

# 2023 WATER QUALITY REPORT

Your water is safe to drink  
right out of the faucet.

This publication contains important information on the quality of your drinking water. It includes all data required by the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act and fulfills the requirement that all water systems distribute an annual Water Quality Report to our water customers.

**¿Habla español?** Este Informe contiene información muy importante acerca de su agua potable. Por favor tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.



Public Utilities

[ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com) • 706-613-3729

WATER SYSTEM #0590000 CONSUMER  
CONFIDENCE REPORT (CCR)

# Director's note



I am pleased to share this year's Drinking Water Quality Report, also known as our Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). Inside, you'll find results of comprehensive lab tests on Athens-Clarke County's (ACC) drinking water conducted throughout 2023. The journey of your drinking water begins when water is pumped to the J.G. Beacham Water Treatment Plant. Our staff closely monitors as the water travels through a complex treatment process, which is detailed in this report.

ACC's drinking water is delivered to your taps by a dedicated group of professionals whose goal is to ensure the county's drinking water consistently meets or surpasses all state and federal standards. Our team is proud to present this report as a testament to the excellence and reliability of ACC's drinking water system. The staff includes highly trained maintenance mechanics, lab technicians, and operators who keep the treatment system running smoothly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Not only do we deliver an outstanding product to your taps, the J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment plant received the 2024 Best Operated Plant of the Year Award from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals in the Surface Water 25 million gallons per day (MGD) – 49.99 MGD category. The criteria for this award encompasses all aspects of the facility such as safety, maintenance operations, documentation, and lab operations. Additionally, the ACC Water Conservation Office (WCO) earned its seventh Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for our work helping consumers and businesses save water, energy, and money by promoting water-efficient products and programs.

We understand the importance of transparency regarding our residents' drinking water and encourage you to review the information in this report. We detail our water sources, treatment process, and laboratory results. Should you have any questions as you review the report, please get in touch with our department at 706-613-3729 or email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com).

*Hollis Terry IV*

Hollis Terry IV, Director of  
Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department

**204** Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities  
Department employees are hard at work to

## protect your water quality

In 2023...

**5,034,590,000**  
gallons of water were delivered

**267** tests were done each day

**97,455** tests throughout the year  
AT WATER PLANT DURING TREATMENT PROCESS

**37** average weekday tests

**808** average monthly tests

**9,693** total annual tests

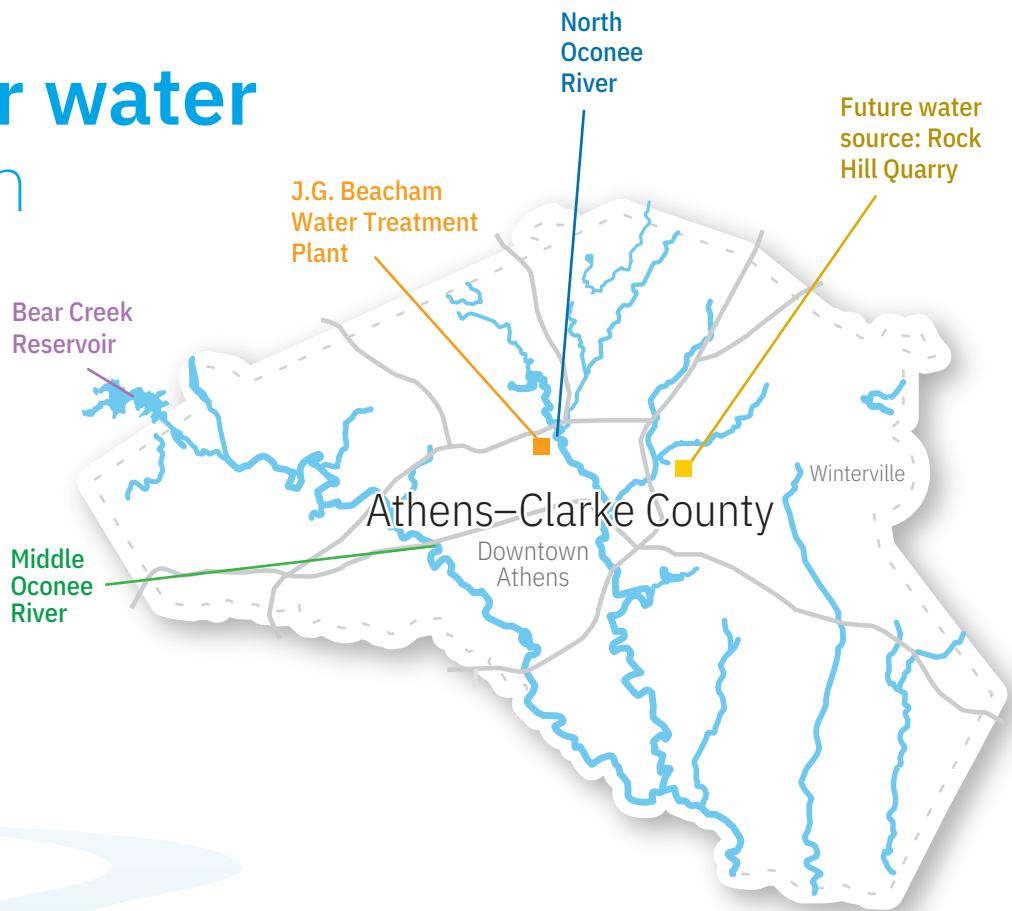
PERFORMED BY ACC ON TREATED WATER SENT TO HOMES

