

ANNUAL

WATER QUALITY REPORT

Water testing performed in 2008



DARE COUNTY WATER
SOUTH

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Meeting the Challenge

We are once again proud to present to you our annual water quality report. This edition covers all testing completed from January 1 through December 31, 2008. Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to producing drinking water that meets all state and federal drinking water standards. We continually strive to adopt new and better methods for delivering the best quality drinking water to you. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, we remain vigilant in meeting the challenges of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all our water users.

Please share with us your thoughts about the information in this report. After all, well-informed customers are our best allies.

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.

Information on the Internet

The U.S. EPA Office of Water (www.epa.gov/watrhme) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) Web sites provide a substantial amount of information on many issues relating to water resources, water conservation, and public health. Also, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources has a Web site (www.ehn.state.nc.us) that provides complete and current information on water issues in North Carolina, including valuable information about our watershed.

What's Your Water Footprint?

You may have some understanding about your carbon footprint, but how much do you know about your water footprint? The water footprint of an individual, community, or business is defined as the total volume of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services that are consumed by the individual or community or produced by the business. For example, 11 gallons of water are needed to irrigate and wash the fruit in one half-gallon container of orange juice. Thirty-seven gallons of water are used to grow, produce, package, and ship the beans in that morning cup of coffee. Two hundred and sixty-four gallons of water are required to produce one quart of milk, and 4,200 gallons of water are required to produce two pounds of beef.

According to the U.S. EPA, the average American uses about 100 gallons of water daily. In fact, in the developed world, one flush of a toilet uses as much water as the average person in the developing world allocates for an entire day's cooking, washing, cleaning, and drinking. The annual American per capita water footprint is about 8,000 cubic feet; twice the global per capita average. With water use increasing six-fold in the past century, our demands for freshwater are rapidly outstripping what the planet can replenish.

To check out your own water footprint, go to www.h2oconserve.org, or visit www.waterfootprint.org to see how the water footprints of other nations compare.

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 byproducts 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.

Where Does My Water Come From?

This report covers three of the five Dare County Water Department treatment facilities: the two water systems on Hatteras Island and the system serving the community of Stumpy Point.

Source water for the Mac Midgett Water Plant (formerly RWS), which serves the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, and Salvo, comes from two wells that draw from the Mid-Yorktown Aquifer.

The Cape Hatteras treatment plant, which serves the villages of Avon, Buxton, Frisco, and Hatteras, uses two separate treatment processes. The anion-filter side of the plant draws its source water from 19 shallow, freshwater wells in the Buxton Woods; four deep, brackish wells supply the reverse osmosis side of the plant. The product from both processes is blended to provide an ample source of safe, fresh drinking water.

Stumpy Point's reverse osmosis plant draws its water from two wells that feed from the Upper Yorktown Aquifer.

Water Conservation

You can play a role in conserving water and save yourself money in the process by becoming conscious of the amount of water your household is using and by looking for ways to use less whenever you can. It is not hard to conserve water. Here are a few tips:

- Automatic dishwashers use 15 gallons for every cycle, regardless of how many dishes are loaded. So get a run for your money and load it to capacity.
- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- Check every faucet in your home for leaks. Just a slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons a day. Fix it and you can save almost 6,000 gallons per year.
- Check your toilets for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Watch for a few minutes to see if the color shows up in the bowl. It is not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons a day from an invisible toilet leak. Fix it and you can save more than 30,000 gallons a year.
- Use your water meter to detect hidden leaks. Simply turn off all taps and water using appliances. Then check the meter after 15 minutes. If it moved, you have a leak.

Lead and Drinking Water

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 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.

Tap vs. Bottled

Thanks in part to aggressive marketing, the bottled water industry has successfully convinced us all 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).

The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for regulating bottled water, but these rules allow for less rigorous testing and purity standards than those required by the U.S. EPA for community tap water. For instance, the high mineral content of some bottled waters makes them unsuitable for babies and young children. 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 10,000 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 49 cents. Even if you installed a filter device on your tap, your annual expenditure would be far less than what you'd pay for bottled water.

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

Questions?

For more information about this report, or for any questions relating to your drinking water, please call Ken Flatt, Utilities Director, at (252) 475-5606.

