

Well Connected®



A Publication of the Water Systems Council

WSC MEMBER NEWS

WSC Calendar

July 29-30, 2007

- **South Atlantic Well Drillers Jubilee**
Myrtle Beach Convention Center,
Myrtle Beach, SC

July 31, 2007

- **Board of Directors Meeting**
Sheraton Convention Center Hotel,
Myrtle Beach, SC

October 28-31, 2007

- **WSC Fall 2007 Members' Meeting & Board of Directors Meeting**
Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia
Island, FL

December 4-7, 2007

- **NGWA Expo** Orlando, FL

February 26-28, 2008

- **WSC Spring 2008 Members' Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting** Sofitel Lafayette Square Hotel, Washington, DC



WSC Develops Compilation CD

WSC recently unveiled a new CD that compiles of all of WSC's recent products and print materials – along with information on WSC's programs, services, and accomplishments in recent years – in one convenient place.

The CD, *wellcare® Resources and Materials on Wells and Groundwater*, opens with a 7-minute voice narrative and includes full copies of most of the publications and materials produced by WSC, including the *Water Systems Handbook*, a draft PowerPoint presentation for training pump installers, public service announcements, public information posters, research reports,

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WSC Responds to Article in *Babytalk* Magazine

Water Systems Council (WSC) sent a letter to the editor of *Babytalk* magazine in February, in response to an article in their March issue. The article included a reference to well water that may have unnecessarily raised alarm among the magazine's readers with private wells, while also offering questionable advice about boiling water as a treatment method.

In discussing whether parents should sterilize water before using it to mix infant formula, the article stated, "Your pediatrician may suggest that you boil the water you

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AROUND THE STATES

AZ Legislature Wrestles with Rural Water Concerns

The Arizona legislature is considering several bills that would regulate water use in areas of the state that were once considered rural, but are becoming increasingly strained by population growth. Bills under consideration this session would allow local governments to place new restrictions on development in areas that lack adequate water supplies, and would help areas short on water to fund supplemental water supplies.

In 1980, Arizona passed a historic law regulating water use in urban areas. The law imposed pumping restrictions in Phoenix, Tucson, and other parts of

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Westchester County, NY Passes Well Testing Ordinance

The Westchester County Board of Legislators unanimously approved a new law requiring a home's seller to have their well tested before completing the sale. The bill, passed May 21, also requires periodic well testing on rental properties.

Testing must be performed by a certified laboratory under strict Health Department guidelines. Test results must be delivered to the buyer within five days of receipt by the seller. If the well fails the test, the seller can either correct the problem, cancel the sale and return the buyer's down payment, or reach

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WSC MEMBER NEWS.....

Not a member? Join WSC!

WSC Membership benefits include:

- ◆ Discounts on publications (up to 25%)
- ◆ Free Membership Directory and hotlink to your website from WSC's website
- ◆ Free listing in PAS-97(04) and ANSI/WSC PST 2000-2005, if qualified (included in dues)
- ◆ Access to Members-Only Forum where you will find monthly updates on state legislative issues impacting our industry in Around The States
- ◆ Networking possibilities at WSC's spring and fall membership meetings
- ◆ Representation at the federal level through National Programs Office
- ◆ and more!

To become a member or for more information, contact

memberservices@water
systemsCouncil.org
or visit

www.watersystemscouncil.org/join

wellcare® Hotline

888-395-1033

WSC Responds to Article in *Babytalk Magazine*

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use to mix formula for the first few months to be safe, but others say not to worry about it unless you have well water or concerns about your local water supply."

In its response, WSC questioned the appropriateness of this statement, which not only unfairly questions the safety of well water – a safe, reliable, and affordable source of drinking water for millions of Americans – but may lead some readers to believe that boiling their drinking water is the safest action in *all* instances when their water source may be contaminated.

In her letter, WSC Executive Director Kathleen Stanley explained, "Boiling water vigorously for at least one minute helps assure that common bacteria are removed, however it could also concentrate other contaminants that are not usually present but could be in the water. For example, boiling drinking water is *not* recommended when nitrate, arsenic, lead or other toxic metals or chemicals are present in the water. Boiling the water will not remove these substances and, as mentioned above, may actually concentrate the levels of these contaminants, due to evaporation that occurs during boiling. Though less common than bacteria, these substances can be harmful to infants. For instance, high levels of nitrate in drinking water can lead to blue baby syndrome in infants under six months of age, and can be fatal."