Additional samples are sent to private labs and the  
Georgia Environmental Protection Division.



# Where **your water** comes from

Your drinking water comes from three sources: the Bear Creek Reservoir, the North Oconee River, and the Middle Oconee River. Before ever reaching your faucet, it travels through a carefully monitored, reliable treatment process at the J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment Plant.



## The **water treatment** process

A lot happens to your drinking water before it gets to you. It all begins when we pump water into the water treatment plant from the North Oconee River, Middle Oconee River, or the Bear Creek Reservoir.

**1** Chemicals are added to make small particles clump together, forming "floc."

**2** The floc settles in the basins, sinks to the bottom, and is removed.

**3**

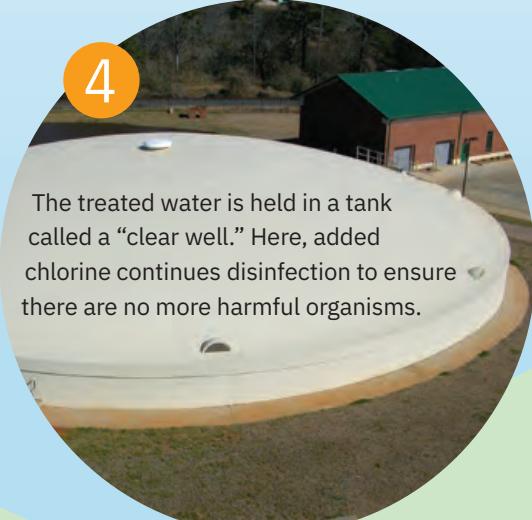
Filters catch any remaining particles so the water becomes crystal clear.

**5**

Storage tanks safely hold the finished water until it is delivered to homes, organizations and businesses.

### Turn on your tap with confidence

Dedicated personnel keep the water treatment system running smoothly 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Certified water treatment operators and lab technicians carefully test the source water and finished water to ensure you have safe, high quality drinking water.





# Safeguarding our rivers

The Middle Oconee River  
north of Ben Burton Park

In order to protect public drinking water supplies at the source, the State of Georgia established a Source Water Assessment Program. As part of this program, Athens-Clarke County and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission completed a Source Water Assessment of the Middle Oconee and North Oconee rivers. Both rivers have been ranked with a medium level of pollution susceptibility.

Based on the results of the Source Water Assessment, the county developed a Watershed Protection Plan for safeguarding our water resources.

Copies of the report and plan are available at the Public Utilities Department Administration Office, 124 East Hancock Avenue in downtown Athens.

If you have questions about water quality or want to find out how to help safeguard our source water, email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com).

[ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com)



## Why are there contaminants in water?

Pure water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. However, all drinking water comes from rivers, lakes, reservoirs, or wells. These sources are never purely hydrogen and oxygen. As water travels over land or through the ground, it dissolves natural minerals, and is subject to potential "contamination" by a variety of naturally occurring and man-made substances.

To ensure that our tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Water Test Results in this report detail the EPA's ideal goal and highest level allowed.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general public. Immuno-compromised individuals, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

EPA and Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available by contacting the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

## Important health information from the EPA

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).



If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with private service lines and home plumbing. ACC Public Utilities Department (PUD) is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested.

Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791) or at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://epa.gov/safewater/lead).

[epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://epa.gov/safewater/lead)



Find the faucet icon hidden in this report and enter to win a bucket of water gifts! Tell us at [accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout](http://accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout) by July 31, 2024.

# 2023 Water Test Results

We test for over **190 substances**. This Water Quality Report Summary shows only what we found in the water after treatment. **If it isn't listed in these test results, we didn't find it.**

Commonly known toxic substances tested for and **NOT FOUND** in your drinking water:

- arsenic
- barium
- cadmium
- cryptosporidium
- cyanide
- giardia lamblia
- legionella
- mercury
- radium
- selenium
- thallium
- uranium

## PFAS CHEMICALS

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are long lasting chemicals used worldwide in industry and consumer products. Known as “forever chemicals,” PFAS break down very slowly in the environment and can dissolve in water. PFAS have been found in water, air, fish, and soil at locations around the globe. Studies link some PFAS to harmful health effects. The ACC PUD participated in a Georgia Environmental Protection Division monitoring project and found that all regulated and unregulated PFAS have been below EPA recommended guidelines and/or MCLs. The ACC PUD continues to invest in testing and participate in monitoring projects to ensure we stay below the EPA recommended guidelines and/or MCLs. The ACC PUD is committed to providing safe drinking water and will update our findings in regards to PFAS at [www.accgov.com/10543/PFAS](http://www.accgov.com/10543/PFAS).

## UNDERSTANDING MEASUREMENTS



### Part Per Million (ppm)

1 drop in **13.2 gallons of water** = 1 ppm

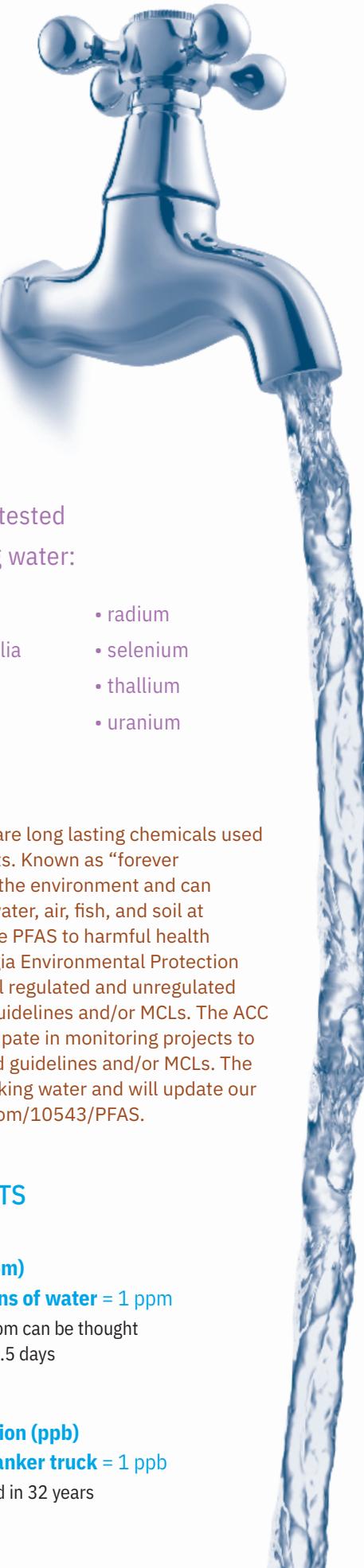
Or, in terms of time, ppm can be thought of as one second in 11.5 days



### Part Per Billion (ppb)

1 drop in a **tanker truck** = 1 ppb

Or, one second in 32 years



## TERMS TO KNOW

**AL (ACTION LEVEL)** The concentration of a contaminant, which if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**MCLG (MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL GOAL)** 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.