Source Water Assessment Program

The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Public Water Supply (PWS) Section, Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), conducted assessments for all drinking water sources across North Carolina. The purpose of the assessments was to determine the susceptibility of each drinking water source (well or surface water intake) to potential contaminant sources (PCSs). The results of the assessment are available in SWAP reports that include maps, background information, and a relative susceptibility rating of higher, moderate, or lower.

The relative susceptibility rating of each source for Dare County's water systems was determined by combining the contaminant rating (number and location of PCSs within the assessment area) and the inherent vulnerability rating (i.e., characteristics or existing conditions of the well or watershed and its delineated assessment area). The assessment findings for Dare County's three treatment facilities are summarized in the accompanying table.

Source/Well Number	Susceptibility Rating
RWS System	
Well 1	Moderate
Well 2	Unknown
Cape Hatteras System	
Freshwater wells 3-22	Moderate
RO (reverse osmosis) wells 1-4	Lower
Stumpy Point System	
Well 1-2	Lower

The complete SWAP report for all Dare County systems may be viewed on the Web at www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/pws/swap. To obtain a printed copy of this report, please mail a written request to Source Water Assessment Program – Report Request, 1634 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1634, or email request to swap@ncmail.net. Please indicate your system name, PWSID #, and your name, mailing address, and phone number. If you have any questions about the SWAP report, please contact the Source Water Assessment staff by phone at (919) 715-2633.



What's growing in my pet's water bowl?

Dog and cat owners often notice the appearance of black or pink growths in their pet's water bowl. These growths come from various types of mold in the air—not the water. Similar growths can also be found on showerheads and shower curtains. Wash your pet's water bowl frequently and be sure to have plenty of fresh water available at all times.

Is it safe to drink water from a garden hose?

Substances used in vinyl garden hoses to keep them flexible can get into the water

as it passes through the hose. These chemicals are not good for you nor are they good for your pets. Allow the water to run for a short time in order to flush the hose before drinking or filling your pets' drinking containers. There are hoses made with "food-grade" plastic that will not contaminate the water. Check your local hardware store for this type of hose.



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 table below shows only those contaminants that were detected in the water. Although all of the substances listed here are under the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), we feel it is important that you know exactly what was detected and how much of the substance was present in the water.

The state requires us to monitor for certain substances less than once per year because the concentrations 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

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	MCL [MRDL]	MCLG [MRDLG]	Mac Midgett		Cape Hatteras		Stumpy Point		VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
				AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH		
Chlorine (ppm)	2008	[4]	[4]	0.45	0.3–0.6	0.61	0.25–1.10	0.86	0.53–1.2	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Fluoride (ppm)	2008	4	4	1	0.94–1.01	1.01	0.96–1.04	1.00	0.95–1.11	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Haloacetic Acids [HAA] (ppb)	2008	60	NA	ND	NA	2.00	NA	7.8	NA	No	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
TTHMs [Total Trihalomethanes] (ppb)	2008	80	NA	43	NA	9.00	NA	31	NA	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination

Tap water samples were collected for lead and copper analyses from sample sites throughout the community

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	AL	MCLG	Mac Midgett		Cape Hatteras		Stumpy Point		VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE
				AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES	AMOUNT DETECTED (90TH%TILE)	SITES ABOVE AL/ TOTAL SITES		
Copper (ppm)	2006	1.3	1.3	0.081	0/10	0.113 ¹	0/20 ¹	ND ¹	0/5 ¹	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives

UNREGULATED SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE (UNIT OF MEASURE)	YEAR SAMPLED	Mac Midgett		Cape Hatteras		Stumpy Point		TYPICAL SOURCE
		AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	AMOUNT DETECTED	RANGE LOW-HIGH	
Bromodichloromethane (ppb)	2008	6	NA	ND	NA	18	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Bromoform (ppb)	2008	18	NA	3	NA	ND	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Chlorodibromomethane (ppb)	2008	17	NA	2	NA	25	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Chloroform (ppb)	2008	2	NA	ND	NA	12	NA	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection

Footnote: _____
¹ Sampled in 2007.

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.

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.

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).