summer 2012

waterSOURCE

a Publication of the Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department

Athens-Clarke County is experiencing a SEVERE* drought!

Please follow the Outdoor Watering Schedule:

Watering is allowed one day per week, weekends only.

Saturday – addresses ending in even numbers

Sunday – addresses ending in odd numbers

NO WATERING between 10 AM and 4 PM on any day.

For exemptions, call the Water Conservation Office at 706-613-3729, email savewater@athensclarkecounty, or visit www.thinkatthesink.com

*Level D2 Severe Drought, as classified by U.S. Drought Monitor, http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Inside: Your water quality report

This annual report provides you with vital information on the quality of your drinking water. The Public Utility Department staff works diligently to ensure that you have high quality, reliable drinking water and that the water you use is safely returned to our waterways. We're dedicated to helping everyone in our community – from children to senior citizens – use water wisely and protect this vital resource.

Recent awards reflect our commitment to serving you well:

Water Distribution System
2011 Water Distribution System of the Year Award for medium-sized systems – Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP)

J. G. Beacham Water Treatment Plant
GAWP Gold Award – 4th consecutive year

Middle Oconee Water Reclamation Facility
GAWP Gold Award – This achievement, recognizing a full year of perfect compliance with Georgia permitting regulations, is especially significant because the facility was under major reconstruction that disrupted normal operations.

Water Conservation Office
Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization Award – Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia

Project WET 2012 Organization of the Year Award, for providing quality water education to students and a well-rounded program of water stewardship and conservation.

Fox McCarthy Award, for an outstanding water conservation program – Georgia Water Wise Council of GAWP

Congrats to our water conservation leaders

The Gilles Allard family and Clarke County School District have earned Water Conservation Leadership Awards for their significant commitment to water conservation.

The Allard family only uses an average of 35 gallons of water a day – the typical average daily use per person is 69 gallons! Their conservation efforts include relying on rain collection for watering their vegetable garden and good daily habits, such as only using their dishwasher when full and saving running water before it gets hot for use on plants.

When the Clarke County School District conducted a major renovation of Fowler Drive Elementary School last year, they took the opportunity to make innovative strides in water conservation. The school now has a rainwater recycling system that is used to flush toilets. They are also collecting rainwater in cisterns for irrigation. Best of all, both systems are part of their science curriculum.

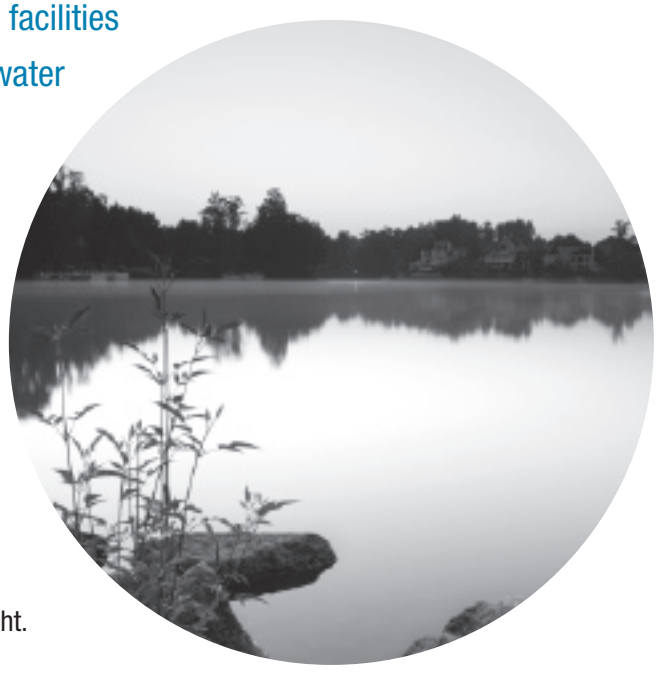
Congratulations and sincere thanks to the Allard Family and Clarke County School District for their dedication to water conservation!