**MCL (MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL)** 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.

**MAXIMUM RESIDUAL DISINFECTANT LEVEL (MRDL)** The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**MAXIMUM RESIDUAL DISINFECTANT LEVEL GOAL (MRDLG)** The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contamination.

**ND** Not detected.

**NTU (NEPHELOMETRIC TURBIDITY UNIT)** is a measurement of the clarity of the water.

**TT (TREATMENT TECHNIQUE)** A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**TURBIDITY (cloudiness of water)** has no health effects, but we measure turbidity because it can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth.

# 2023 Water Test Results

Results of Athens-Clarke County's Public Utilities Department tests of treated water shown in comparison to EPA standards.

Substance	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Detected Level (what we found)	Meets EPA Standard	
Copper**	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	1.30 ppm	AL 1.30 ppm	0.036 ppm 0.00 over AL	✓	
Lead**	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	0.00 ppb	AL 15.00 ppb	7.5 ppb 2.0 over AL	✓	
Fluoride	Water additive that promotes strong teeth	4.00 ppm	4.00 ppm	Max 1.20 ppm Average 0.74 ppm Actual Range 0.45–1.20 ppm	✓	
Nitrate (Nitrogen)	Runoff from fertilizer use	10.00 ppm	10.00 ppm	0.80 ppm	✓	
Haloacetic Acids	Corrosion of private household plumbing systems	0.00 ppb	60.00 ppb (annual average)	32.60 ppb* Detected Range 20.50–52.00 ppb	✓	
Filtered Turbidity	Soil runoff	0.00 NTU	TT = 1.00 NTU  TT = 95% of samples ≤ 0.30 NTU	0.17 (highest single measurement)  100.00% ≤ 0.30 NTU	✓	
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs)	By-product of drinking water chlorination	0.00 ppb	80.00 ppb* (annual average)	38.60 ppb* Detected Range 18.30–86.20 ppb	✓	
Substance	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MRDLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MDRL)	Detected Level (what we found)	Meets EPA Standard	
Chlorine	Water additive for disinfection	4.00 ppm (MRDLG)	4.00 ppm (MRDL)	Max 1.78 ppm Average 0.89 ppm	✓	
Substance	Typical Source	EPA Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Range of Removal	Annual Average Removal	Meets EPA Standard
Total Organic Carbon	Naturally present in the environment	N/A	TT	0.20–1.3 ppm 13.0%–45.0%	0.70 ppm 31.38%	✓

\*System-wide running annual average. \*\*EPA regulations require testing every three years; latest testing done in 2021 for copper and lead.