"Water Systems Council (WSC) advises all well owners to test their water regularly, at least once per year, or more often if any contamination is suspected or when recommended by their local health department."

–WSC Executive Director, Kathleen Stanley, in response letter to the editor of *Babytalk magazine*

Stanley also provided information on WSC's wellcare® hotline, and a reference to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brochure, "Children and Drinking Water Standards," available at

www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/kidshealth/pdfs/brochure_childrenstandards.pdf.

wellcare® Hotline Update

Hotline Calls Total Nearly 1,400 Thus Far in 2007

The wellcare® hotline responded to nearly 1,400 inquiries between January and May of 2007, reports Hotline Specialist Charlene Greenstreet. This number is just below the total number of inquiries received during the same period last year.

Seventy-one percent of hotline calls came from well owners, while home or property buyers made up 9 percent of hotline calls. The majority of callers had questions concerning potential groundwater contaminants, water treatment, and/or questions about mechanical pumps.

Callers from 48 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Africa, and Germany contacted the hotline during the 5-month period, with the highest number of calls coming from Pennsylvania (6.3%), Arizona (6%), New York (6%), and Maryland (5%).

AZ Legislature Wrestles with Rural Water Concerns

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the state. The new legislation could impose similar restrictions to other areas of the state.

The mostly desert state is the country's fastest growing state in terms of population. Residents in eastern and northern Arizona already are trucking in water, and there are fears pumping could dry up rivers and streams elsewhere in the state.

Summit County, Colorado Cracks Down on Well Users

Well owners in Summit County, Colorado have received letters demanding that they limit water use, and threatening to revoke their well permits. The county is seeking to protect the holders of senior surface water rights in this prior appropriation state.

Although the well owners may use the water for indoor, domestic uses, many are restricted from using water for outdoor uses such as irrigation or washing a car. The state worries that water used outdoors will not return to streams and surface waters, impeding senior water rights.

The crackdown in Summit County reflects a national trend where state and local officials across the country are reexamining the connection between groundwater and surface water. In some states, the legal regimes for groundwater and surface water are different, further complicating the matter.

Idaho Threatens to Curtail Groundwater Rights

The latest round in the battle between the Idaho Department of Water Resources and groundwater users went to the state. On June 6, 2007, Fifth District Judge John Melanson dismissed a lawsuit filed against the department by Idaho Ground Water Appropriators Inc. (IGWA), which sought to bar the department from enforcing a curtailment order that would shut down water wells used by more than 700 farmers, dairymen and businesses located on more than 33,000 acres of the Magic Valley, in the south central portion of the state. Junior groundwater pumpers stand to lose \$38 million if they're curtailed, according to IGWA's attorney. Like Summit County, Colorado, this case involves senior surface water rights holders, as well as holders of ground water rights.

So far this spring, department Director David Tuthill has signed off on two separate rounds of curtailment letters. The first batch of letters, sent in response to calls for water by Blue Lakes Trout Farm and Clear Springs Foods' Snake River Farm, gave the groundwater pumpers until May 14 to find an alternative to a shutdown.

Instead, the users and the groundwater group challenged the state's plan in court. Fifth District Judge John Butler initially sided with the water users, issuing a temporary injunction barring the state from enforcing the shutdown. Melanson was then assigned to the case and dismissed the lawsuit.

The second batch of curtailment orders targeted 760 individual water users spread across more than 46,000 acres of south-central and eastern Idaho. Those water users averted a shutdown after the state approved a plan to set aside enough water to meet the needs of seven senior rights holders.

When he issued the order in late April, Tuthill said the shutdown was necessary to ensure enough water for two trout farms with more senior water rights. Tuthill said he will enforce the shutdown if necessary, but has also left open the possibility of finding an alternative solution.

Westchester, NY Passes Well Testing Ordinance

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an agreement with the buyer to continue the sale.

The landlord of a rental property served by a private well must have the well tested within the next year and at least once every five years thereafter. The landlord must share the test results with the tenants and provide bottled water if the well fails the test.

About 20,000 households, mostly in the northern part of Westchester, use private wells for their drinking water.

Vermont Supreme Court Rules Homebuyers Were Defrauded

The Vermont Supreme Court found that buyers of a home in Killington were victims of consumer fraud, after a real estate company failed to inform them that the water supply on the property they were buying had been tainted by a gasoline spill.

