

2015



Annual Water Quality Report

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This report is designed to inform you about the quality of the water and services delivered to you in 2015 by Polk County Utilities, Board of County Commissioners. Included are details about where your drinking water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

Northwest

If you have any questions about this report, your water utility, or would like to obtain a copy of this report, please contact Mark Lowenstine at (863) 298-4260.

Visit www.polk-county.net/NorthwestWQ

2015 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

Northwest Public Water System #6532348

The service area for the **Northwest Public Water System (PWS)** is in the Northwest Regional Utility Service Area of Polk County. Last year, the customers connected to the Northwest PWS used approximately 852.7 million gallons of water.

The **Northwest PWS** is supplied by ground water pumped from seven (7) wells drilled into the Floridan Aquifer. This vast subterranean reservoir contains some of the cleanest water in the nation. The Floridan Aquifer is fed primarily by rainwater that is filtered through hundreds of feet of rock and sand in a natural cleansing process. The ground water is treated at six (6) water treatment facilities (WTFs). Typical treatment at the WTFs consists of chlorine for disinfection; a poly-orthophosphate solution is then added for sequestering iron.

Source Water Assessment: In 2015 the Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) performed a Source Water Assessment on our system. The assessment was conducted to provide information about any potential sources of contamination in the vicinity of our wells. There are 3 potential sources of contamination identified for this system with low to moderate susceptibility levels. The assessment results are available on the FDEP Source Water Assessment and Protection Program website at www.dep.state.fl.us/swapp or they can be obtained from Polk County Utilities.

Hardness, Alkalinity and pH: Hardness describes the level of the dissolved natural minerals (primarily calcium and magnesium) in drinking water. As a general rule, water is considered hard if it contains more than 120 ppm as CaCO₃ (7 grains per gallon). Hard water requires more soap than soft water and will, with time, leave mineral deposits on pipes and valves. The hardness of the Northwest PWS is typically around **113 ppm**, or **6.6 grains per gallon**. Alkalinity helps provide a stable environment in the distribution system. Alkalinity levels between 60 and 120 ppm as CaCO₃ are considered moderate levels. The alkalinity of the Northwest PWS is typically around **141 ppm**. The pH is typically around **7.8**.

Delivering Safe Drinking Water: The primary law governing drinking water in the United States is the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The SDWA, originally passed in 1974 and updated several times since, authorizes the EPA to establish comprehensive national standards for protection against both naturally-occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. These standards, adopted by the FDEP, govern the quality of the water supplied, requirements for physical and chemical treatment, source water protection, operator training, funding for water system improvements, and public water information. Some of the standards adopted by the FDEP are more stringent than those established by the EPA.

Polk County Utilities works closely with the EPA, FDEP, and the Polk County Health Department to ensure that the water delivered to our customers is in compliance with the applicable standards. In accordance with the SDWA, Polk County Utilities is required to treat the water, test the water on a regulated schedule for specified contaminants, and report the results to the appropriate regulatory agency. If a problem is detected, Polk County Utilities immediately retests and informs its customers about the problems until the system can reliably demonstrate that the situation has been resolved.

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. Polk County Utilities is 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 <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

The sources of drinking water (both tap 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 and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- A. **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment facilities, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- B. **Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- C. **Pesticides and herbicides**, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses.
- D. **Organic chemical contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.
- E. **Radioactive contaminants**, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

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In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in the water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 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 contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised 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 can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800) 426-4791.

As authorized and approved by EPA, the State has reduced monitoring requirements for certain contaminants to less often than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year. Some of our data (e.g., for organic contaminants), though representative, is more than one year old.

Polk County Utilities routinely monitors for contaminants in your drinking water according to Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations. Except where indicated otherwise, this report is based on the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2015. Data obtained before January 1, 2015, and presented in this report are from the most recent testing done in accordance with the applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires monitoring of over 80 drinking water contaminants. Those contaminants listed in the following tables are the only contaminants detected in your drinking water.

The following are definitions of some of the terms you may find in our report.

