?
- ◆ Glad You Asked!

Page 4

- ◆ Kids' Corner
- ◆ Mark Your Calendar



On Dec. 13, 2012, the Fairfax Water Board of Directors approved changes to Fairfax Water’s rates, fees, and charges. The changes will be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2013. The changes to the commodity charges will increase the average household quarterly bill by \$3.97. Even with this increase, Fairfax Water’s rates remain the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. To see a comparison of regional water rates or for more rate information, visit www.fairfaxwater.org and click on “Customer Service.” ♦



From April to June, Fairfax Water will flush all of our water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. This allows us to test all the hydrants to ensure they are working properly and to determine if they need maintenance or painting. During the spring flushing program, free chlorine is added during the water treatment process instead of the chloramines used during the rest of the year.

You may notice more of a chlorine taste and odor in your drinking water during the spring flushing program. This is not harmful. Keeping an open container of drinking water in your refrigerator will allow the chlorine to dissipate. Be sure to change the water in your refrigerated container weekly.

If you have an aquarium or pond, always test the water you add to your aquatic environment to be sure it is free of chlorine before adding fish or other animals.

If you have questions about this program or the work being conducted in your area, call 703-698-5800, TTY 711, during business hours and after-hours, call 703-698-5613, TTY 711. ♦



Planning your summer garden? The “Water Wise Landscaping and Watering Guide” can help you save money and protect the environment. You’ll find the guide on our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org - just scroll down on our homepage until you see “Water Wise Landscaping and Watering Guide.” To request a copy by mail, call 703-289-6018, TTY 711. ♦



Looking for some great family fun this summer? From June 7 - 9, Celebrate Fairfax! will offer 25-acres of great festival food, carnival rides, interactive activities, live concerts, and daily fireworks. And to keep you going, Fairfax Water will be there with plenty of the best-tasting - and free - ice water ever! Find out more at www.celebratefairfax.com and be sure to stop by and see us at the Fairfax Water tent. ♦



Boating and fishing are allowed on the Occoquan Reservoir, but the presence of the Occoquan dam creates a unique challenge for boaters. If you plan to spend the day on the reservoir, keep an eye out for the boat busters, a highly visible floating barrier across the Occoquan Reservoir. The boat busters keep boaters a safe distance from the dam and provide added security for our facilities. And don’t forget that boat motors are limited to no more than ten horsepower on the Occoquan Reservoir. ♦



If you are emptying your swimming pool this spring, please remember to be fish friendly! If you drain your pool directly into a stream or storm drain, it may kill the fish, harm aquatic plants and animals, or cause stream-bank erosion and flooding. For information about safely emptying your pool, visit the Fairfax County Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/pooldischarge.htm or call the county’s Stormwater Planning Division at 703-324-5500, TTY 711. Commercial swimming pool operators should contact the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2300, TTY 711. ♦



and Save

In the summer 2012 issue of *Straight From the Tap*, we told you about TapIt™, a network of cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses where you can fill your reusable water bottle with tap water for free when you are on the go. Fairfax Water is partnering with the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (MWCOG) and the TapIt™ organization to provide this service to our customers.

Since June, more than 50 businesses in Fairfax County have joined TapIt™ and there are hundreds of locations throughout our region. You can find a location near you or along your running or biking route by using the search and mapping features at www.tapitwater.com on your computer or Smartphone or by downloading 'TapIt Water' from the iPhone App Store.

If you have limited access to technology, you can download and print one of the TapIt™ city maps or simply look for the TapIt™ sticker on the windows of your favorite cafes. ♪



How often did you turn on the tap today? You probably relied on having a hot shower, washing the dishes, or drinking a cold glass of water.

But did you know that 783 million people around the world do not have access to safe drinking water? To make us more

aware of how important water is, the American Water Works Association sponsors Drinking Water Week each year. Drinking Water Week celebrates the critical role clean, safe water plays in our daily lives.

In this country we are fortunate to have a reliable, safe supply of drinking water at the touch of a tap. Safe drinking water protects our health, provides fire protection, and is vital to economic development and our quality of life.