The ruling overturns a 2005 decision by a Rutland Superior Court jury, which found the real estate company was not at fault.

The home was one of 36 in the area with a water supply contaminated by methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) or other contaminants. Levels of MTBE on the property peaked at 27 parts per billion (ppb) in 2000 (well below the allowable limit of 40 ppb), and have since dropped. Court proceedings determined Killington Valley Real Estate knew the well was being monitored, but failed to disclose that information. The Superior Court jury determined that the omission was not significant enough to effect the home buyers' decision about the property, but the Supreme Court justices disagreed, saying the failure of the real estate company to tell the homebuyers about the gasoline spill was material "as a matter of law."

The case was sent back to the lower court to determine what damages the home buyers should receive under the state Consumer Fraud Act.

California Water Board Imposes Groundwater Tax

California's North San Joaquin Water Conservation District voted unanimously to impose a fee on private water well users. North San Joaquin district officials say the money is needed to pay for new pipelines and other equipment to take water from the Mokelumne River and deliver it to farms as well as put it underground to boost the aquifer. The state is threatening to take away the district's water rights if it cannot make full use of the water it is allocated.

Property owners could have thwarted the district's plan if a majority had filed protests. But of the 5,501 property owners potentially subject to the fees, only 974 protested, an attorney for the district said. Critics blamed the district for poor communication and claimed that as a result, some of the protests went astray in the mail or were never filed.

Under the fee, rural homeowners are asked to pay \$21.40 a year. Growers would be assessed anywhere from \$6.42 an acre to \$17.12 an acre. The fee would raise about \$900,000 a year. If nothing is done, the district loses its Mokelumne River water rights, and groundwater levels will keep falling at an average of 1 foot per year, said Ed Steffani, the district's manager.

State officials have threatened to step in and decide how much groundwater should be used in San Joaquin County. According to Steffani, such a move could include meters on farmers' wells, reducing groundwater pumping by 25 percent in the North San Joaquin district and hurting the economy.



EPA Proposes to Add Five Points Site to Superfund List

The EPA is proposing to add an area of groundwater contamination near Woods Cross City, Utah to the National Priorities List (NPL) for Superfund sites. The Five Points site contains tetrachloroethylene

(PCE), which is used as a dry cleaning agent and metal degreaser.

The contamination primarily lies under Woods Cross City, which has four municipal water wells supplying water to about 7,400 people.

The EPA is investigating the source of the contamination. As a site on the NPL, Five Points would be eligible to receive federal funds for clean-up.

EPA, Colorado Community Partner on Household Well Water Educational Initiative

For nearly 2 years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) has worked with citizens in San Luis Valley, Colorado to help ensure clean, safe drinking water supply from the community's water wells. On April 12, the EPA presented six community leaders with the U.S. EPA Friends of Environmental Protection Award in recognition of the community's efforts.

The EPA has provided free water testing for the region since June of 2005, and also provided education on water treatment for those households whose wells tested positive for bacteria or other contaminants.

Approximately 30 percent of San Luis Valley residents obtain their water from private wells.

wellcare® Briefs

Missouri Study Finds No Pesticides in 98 Percent of Sampled Wells

Testing conducted between 2001 and 2006 by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources showed low-level pesticide concentrations in only four of 190 shallow aquifer wells statewide. The testing was part of a statewide groundwater monitoring network established by the department's Water Resources Center in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and was funded by the EPA.

None of the detected pesticide concentrations exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safe drinking water standards. The complete report of the study's findings is available at www.dnr.mo.gov/env/wrc/docs/pesticidefinalreport.pdf.

Bottled Water: An Environmental Threat?

An article in the April 19 edition of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* questioned the impact of bottled water use on the environment. According to the article, Americans consume more than 8 billion gallons of bottled water each year. The energy required to manufacture the plastic, process and fill the bottle, transport it to the market and deal with the waste is equivalent to "filling up a quarter of every bottle with oil," says Peter Gleick, a water policy expert and director of the Pacific Institute in Oakland, California. "There's really no valid reason to think bottled water is any healthier than tap water," Gleick said.

In fact, "bottled water is actually much less regulated than tap water," said Gina Soloman, senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council. "There are a number of studies in which we find arsenic, disinfection byproducts and bacteria in bottled

water."

Bottled water also costs about 1,000 times more than tap water, the article said.