# Summary of 2023 Water Test Results

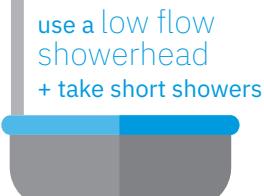
<h3>Copper**</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>0.036 ppm</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 1.30 ppm</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>0.036 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 1.30 ppm	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems		<h3>Lead**</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>7.5 ppb</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 15.0 ppb</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>7.5 ppb</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 15.0 ppb	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems		<h3>Haloacetic Acids</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>32.60 ppb*</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed 60.0 ppb*</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>32.60 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 60.0 ppb*	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems	
Amount we found <b>0.036 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 1.30 ppm																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems																				
Amount we found <b>7.5 ppb</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed AL 15.0 ppb																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems																				
Amount we found <b>32.60 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 60.0 ppb*																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Corrosion of household plumbing systems																				
<h3>Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMS)</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>38.60 ppb*</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed 80.0 ppb*</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>38.60 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 80.0 ppb*	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection		<h3>Chlorine</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>max 1.78 ppm</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>max 1.78 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection								
Amount we found <b>38.60 ppb*</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 80.0 ppb*																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection																				
Amount we found <b>max 1.78 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> By-product of drinking water disinfection																				
<h3>Fluoride</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>max 1.20 ppm</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Water additive that promotes strong teeth         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>max 1.20 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Water additive that promotes strong teeth		<h3>Filtered Turbidity</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>100.00% <math>\leq 0.3</math> NTU</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed TT = 1 NTU TT = 95% of samples <math>\leq 0.3</math> NTU</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Soil runoff         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>100.00% <math>\leq 0.3</math> NTU</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT = 1 NTU TT = 95% of samples $\leq 0.3$ NTU	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Soil runoff								
Amount we found <b>max 1.20 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 4.0 ppm																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Water additive that promotes strong teeth																				
Amount we found <b>100.00% <math>\leq 0.3</math> NTU</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT = 1 NTU TT = 95% of samples $\leq 0.3$ NTU																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Soil runoff																				
<h3>Nitrate (Nitrogen)</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Amount we found <b>0.80 ppm</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed 10.0 ppm</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Runoff from fertilizer use         </td></tr> </table>	Amount we found <b>0.80 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 10.0 ppm	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Runoff from fertilizer use		<h3>Total Organic Carbon</h3> <table> <tr> <td>Range of removal <b>0.20–1.3 ppm</b></td><td>Highest EPA Level Allowed TT</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  <b>Meets EPA Standards</b> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>How it gets into the water:</b> Naturally present in the environment         </td></tr> </table>	Range of removal <b>0.20–1.3 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT	 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>		<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Naturally present in the environment		<p>*System-wide running annual average</p> <p>**EPA regulations require testing every three years; latest testing done in 2021 for copper and lead.</p>						
Amount we found <b>0.80 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed 10.0 ppm																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Runoff from fertilizer use																				
Range of removal <b>0.20–1.3 ppm</b>	Highest EPA Level Allowed TT																			
 <b>Meets EPA Standards</b>																				
<b>How it gets into the water:</b> Naturally present in the environment																				

# Let's be WATER WISE!

The PUD website is flush with water saving resources. Do a household water assessment, get tips for leak detection, and more at [ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com).

use trees & shade to keep areas cool

showers can use up to 50% less water than baths



install a WaterSense labeled toilet or a dual flush toilet



turn off sprinklers on windy days

use a carwash facility that recycles water

install high efficiency appliances

wait for a full load before running the dishwasher

use a rain barrel to collect water for landscaping

Barrel art by Marisa Leilani Mustard

fill your garden with native plants



avoid fertilizers & pesticides that can pollute our water



keep mulch at least 3 inches deep



water infrequently but deeply (4-6 inches)

sweep your patio instead of spraying down with a hose

improve soil so it dries more slowly – add organic matter like compost to potted plants and gardens

use drip irrigation and only water soil that is dry

use porous materials for patios and walkways so water can flow through

## what you can do to protect your water

- Never pour hazardous waste down the drain, on the ground, or into storm sewers.
- Limit the use of pesticides or fertilizers.
- Dispose of your medications properly – visit [accgov.com/6344/What-should-I-do-with-old-prescriptions](http://accgov.com/6344/What-should-I-do-with-old-prescriptions)
- Always pick up after your dog.
- Never sweep litter or debris into a storm drain.

# Join us. Community counts!



## Rivers Alive

Participate in the annual clean-up of our local waterways. For more info, visit [accgov.com/riversalive](http://accgov.com/riversalive)