To learn more about the value of tap water, visit www.drinktap.org. ♪



Do you have unused or expired medication in your medicine cabinet? Are you looking for a way to dispose of them safely? The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) can help. The DEA sponsors National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days throughout the year. On these days, you can safely dispose of unwanted prescription drugs at a nearby drop-off location. To find out more, visit their Web site at www.dea.gov or call 800-882-9539, TTY 711, for more information.

If you can't make it to a Take-Back event, you can still dispose of medicines safely. Don't flush drugs down the toilet unless the label says to do so. Medicines that are flushed can end up in our rivers and streams. Throw unwanted medicines in the trash using the American Pharmacists Association's steps for safely disposing of medicine. You can find instructions for safely disposing of medication at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/dontflush/ or call the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2411, TTY 711. ♪

Glad You Asked!

Q What is the difference between the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act?

A The Clean Water Act (CWA), passed in 1972, is the primary federal law that regulates the discharge of pollutants into the nation's surface waters, including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and coastal areas. The CWA specifies that all discharges into the nation's waters are unlawful unless authorized by a permit. In 1987, Congress made a number of revisions to the act, most notably to establish a comprehensive program for controlling toxic pollutants and storm-water discharges.



The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), originally enacted by Congress in 1974, is the main federal law created to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply. The SDWA establishes health-based standards to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. The act has been amended twice since 1974.



Fairfax Water is regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for establishing regulations under the SWDA and the Virginia Department of Health is responsible for enforcing these standards for public water systems in the commonwealth.

At Fairfax Water, we're proud that our water quality consistently surpasses SWDA standards for quality. ♪

If you have a question, concern, or compliment, contact us at pr@fairfaxwater.org or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.



We Want to Know . . .

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, please e-mail us at pr@fairfaxwater.org, call us at 703-698-5600, or write to the address below:

Straight From the Tap Editor
Fairfax Water
8570 Executive Park Ave.
Fairfax, VA 22031

Important Numbers

Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service:
703-698-5800

After Hours/Emergencies:
703-698-5613

To report a water main break:
703-698-5613 or send an
e-mail to watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org.

Questions about billing:
703-698-5800

All other Fairfax Water
departments: 703-698-5600

Fairfax County Services

24-hour trouble-response
center for sewer back ups or
sluggish flow in a sink, toilet, or
tub: 703-323-1211

Sanitary sewer back ups and line
maintenance: 703-250-2003

Dig with C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001
or 811

Use TTY 711 (*Virginia Relay*)
for all numbers unless otherwise
stated.

KIDS' CORNER

WATER MOLECULES ON THE MOVE

This experiment is great for testing if hot water molecules really move faster than cold ones. Be sure to have a grown-up help you!

What you'll need:

- A clear glass filled with hot water
- A clear glass filled with cold water
- Food coloring
- An eye dropper

Instructions:

1. Fill the glasses with the same amount of water, one cold and one hot.
2. Put one drop of food coloring into both glasses as quickly as possible.
3. Watch what happens to the food coloring.

What's happening?

If you watch closely you will notice that the food coloring spreads faster throughout the hot water than in the cold. The molecules in the hot water move at a faster rate, spreading the food coloring faster than the cold water molecules, which move slower.

Source: *Science Kids*
www.sciencekids.co.nz/



The Science Guy

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April - June

Fairfax Water's Annual Water Main
Flushing (See www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free_chlorine.htm for more information.)



Mon., April 22
Earth Day 2013
www.earthday.org/2013

May 13 - 19

Drinking Water Week 2013;
www.drinktap.org.

Sat, May 18

Occoquan River Fest, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
703-690-2121, TTY 711, or visit
www.owlva.org

Mon., May 27

Fairfax Water offices closed for
Memorial Day.

Fri., June 7 - Sun., June 9

Visit Fairfax Water's exhibit for a free
glass of ice water at **Celebrate Fairfax!**
703-324-3247, TTY 711, or visit
www.celebratefairfax.com

Thurs., July 4

Fairfax Water offices are closed for
Independence Day.

Mon., Sept. 2

Fairfax Water offices closed for
Labor Day.

Fairfax Water



**Water-Saving
Tip**

Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving nearly 1.7 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dullles, Vienna, and Alexandria.

Now that the fresh produce season is here, you can save water by washing your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap. For more information and water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com. 💧