

June 24, 2021

The City of Rawlins is asking for help from everyone in our community. We are facing unprecedented issues with water this year and it is imperative that we work together as a community to ensure adequate water for drinking, fire protection and watering of lawns and parks.



A multitude of factors have created this situation:

- Flows from the springs are down by 47%. We are relying heavily on reservoir water which requires significantly more filtration (Filters must be cleaned every 3-4.5 hours instead of 900 hours). This is due to aging infrastructure and our dry year.
- Filtration capacity is down to 75% at the water treatment plant due to valve and equipment failures.
- Water usage hit summer levels (3-3.5 million gallons/day) two months earlier than usual, depleting our reservoirs much more quickly than normal.

Mark Carney, Water & Sewer Superintendent for Public Works said “This is a critical crossroads for our community. If, working together as community, we can cut our watering for lawns and gardens in half, we will extend the current life of our reservoirs by about 50 days. This would help get us through this hot, dry summer without a water shortage. Mechanical failure, increased demand, and a more turbid water source have made it important that we all work together to conserve water.”

Additionally, attached to this letter is our official exceedance letter as required by the EPA. Due to the reservoir water being more turbid (cloudy), we exceeded the turbidity requirements for the month of May. You do not need to boil your water and we do not know of any contamination. We have also increased our chlorine residual to ensure adequate disinfection. Please see attached letter for more information.

There are many steps which can be taken to reduce household watering while keeping grass and plants healthy. By practicing conservation, we can maintain an adequate water supply for household use and fire protection.

- Deep and less frequent watering leads to stronger turf that is more resilient. Do not use more water than your grass needs.
- Water your lawn in the evening or in the early morning to avoid evaporation. Do not water between 10am and 6pm. Be careful to water only the lawn and not the sidewalk or street.
- Do not water on Sundays. With our reduced staff on the weekends, the clean water amount stored in the tanks drops over the weekend and it is difficult to meet demand.
- Check household faucets for leaks. 15 drips per minute add up to almost 3 gallons of water wasted daily.
- Use a broom to sweep your driveway, garage, or sidewalk. Use a bucket of water to wash your bike or the family car and rinse quickly with a hose.

The City of Rawlins will not water any parks until at least June 28th to help the tanks refill, and then will keep the watering to the bare minimum to do our part. We have also taken many measures to overcome these issues.

- Staff is working around the clock to keep our filters clean and water storage at the correct levels, now including staff on overnight shifts.
- Staff increased the chlorine residual to 2.5-3 (usually 1.0) whenever our NTU is above 1.0.
- Staff treated Peaking reservoir to eliminate algae growth, which also reduces the shrimp population.
- Constantly working to make repairs and improvements at the water treatment plant, reservoirs, wells, and springs.
- Regarding the infrastructure from the springs to the water treatment plant, City Council passed the Source Water Protection Plan and are currently seeking funding. For more info, visit www.rawlinswy.org/watertreatment
- We reduced watering to the parks and asked citizens to use smart watering practices on June 3rd through our website (rawlinswy.org) and Facebook, with additional coverage by Bigfoot 99.

For more information, please contact Mira Miller, City of Rawlins Community Relations Coordinator, at 307-328-4500 ext. 1022.

###

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER
City of Rawlins Did Not Meet Treatment Requirements

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

We routinely monitor your water for turbidity (cloudiness). This tells us whether we are effectively filtering the water supply. Water samples for the month of **May 2021** showed **7 %** of turbidity measurements were over **1.0 NTU** (turbidity units), with a maximum turbidity of **1.0 NTU**. The standard is that no more than 5 percent of samples may exceed **1.0 NTU** per month for our alternative filtration system. Normal turbidity levels at our plant are **0.15 NTU** turbidity units.

What should I do?

You do not need to boil your water or take other actions. We do not know of any contamination, and none of our testing has shown disease-causing organisms in the drinking water.

People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at: 1(800) 426-4791.

What does this mean?

Turbidity has no health effects. However, turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches. These symptoms are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice.

What happened? What was done?

- We began using water from Peaking reservoir due to increased early demands and decreased spring flows.
- Peaking reservoir inverted, meaning the water from the bottom came to the top, and increased turbidities into the plant.
- This water requires significantly more treatment and, as a result our filters have been pushed to their limits.
- We treated the reservoir to reduce algae and shrimp populations. After treatment, Peaking reservoir had to rest for a minimum of two weeks.
- We switched to Atlantic Rim reservoir which was not as affected by the drought and therefore had less algae.
- We have increased the chlorine residual to 2.5-3 mg/l.
- Due to the increased loading on our filters, shortened filter run times of 3.5-4 hours vs. 900 hours, we have changed to 24-hour staff with near-constant cleaning of filters during this time of higher turbidity and high demand.

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.

This notice is being sent to you by **City of Rawlins**

Public Water System ID#: WY5600045

Date Distributed: **June 30, 2021**