

La Mesa Water Cooperative

PO Box 53, Placitas NM, 87043

Update on Water Availability and Water Quality

September 2013

We are now in our third year of extreme drought. Because the aquifers supplying our water are replenished by surface precipitation, prolonged or extreme drought may influence our water supply. This appears to be happening because we are experiencing an unusually large decline in the water levels in our wells.

This decline in water levels is not producing a meaningful decline in the availability of water. **We do not expect to experience a shortage of water.** However, our routine testing has indicated that the drop in water levels has been accompanied by an increase in the amount of arsenic in the water from two of our wells.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element that is present in many water supplies in the Southwest. For many years the arsenic levels were required to be less than 50 ppb (parts per billion). In 2006 this standard, which is computed as a yearly running average, was lowered to the current level of 10 ppb. Our arsenic concerns involve wells #2 and #6.

Well # 2

- This is our oldest and least productive well. Its arsenic levels were consistently less than 10 ppb for many years. However, the arsenic level has shown a steady increase for about a year. It reached 11 in March, 14 in June, and 21 in August. This well produces only 10% of our water and this water is diluted by low arsenic water from nearby well #5.
- We have just been notified that water from this well is violation of water quality standards. **This is not an emergency.** The required notice of violation appears on the back of this page and will be posted on bulletin boards near the mailboxes.
- **We have removed well #2 from service. The violation is no longer present.**

Well # 6

- This well went into service in April of 2013. At that time, its arsenic level was 8.6. We subsequently experienced a large drop in the water level and the August test found an arsenic level of 13. We are carefully monitoring this well.
- We anticipated an eventual need for arsenic treatment at #6 and planned to have it ready by 2015 in case it became necessary. We are now planning to begin arsenic treatment by next summer (2014). All of the necessary engineering and design has been done, and we have sufficient reserve funds to pay for it. We do not anticipate that an earlier start arsenic treatment will have much influence on rates, but a modest increase in rates may be required because of the operating cost.

Summary

1. We are experiencing an increase in arsenic levels at well #2 and well #6.
2. Water from well #2 is in violation of water quality standards and the well has been removed from service.
3. We are carefully monitoring Well #6 and plan to have arsenic removal equipment operating at the well by next summer.
4. We do not expect to experience a water shortage.
5. If you have any questions, please contact any Board member.

Board of Directors

Bob Blanchard (802) 922-1042
Bob Davey 771-3434
Marty Davis 771-9127

Gordon Forbes 771-3464
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Turn page over to see required violation notice

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

La Mesa Water Coop Has Levels of Arsenic Above Drinking Water Standards

Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Testing results we received show that our system exceeds the standard or maximum contaminant level (MCL), for arsenic. The standard for arsenic is 0.010 mg/L. The average level of arsenic in samples taken during 3rd quarter 2013 was 0.012 mg/L. The table below shows the dates, locations, and values detected:

Sample Location	Sample Date	Quarter & Year	Result mg/L	RAA mg/L
Well 2	3/6/2013	1 st 2013	0.011	
Well 2	5/7/2013	2 nd 2013	0.014	
Well 2	7/22/2013	3 rd 2013	0.021	0.012

What should I do?

- There is nothing you need to do. You do not need to boil your water or take corrective actions. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.
- If you have a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at increased risk and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified within 24 hours. However, some people who drink water containing arsenic in excess of the MCL over many years could experience skin damage or problems with their circulatory system, and may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

What is being done?

Arsenic contamination is rarely due to human activity. We are currently evaluating our treatment technique processes. **We have resolved this issue. Well #2 has been removed from service.**

For more information, please contact:

Gordon Forbes 771-3464

or

La Mesa Water Coop, NM3500123
Po Box 53
Placitas, NM 87043

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.