¿HABLA ESPANOL? Este Informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

drinking water

protecting our water sources

For 50 years Athens-Clarke County has been safeguarding and replenishing the rivers that serve as water sources not only for our community, but communities downstream. Through our water reclamation process, we reclaim, refresh, and return the water that you have used safely to our waterways. Our water reclamation facilities produce high quality water superior to treated water from traditional wastewater treatment plants.



Reservoir helps safeguard our ecosystem

Bear Creek Reservoir is an important part of our water supply system that helps protect the quality of our water resources. The health of rivers depends upon having a certain level of water flowing. Below this level, the ecosystem and water quality can be threatened. This means we are limited on the amount of water we can draw from the North and Middle Oconee rivers for our use when water levels drop dangerously low, such as in times of drought. During these critical times, the reservoir provides us with water, helping to safeguard the ecosystem and water quality of the North and Middle Oconee rivers.

You can help, too

- ALWAYS pick up after your dog wherever they go.
- ALWAYS keep fertilizers and pesticides off of paved surfaces and follow the directions on the package label.
- ALWAYS maintain your car to prevent leaks of toxic chemicals.
- NEVER toss a cigarette butt on the ground or out a car window.
- NEVER sweep litter or debris into a storm drain.
- NEVER put any type of grease down a drain.
- NEVER dump cleaning products, chemicals, or paints down a drain.

The journey of your water is an interesting trip!

Join us for a tour through the J.G. Beacham Water Treatment Plant and Bob M. Snipes Water Resource Center to learn more about water treatment and testing.

To schedule a tour, contact the Water Conservation Office, at 706-613-3729 or savewater@athensclarkecounty.com

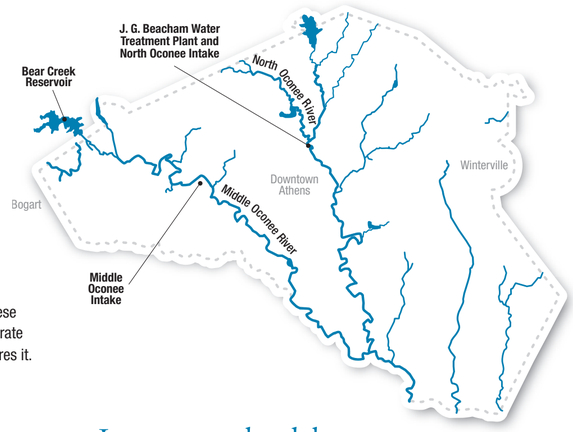
See something dumped down a storm drain or into a stream? Suspect pollution in a stream? Email stormwater@athensclarkecounty.com or call 706.613.3440.

2011 about your water test results

Your water, treated and delivered by Athens-Clarke County, meets or surpasses all state and federal standards for safe drinking water. This annual report, required by the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act, provides you with vital information on the quality of your drinking water.

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. The rivers flow through Athens-Clarke County before merging to form the main stem of the Oconee River. From these sources it travels through an elaborate system that treats, moves, and stores it.



Georgia Water Assessment Program

In order to protect public drinking water supplies at the source – our rivers, lakes and streams – the State of Georgia has established a Source Water Assessment Program. As part of this program, Athens-Clarke County and the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center completed a Source Water Assessment of the Middle Oconee and North Oconee rivers. The assessment identified potential sources of pollution and the overall susceptibility of our water supply to contamination. Both rivers have been ranked with a medium level of pollution susceptibility. Copies of the *ACC Source Water Assessment Report* are available at the Public Utilities Department Administration Office, 124 East Hancock Avenue in downtown Athens.

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. For more information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

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/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).

The charts below show the findings of our water testing after treatment and how it compares to national standards.