Report Examines Threat of Groundwater Pumping on Surface Water Sources

A report issued by Trout Unlimited, a national conservation organization, urges policymakers to take steps to reduce the impact of groundwater use on streams and rivers. The report, "Gone to the Well: Once Too Often: The Importance of Ground Water to Rivers in the West," examines the relationship between ground and surface waters, and states that over-use of groundwater sources can lead to low stream flows and poor water quality. Trout Unlimited is primarily concerned with the impact overpumping has on wildlife, which it says is evident in all Western states. *Continued on page 6*

wellcare® Briefs

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The report suggests a number of solutions to the problem, such as water conservation, efficiency and reuse; water resource management; replenishing groundwater supplies through aquifer recharge; and reconsideration of current state regulations and loopholes that exempt small household wells from water use restrictions and related laws.

A full copy of the report is available at www.tu.org/groundwater.

Earthquake Lowers Groundwater Levels in Maine

An earthquake that occurred in Maine last October caused the water level in a United States Geological Survey (USGS) monitoring well to drop more than 2.5 feet. The earthquake was the third minor earthquake to hit the area near Bar Harbor in a two-week period.

A USGS hydrologist said well owners may have noticed cloudiness in their water, and possibly even a change in the availability of water, as a result of the earthquake.

Massachusetts Towns Seek to Protect Drinking Water Source

Seven towns near Plymouth, Massachusetts are taking steps to protect the sole source of their drinking water. The Plymouth-Carver aquifer, which stretches 199 square miles and contains an estimated 500 billion gallons of water, serves the towns of Carver, Kingston, Middleborough, Plymouth, Plympton, Wareham and Bourne.

The towns' legislators have budgeted \$100,000 towards an aquifer management plan, which includes aquifer protection bylaws and open space preservation.

Quick Response Prevents Oil Contamination in Boston Area Municipal Well

An oil spill near a municipal well in Stoughton, Massachusetts did not reach groundwater, thanks to a quick response from firefighters and others. Approximately five quarts of oil were spilled at a gas station, apparently during an oil change.

Firefighters covered the spill with an absorbent material, then workers from a local environmental services company dug up the contaminated soil and hauled it away from the site.

Police charged the individual responsible for the spill with a hazardous waste violation and littering.

BP Pipelines Investigates Groundwater Contamination in Illinois

BP Pipelines North America Inc. drilled three test wells in a Lomax, Illinois family's yard, in order to help uncover the source of diesel fuel that has contaminated the family's drinking water. In 2005, laboratory test results showed 15,000 micrograms per liter of No. 2 diesel in the water. The soil from the drilling was also collected.

BP owns three lines in Lomax; a fourth pipeline is owned by Pennsylvania-based Buckeye Partners.

There are no state or federal limits on diesel fuel in groundwater. Researchers at the University of Maine suggest 50 micrograms per liter of hydrocarbons as the maximum safe level in water. The

water on the property under investigation contained 300 times that amount.

Idaho Nitrate Testing Clinic Aids More Than 500 Well Owners

Over 500 well owners attended a private well nitrate testing clinic held March 31 by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. The test results showed a number of private wells in the area had high nitrate levels. The problem was most common in shallow wells.

The purpose of the clinic was to raise public awareness of possible nitrate contamination, and to determine how and where high nitrate levels occur.

Stone Company Sets up \$1 Million Fund to Settle Well Lawsuit

Halquist Stone Co. has set up a \$1 million fund to settle a lawsuit filed by well owners in Lisbon, Wisconsin, after an October 2003 blast at the company's Lisbon quarry caused well owners in the town to lose their water supply for several days. When the wells started producing water again, tests showed coliform bacteria and E. coli.

The fund will be used to provide an alternative water supply to the residents. Options include replacing the existing shallow wells with deep wells, creating multiple deep wells to serve the neighborhood, or extending public water service to the area. Although Halquist was prepared to begin drilling wells in early May, discussions have since turned to whether a neighboring community would extend public water lines.

wellcare® Briefs

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Pharmaceuticals Found in Groundwater

A study in the May/June issue of the journal *Ground Water* revealed pharmaceuticals are being detected in septic tanks and, consequently, groundwater. The researchers attributed this finding to incomplete human metabolism and excretion into the waste stream, and disposal of unused medications in the toilet or down the sink.