- ✓ **Action Level (AL):** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- ✓ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- ✓ **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**
- ✓ **Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS)**
- ✓ **Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):** 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.
- ✓ **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG):** 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.
- ✓ **Maximum residual disinfectant level (MRDL):** 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.
- ✓ **Maximum residual disinfectant level goal (MRDLG):** 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.
- ✓ **Not Applicable (N/A):** Does not apply
- ✓ **Not Detected (ND):** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.
- ✓ **Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$):** One part by weight of analyte to 1 billion parts by weight of the water sample.
- ✓ **Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l):** One part by weight of analyte to 1 million parts by weight of the water sample.
- ✓ **Picocuries per liter (pCi/L):** Measure of radioactivity in water.

NORTHWEST PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM WATER QUALITY TEST RESULTS

Microbiological Contaminants

Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Dates of Sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Highest Monthly Percentage	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Total Coliform Bacteria	01/15	N	4.76%	0	5%	Naturally present in the environment

** For radioactive and inorganic contaminants, results in the Level Detected column are the highest detected level at any sampling point. Range of results is the range of individual sample results (lowest to highest) for all monitoring locations.

Radioactive Contaminants

Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Dates of Sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected **	Range of Results	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Alpha emitters (pCi/L)	01/14-12/14	N	4.1	0.8 – 4.1	0	15	Erosion of Natural Deposits
Radium 226 + Radium 228 or Combined Radium (pCi/L)	01/14-12/14	N	2.5	1 – 2.5	0	5	Erosion of Natural Deposits
Uranium (µg/L)	01/14-12/14	N	6.2	1.2 – 6.2	0	30	Erosion of Natural Deposits

Inorganic Contaminants

Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Dates of Sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected **	Range of Results	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Arsenic (ppb)	01/14-12/14	N	2.6	ND – 2.6	N/A	10	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; runoff from electronics production wastes
Barium (ppm)	01/14-12/14	N	0.013	ND – 0.013	2	2	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	01/14-12/14	N	0.24	ND – 0.24	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories. Water additive which promotes strong teeth when at optimum levels between 0.7 and 1.3 ppm
Lead (point of entry) (ppb)	01/14-12/14	N	1.9	ND – 1.9	15	15	Residue from man-made pollution such as auto emissions and paint
Nitrate (as Nitrogen) (ppm)	01/15-12/15	N	1.6	ND – 1.6	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)	01/14-12/14	N	9	8 – 9.9	N/A	160	Salt water intrusion, leaching from soil
Thallium (ppb)	01/14-12/14	N	0.1	ND – 0.1	0.5	2	Leaching from ore-processing sites; discharge from electronics, glass, and drug factories

Stage 2 Disinfectant/Disinfection By-Products

For chlorine, the level detected is the highest running annual average (RAA), computed quarterly, of monthly averages of all samples collected. Range of Results is the range of individual sample results (lowest to highest) for all monitoring locations.
For haloacetic acids or TTHM, the level detected is the highest LRAA, computed quarterly, of quarterly averages of all samples collected. Range of Results is the range of individual sample results (lowest to highest) for all monitoring locations.

Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Dates of Sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected **	Range of Results	MCLG or MRDLG	MCL or MRDL	Likely Source of Contamination
Chlorine (ppm)	01/15-12/15	N	2.2	0.7 – 2.8	MRDLG = 4	MRDL = 4.0	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids (five) (HAA5) (ppb)	01/15-12/15	N	41.25	21.00-53.00	N/A	MCL = 60	By-product of drinking water disinfection
TTHM (Total Trihalomethanes) (ppb)	01/15-12/15	N	57.23	20.38-72.45	N/A	MCL = 80	By-product of drinking water disinfection

Lead and Copper (Tap Water)

Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Dates of Sampling (mo/yr)	AL Violation Y/N	90th Percentile Result	No. of sampling sites exceeding the AL	MCLG	AL (Action Level)	Likely Source of Contamination
Copper (tap water) (ppm)	01/15-12/15	N	0.85	0	1.3	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Lead (tap water) (ppb)	01/15-12/15	N	2.1	1	0	15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems

Lead and copper tap water results are based on samples collected at selected consumer home taps located throughout the distribution system. The 90th percentile lead and copper results show that 90% of the home tap water samples collected were equal to or less than the value indicated.