

Annual
WATER
QUALITY
REPORT

Reporting Year 2013



Presented By
Highridge Water Authority

PWS ID#: 5650069

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

At Your Service

We are once again proud to present our annual water quality report covering all testing performed between January 1 and December 31, 2013. Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to producing drinking water that meets all state and federal standards. We continually strive to adopt new methods for delivering the best-quality drinking water to you. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, we remain vigilant in meeting the goals of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users.

Please remember that we are always available to assist you should you ever have any questions or concerns about your water.

Bottled Water Less Regulated Than Tap Water

Due to aggressive marketing, the bottled water industry has successfully convinced people that water purchased in bottles is a healthier alternative to tap water. However, according to a four-year study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council, bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water. In fact, about 25 percent of bottled water is actually just bottled tap water (40 percent according to government estimates).

FDA regulations for bottled water allow for less rigorous testing and purity standards than those required for community tap water. Further, the FDA completely exempts bottled water that's packaged and sold within the same state, which accounts for about 70 percent of all bottled water sold in the United States.

People spend 1,000 times more per gallon for bottled water than they typically do for tap water. If you get your recommended eight glasses a day from bottled water, you could spend up to \$1,400 annually. The same amount of tap water would cost about \$1.35 cents per year.

For a detailed discussion on the NRDC study results, check out their Web site at www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bw/exesum.asp.

Water Sources of Highridge

The water system is currently supplied by a series of mountain reservoirs with a combined total raw water storage capacity of approximately 400 million gallons.

These reservoirs, amidst western Pennsylvania's Laurel Mountains, are located on Tubmill Creek south of New Florence, and on Big Springs Run and Little Sugar Run outside the borough of Seward.

Additional Sources of Water

Highridge purchases small volumes daily from Blairsville Municipal Authority (BMA) and occasionally trades water with Central Indiana County Water Authority (CICWA). BMA's source is located east of the village of Hillside on Chestnut Ridge in Derry Township. Yellow Creek is CICWA's source.

Reporting Error

In July 2013, a clerical error resulted in incorrect testing results being submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection. Once notified, the information was corrected and re-sent. In the future, however, to ensure that our reports are accurate when submitted to state and federal agencies, we have implemented a peer review process. Despite this oversight, we can assure everyone that the quality of water was never compromised.

Lead in Home Plumbing

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 service lines and home plumbing. We are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in household 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 Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Illegal Fire Hydrant Use

The use of fire hydrants by anyone other than Highridge Water Authority employees or local fire departments is a misdemeanor of the third degree, subject to fines and punishable by up to a year in jail.

Keep in mind that all costs to produce water are passed on to customers. In addition, the improper use of hydrants can result in broken hydrants, water main breaks, and dirty water.

Please report any suspicious use of fire hydrants to Highridge immediately. If your tips lead to the prosecution of offenders, we will give you a cash reward or credit on your water bill! Please call (888) 557-4343 to report use during business hours or (800) 847-6637 after normal hours.

Important Health Information

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants may be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The U.S. EPA/CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or <http://water.epa.gov/drink/hotline>.

Be Notified of Water Emergencies

Although Highridge is one of the most dependable water utilities, emergencies do occur. You can be notified and updated in several ways about service interruptions.

- * Be sure we have a working phone number so you can be notified promptly by a recorded message.
- * Provide Highridge with an email address and receive news alerts.
- * Log onto our Web site, www.highridgewater.org, to get the latest news. It can also be used to pay water bills, find plumbing supply stores, and obtain tips for conserving water.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call George E. Sulkosky, Executive Director, at (724) 459-8033.

System Improvements

More than \$750,000 was invested by Highridge Water Authority during 2013 as we continued to extend water service, relocate distribution mains, and repair aging facilities. It was also necessary that we replace pumping facilities, filtration equipment, and telecommunications technology this past year.

With the assistance of Congressman Bill Shuster, Highridge was able to match federal monies to construct 18,500 linear feet of water mains in Brush Valley Township, Indiana County. Another 2,000 feet was relocated to accommodate several PennDOT safety initiatives that included the new bridge in Seward for carrying Route 56 traffic over Norfolk Southern's railroad tracks.

Several boil water notices, affecting thousands of Commonwealth residents, have been issued by local water systems recently. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, therefore, during its annual inspection, suggested that Highridge consider upgrading the monitoring equipment at its two filter plants before any water quality issues arise.

Despite having performed unflinching during its nearly two decades of use, precision instrument panels on all 13 individual filters were nevertheless replaced and chlorine monitoring equipment renewed. Additional updates are scheduled for this year. The two plants produce a combined total of 1.7 million gallons of water daily.

Other facilities vital to the operation of a regional water system had upgrades as well. The scarcity of replacement parts made repairs difficult, so it was necessary to purchase new telecommunications equipment for the remote monitoring and operating of various pump stations and water tanks. To guard against extended power outages, backup generator hook-ups were also installed.