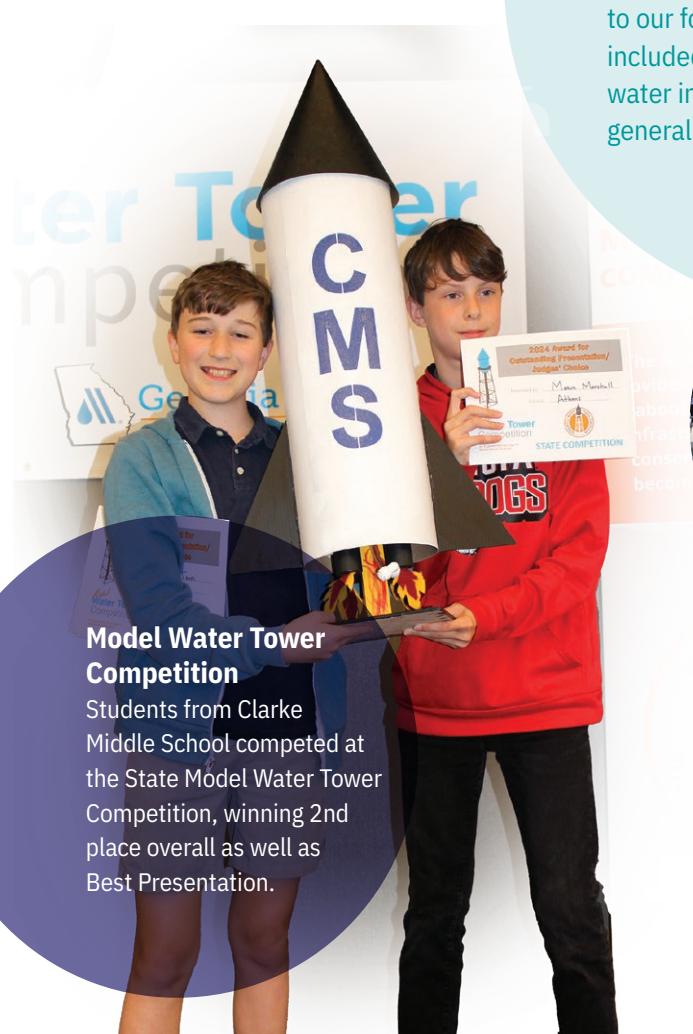
## Plant of the Year!

The J.G. Beacham Drinking Water Treatment Plant received the 2024 Best Operated Plant of the Year Award from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals in the Surface Water 25 MGD – 49.99 MGD category. Additionally, they achieved the GAWP Gold Award for not having any permit violations during the 2023 calendar year.



## 85 tours

to our four facilities! **1780 participants** included students from local schools, water industry professionals, and the general public.



## Model Water Tower Competition

Students from Clarke Middle School competed at the State Model Water Tower Competition, winning 2nd place overall as well as Best Presentation.



## Facility Tours

The journey of your drinking water is an exciting trip. See the treatment process firsthand through a tour of our plant. Visit [ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com) for updates about the next public tour or view our engaging tour video.



## Athens Water Festival

Learn, splash, and play at our annual water celebration – one of the best family events in town! Save the date for this year's festival – September 7, 2024. [AthensWaterFestival.com](http://AthensWaterFestival.com)



## Public Utilities

124 East Hancock Ave.  
Athens, Georgia 30601



**Water Bill Questions**  
706-613-3500

**Administration**  
706-613-3470

**Water Conservation**  
706-613-3729

**To Report a Water Leak**  
706-613-3495

**Emergencies**  
706-613-3481



**ENTER TO WIN!** Find the faucet icon hidden in this water quality report and enter to win a bucket of water gifts! Tell us at [accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout](http://accgov.com/LittleLilyLookout). Entries are accepted until July 31, 2024.

[accgov.com/publicutilities](http://accgov.com/publicutilities)  
[ThinkAtTheSink.com](http://ThinkAtTheSink.com)

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK,  
TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM.**

-  [facebook.com/accpublicutilities](https://facebook.com/accpublicutilities)
-  [twitter.com/ACCWaterWarrior](https://twitter.com/ACCWaterWarrior)
-  [instagram.com/lilyannephibian](https://instagram.com/lilyannephibian)



### LEARN MORE

All PUD records are available to the public. Commission meetings, where all major water and wastewater projects are reviewed and approved, are open to the public and televised on ACTV Cable Channel 180. For more details, visit: [accgov.com](http://accgov.com).



### WANT MORE INFORMATION ON WATER QUALITY?

- Contact Jackie Sherry at 706-613-3729
- Email [savewater@accgov.com](mailto:savewater@accgov.com)
- Visit [epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water](http://epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water)