Better than EPA Standard	Contaminant	Typical Source	EPA Ideal Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Detected Level (what we found)
✓	Copper	Corrosion of household plumbing systems	1.3 ppm	AL 1.3 ppm	0.06 ppm 0 over AL
✓	Fluoride	Water additive that promotes strong teeth	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0.90 ppm Actual range 0.50–0.90 ppm
✓	Lead	Corrosion of household plumbing systems	0.0 ppb	AL 15.0 ppb	2.5 ppb 0 over AL
✓	Nitrate (Nitrogen)	Runoff from fertilizer use	10.0 ppm	10.0 ppm	0.55 ppm
✓	Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMS)	By-product of drinking water chlorination	0.0 ppb	80.0 ppb (annual average)	37.85 ppb (annual average) Quarterly range 23.10–48.28 ppb
✓	Turbidity	Soil runoff	0.0	TT = 1 NTU	0.52 (highest single measurement)
				TT = 95% of samples<0.3 NTU	98.8% <0.3 NTU

Better than EPA Standard	Contaminant	Typical Source	EPA Ideal Goal (MCLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MCL)	Range of Removal	Annual Average Removal
✓	Total Organic Compounds	Naturally present in the environment	N/A	TT (>35% removal required)	21.1%–53.6%	40.6%

Better than EPA Standard	Contaminant	Typical Source	EPA Ideal Goal (MRDLG)	Highest EPA Allowed Level (MDRL)	Detected Level (what we found)
✓	Chlorine	Water additive for disinfection	4.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	1.90 ppm

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.

ppm (parts per million) The equivalent of one drop of water in 42 gallons.

ppb (parts per billion) The equivalent of one drop of water in 14,000 gallons.

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.

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.

TT (Treatment Technique) A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Turbidity A measure of the cloudiness of water. We monitor turbidity because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system. NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit) is a measurement of the clarity of the water.

Why are there contaminants in drinking water?

As we learned in school, pure water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. However, drinking water sources include streams, lakes, rivers, reservoirs and wells, which are never purely hydrogen and oxygen. They are subject to potential "contamination" by a wide variety of substances that occur naturally or are man-made. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves natural minerals, and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from human activity or the presence of animals.

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 protection for public health.

Contaminants that may be present in source water before it is treated

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm 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 septic systems

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and 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

What about lead in drinking water?

Testing shows that the amount of lead in our drinking water is well below the EPA's allowed levels (see chart on right) However, lead in elevated levels can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. It is important to know that lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with water service lines and home plumbing. The Public Utilities Department is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in residential plumbing.

When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds up 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 Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Want to know more?

The PUD provides opportunity for public comment on all projects, and all records are available to the public. The Mayor and Commission review and approve all major water and wastewater projects at regularly scheduled meetings. These commission meetings, held at City Hall, are open to the public and televised locally on ACTV Cable Channel 7. Commission meeting information is available at www.athensclarkecounty.com.

For questions about this report or assistance with environmental or regulatory issues, contact Jeff Knight at 706-613-3470 or email Jeff.Knight@athensclarkecounty.com

To report a water quality problem or to request water testing, call our water treatment plant at 706-613-3481.

ACC Public Utilities Department
www.athensclarkecounty.com/publicutilities

Georgia Environmental Protection Division
georgiaepd.org

Water Resources of Georgia
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
http://ga.water.usgs.gov

EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline
1-800-426-4791
water.epa.gov/drink

For Kids and Teachers
water.epa.gov/learn/kids/drinkingwater

Summer 2012 & 2011 Water Quality Report

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Public Utilities Department

124 East Hancock Ave., Athens, Georgia 30601
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday

Administration
706-613-3470

Customer Service Center
706-613-3500

Water Conservation
706-613-3729

Water Waste Hotline
706-613-3014

To Report a Water Leak
706-613-3495

Emergencies
706-613-3481

www.athensclarkecounty.com/publicutilities

www.thinkatthesink.com

Find us on facebook:
Water Conservation Office – Athens-Clarke County

Printed locally on recycled paper.

Our water conservation mascot, Lily Anne Phibian.

Support wise water use and become Lily's Facebook friend!

News from Lily Anne Phibian

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!! It was so much fun, we're doing it again! The third annual Athens Water Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 8, 2012, at Sandy Creek Park.

Congratulations to the Clarke County School District for their water conservation efforts at Fowler Drive Elementary School and to the Gilles family for their commitment to conservation.

We are having an Eco-Film Contest and need your help! Please contact us at savewater@athensclarkecounty.com for more information.

We are under a SEVERE drought! Follow the outdoor water restrictions and conserve water whenever you can. Check the current watering schedule on the front page of this newsletter and visit www.thinkatthesink.com for more information.