The cooperation of local borough, township, and county officials in addressing the ongoing needs of the public for safe drinking water and reliable service cannot be understated. Special regards are extended to Congressman Bill Shuster, State Senators Don White and Kim Ward, and State Representative Dave Reed for locating resources and providing assistance and guidance in dealing with federal and state agencies.

The population served by Highridge in Westmoreland, Indiana, and Cambria counties now exceeds 12,000.



Renovations were completed on valve house at Torrance Tank.

Are You Impacting Your Water Quality?

The most common signs that your faucet or sink is affecting the quality of your drinking water are discolored water, sink or faucet stains, a buildup of particles, unusual odors or tastes, and a reduced flow of water. The solutions to these problems may be in your hands.

- Hand washing, soap scum buildup, and the handling of raw meats and vegetables can contaminate your sink. Standing water in clogged sinks are sources of contamination also.
- Chemicals and bacteria could splash and accumulate on the faucet screen in addition to particles like sediment and minerals resulting in a decreased flow from the faucet. Particles in the faucet screen could be pieces of plastic from the hot water heater dip tube. White scaling on faucets and shower heads can be cleaned with white vinegar.
- A smell of rotten eggs is a sign of bacteria on your water filters. Regular filter replacement is important. (Remember to replace your refrigerator filter!)

Community Participation

Highridge Water Authority (HWA) encourages its customers to participate in our meetings, held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Authority's conference room at 17 Maple Avenue in Blairsville.

Substances That Could Be in Water

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. EPA prescribes regulations limiting the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals, in some cases, radioactive material, and substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Substances that may be present in source water include: **Microbial Contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, or wildlife; **Inorganic Contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or may result from urban stormwater 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 residential uses; **Organic Chemical Contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and may also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems; **Radioactive Contaminants**, which can be naturally occurring or may be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

For more information about contaminants and potential health effects, call the U.S. EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Sampling Results

During the past year we have taken hundreds of water samples in order to determine the presence of any radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic or synthetic organic contaminants. The state requires us to monitor for certain substances less often than once per year because the concentration of these substances do not change frequently. In these cases, the most recent sample data are included, along with the year in which the sample was taken.

REGULATED SUBSTANCES									
				Highridge Water Authority		Blairsville Municipal Authority			
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Barium (ppm)	2013	2	2	0.037	0.036–0.037	0.037 ¹	0.037–0.037 ¹	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Chlorine [Distribution] (ppm)	2013	[4]	[4]	0.495	0.495–0.743	0.26	0.26–1.31	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Chlorine [Entry Point] ²	2013	MinRDL=0.2	NA	0.5	0.05–1.5	0.4	0.4–1.5	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Di(2-ethylhexyl) Phthalate (ppb)	2011	6	0	1.1	ND–4.4	NA	NA	No	Discharge from rubber and chemical factories
Fluoride (ppm)	2012	2	2	NA	NA	1	1–1	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Haloacetic Acids [HAA]–Stage 1 (ppb)	2013	60	NA	45 ³	18.8–92.3	14	10–18	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Nitrate (ppm)	2013	10	10	2.13 ⁴	ND–8.55	0.19	0.19–0.19	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrite (ppm)	2013	1	1	NA	NA	0.11	0.11–0.11	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes]–Stage 1 (ppb)	2013	80	NA	40 ⁵	6.96–88	41	15–68	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Organic Carbon (ppm)	2013	TT	NA	0.6	ND–0.9	0.7	0.5–0.9	No	Naturally present in the environment
Turbidity (NTU)	2013	TT	NA	0.11	0.03–0.11	NA	NA	No	Soil runoff
Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community									
				Highridge Water Authority		Blairsville Municipal Authority			
SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
Copper (ppm)	2013	1.3	1.3	0.106	0/30	0	0/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Lead (ppb)	2013	15	0	0	0/30	0	2/20	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES (HIGHRIDGE WATER AUTHORITY)

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	TYPICAL SOURCE
Nickel (ppm)	2013	0.0015	0.0014–0.0015	Naturally present in the environment

¹ Sampled in 2012.

² The amount-detected value for chlorine (entry point) represents the lowest level that was detected.

³ Despite one high reading, compliance is determined by the running annual average from quarterly sampling. The average in 2013 for Haloacetic Acids was 45 ppb, well below the maximum level of 60 ppb.

⁴ The amount detected represents the average result of testing done in 2013.

⁵ Despite one high reading, compliance is determined by the running annual average from quarterly sampling. The average for 2013 for TTHMs was 40, well below the maximum level of 80 ppb.

Definitions

AL (Action Level): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

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.

MinRDL (Minimum Residual Disinfectant Level): The minimum level of residual disinfectant required at the entry point to the distribution system.

MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level): 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.

MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal): 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 contaminants.

NA: Not applicable

ND (Not detected): Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.

NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units): Measurement of the clarity, or turbidity, of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

ppb (parts per billion): One part substance per billion parts water (or micrograms per liter).

ppm (parts per million): One part substance per million parts water (or milligrams per liter).

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