# DRINKING WATER PFAS ISSUES

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## Timeline of Events

June 2020

- The City of Eau Claire proactively sampled their drinking water for PFAS compounds
- The sample was collected at the Entry Point
- All PFAS compounds detected were below Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Recommended Enforcement Standards

April 2021

- The DNR asked to partner with the City of Eau Claire in a PFAS sampling campaign
- Another sample was collected at the Entry Point and results were shared with the DNR
- All compounds detected were again below the DNR Recommended Standards

June 8, 2021

- The Department of Health Services (DHS) implements a new method for looking at PFAS called the Hazard Index outside of DNR rulemaking on the Recommended ES

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- The Hazard Index takes the level found for each PFAS compound in ppt divided by its' respective Recommended Enforcement Standard to come up with a ratio. The ratio for all PFAS compounds detected are then added together to give a score. A score of 1.0 or higher suggests that further investigation is warranted

July 1, 2021

- The DNR hosts a meeting with the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire City/County Health Dept. and the DHS
- The DNR notifies us that we did not exceed any Recommended Enforcement Standards
- The DHS unveils their new Hazard Index and explains that we were slightly over the threshold of 1.0
- In response to the findings, the City of Eau Claire immediately samples all of their wells, their stripping tower, raw water and entry point

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July 8, 2021

- Sample results are received from EuroFins Test America in Sacramento California
- The results indicate that four of our sixteen wells have slightly higher levels of PFAS
- The four wells are immediately turned off

July 9, 2021

- The City of Eau Claire meets with Health Dept., DNR and DHS to discuss the results of our testing
- Our Incident Command structure is shared with the group

July 12, 2021

- A press release was delivered
- A virtual media conference was held
- A hotline number and website were established
- A follow-up sample was taken at the Entry Point, only a 0.2 Hazard Index detected

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Late July/early August 2021

- Three more wells were turned off due to increasing PFAS levels
- After turning off the initial four wells, PFAS was drawn to wells that were in use
- Entered into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the DNR with milestones to meet

August 17, 2021

- In an effort to prevent PFAS from spreading to more of our wells, work begins in the well field to allow us to surface discharge well water into our existing lagoons
- Strategic selection of wells discharging into ponds is hoped to contain PFAS plume
- Existing lagoons totaling 30 acres are cleared and grubbed
- Piping work is done in the well field
- The lagoons are shaped and heavy soils removed to promote absorption
- Lagoons are now called absorption ponds due to their design and change of purpose

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## WORK IN THE WELL FIELD

24" HDPE OUTFALL

SOUTH ABSORPTION POND

NORTH ABSORPTION POND

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August 18, 2021

- Began working with Gannett Fleming to do groundwater modeling
- Goal of identifying the PFAS plume, direction of travel, duration of impact, modeling different well combinations

September 28, 2021

- Started discharging wells 11, 15 and 16 to the absorption ponds at a rate of 5 mgd
- Subsequent sampling showed improved Hazard Index for Entry Point and five wells

October 27, 2021

- Met with Gannett Fleming to review their groundwater modeling study
- Learned that many of our wells draw water from the aquifer below the Chippewa River, which is contrary to prior beliefs
- In response to these findings we started dumping wells 15 and 19 to the absorption ponds at a rate of 3.3 mgd

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Currently

- Entry Point remains below Recommended Enforcement Standards and Hazard Index
- We solicited for a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for an engineering firm to guide us through the next phase of the PFAS issue
- Discharge to the absorption ponds is a temporary response so now we will be considering options and recommendations from the engineering firm selected
- Potential treatment options are mostly untested with uncertain results, high cost and disposal complications for filtration media
- Other responses include drilling new wells in areas not affected by PFAS
- The DNR has identified the airport as a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) and they are handling the investigation
- Looking into potential grant money, Federal or State funding
- Following DNR rulemaking process with assistance of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities

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