The study investigated the

occurrence of pharmaceuticals in areas receiving waste water from septic tanks located in sand and gravel deposits in Missoula, Montana. The concentrations found were very low and thought not to pose a threat to human health. However, the study helps further discussion on disposal of expired or unused medications and similar substances.

Wells Near Former Florida Medical Site Tested for Contaminants

Officials from the Florida and Volusia County Health Departments are testing approximately 60 private wells near the former Sherwood

Medical site, now owned by Tyco Healthcare Kendall.

Prior to 1980, cleaning solvents containing chromium were dumped into septic tanks and sludge ponds on the site. Recently, people living near the site have raised concerns that the element may have entered their water supply. Officials said previous tests of residential wells in the area have not shown levels of contaminants in excess of the EPA's maximum contaminant level. According to the EPA, monitoring wells installed on the site 15 years ago have not detected any contamination either.

WSC MEMBER NEWS.....

WSC Publishes New Fact Sheets, Revises Others

WSC has released three new wellcare® information sheets on "Proper Use and Disposal of Pesticides and Fertilizers," "Well Water & Fluoride," and "Methane Gas & Groundwater," and has revised eighteen others.

The "Proper Use and Disposal of Pesticides and Fertilizers" information sheet provides guidance to well owners for preventing pesticide contamination in their groundwater, including tips for pesticide and fertilizer usage, storage and disposal. The fact sheets on fluoride and methane gas provide information on these substances, which may be found in groundwater, including information on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safe drinking water limits, water testing and treatment.

WSC is also working to update its existing fact sheets to include updated information from the WSC Handbook, as well as information from the EPA and other sources that has become available since the sheets were originally published. The following information sheets were updated in May or June:

Well Components: Valves	Chlorine & Groundwater
Well Components: Your Pitless Adapter	Chromium & Groundwater
Well Components: Your Well Cap	Copper & Groundwater
Well Components: Your Well Casing	Radium & Groundwater
Well Components: Your Well Pump	Radon & Groundwater
Well Components: Your Well Tank	Trichloroethylene (TCE) & Groundwater
Arsenic & Groundwater	Turbidity in Drinking Water
Bacteria & Groundwater	Uranium & Groundwater
Benzene & Groundwater	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) & Groundwater

wellcare® information sheets are intended to educate well owners, home buyers, realtors, mortgage companies and others on topics such as well maintenance, well water testing and treatment, water quality, well components and potential ground water contaminants. There are more than 60 information sheets currently available. They can be downloaded FREE from the WSC website at www.watersystemscouncil.org, or can be obtained through the wellcare® hotline at 1-888-395-1033.

WSC Develops Compilation CD

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and each of the more than 60 wellcare® information sheets on topics related to wells and groundwater.

Users can hear the actual public service announcements, view two informational videos, read through the handbook, view all five of WSC's "Special Reports," view and print copies of the wellcare® posters, and much more! The CD was recently distributed to all WSC members, and will also be showcased at WSC's booths at both the South Atlantic Well Drillers Jubilee and the National Ground Water Association's Expo.



WSC NATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE
1101 30th Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20007

Wanted: Volunteers and Sponsors for the 2008 Maryland/Delaware Children's Water Festival

What is it?

The 2008 Maryland/Delaware Children's Water Festival will educate students about groundwater, surface water, drinking water, water quality, and more.

May 8, 2008

8 am until 4 pm

**Delaware Tech
Community College
Dover, Delaware**



Who will be there?

Approximately 2,000 fourth and fifth graders and their teachers from public and private schools in Maryland and Delaware will attend.

How Can I Help?

Volunteers and sponsors are needed to make the 2008 Children's Water Festival a success. Additional festival presenters are also needed, such as water/natural resources experts from universities and colleges, government agencies, environmental organizations and private businesses. To become a volunteer, contact Dawn Greene, Festival Coordinator, at (202) 625-4387 or e-mail dawn.greene@watersystemscouncil.org. Visit www.waterfestivals.org or call the festival hotline at 1-800-598-6164 for more information.

The Winning Water Organizing Committee includes:

Chesapeake College, Performing Arts; DEL TECH Community College; Delaware Division of Public Health, Office of Drinking Water; Delaware Geological Survey; Delaware Department of Education; Delaware Project WET; Environmental Concern Inc.; Maryland/Delaware Water Well Association; Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Project WET; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Environmental Education; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Groundwater & Drinking Water; and Water Systems Council.