The Red River: Fargo's Water Source

The primary water source for the Fargo Water Treatment Plant is the Red River. The Midtown Dam pools a sufficient depth of water to accommodate a water intake. The city also has alternate sources of water that can be used under extraordinary circumstances. An intake and pumping station on the Sheyenne River south of West Fargo can deliver water via pipeline to the treatment plant. The City of Fargo also owns 52% of the stored water rights to Lake Ashtabula, acquired by funding construction of the Baldhill Dam at Valley City. During a drought, water from this lake can be released into the Sheyenne River to provide water for Fargo's needs. Approximately a 2-year supply of water exists in the lake. This source was used during the dry years of 1976, 1984 and 1988.

The City of Fargo has participated in a number of studies since 1995 to determine the feasibility of bringing Missouri River water into the Red River Valley. Legislation passed by the U. S. Congress in 2000 directed the Bureau of Reclamation to develop an environmental impact statement (EIS) and a needs and options study that examine the transportation of Missouri River water.

The EIS has been completed by the bureau and will be submitted to Congress in 2007 for acceptance. A preferred option for delivering water to the Red River Valley has been determined, and its cost is estimated to be $700 million. If Congress approves the project, it will be funded in part by the state of North Dakota and the federal government. The local share of the funding will come from water users residing in the 13 easternmost counties in North Dakota.

The goal of the project managers is to begin construction in 2009, with a completion date of 2014.

Water Treatment: The Key to Great Water

Most large cities like Fargo use surface water as the community water source. Surface water sources can provide more water volume than localized groundwater wells, and surface water is a renewable resource when compared to groundwater. Surface water quality, however, is variable—highly dependent on weather and other environmental conditions. For this reason, more rigorous water treatment processes are required for surface water sources.

The City of Fargo maintains one of the most sophisticated water treatment facilities in the United States, and consumers should know that the treatment plant has undergone several security upgrades since the 9/11 attack. The chemical and physical processes used at the plant convert a source water with variable characteristics into a consistently safe, soft and good-tasting drinking water.

Water from the Red River is hard, and the water treatment process centers around softening the water. The water softening process reduces hardness from an average of 17 grains per gallon to a target value of 7 grains per gallon. Some residual hardness in the finished water is beneficial—this prevents the water from becoming too corrosive.

After softening, the water is disinfected with ozone gas and then filtered to remove fine particles, additional hardness and dissolved minerals like iron. All EPA standards for water clarity were met for 2006. Finally, chloramine is added before distribution to provide disinfection right up to the tap in Fargo homes.

Save Money on Your Water Bill

Water is our oldest natural resource, and there are simple things you can do to conserve it.

In the Bathroom Install a toilet dam or plastic bottle in your toilet tank. Install a water-efficient showerhead (2.5 gallons or less per minute). Take short showers, and draw less water for baths. When you buy a new toilet, purchase a low-flow model (1.6 gallons or less per flush). Turn off water while brushing teeth and shaving.

In the Kitchen or Laundry Keep a gallon of drinking water in the refrigerator rather than running the tap for cold water. This also makes the water taste better and allows chlorine to aerate out. Run your washing machine with a full load of clothes. Wash with cold water when you can.

Outdoors Use drought-tolerant plants and grasses for landscaping, and reduce grass-covered areas. Cut your grass at least two inches high to shade the roots, making it more drought tolerant; keep your mower sharp for the healthiest grass. Water only in the evening or very early morning to minimize evaporation. For more information about what you can do to conserve water, visit: www.wateruseitwisely.com

The Xeriscape Demonstration Garden (pictured above) is located at the intersection of 13th Avenue South and 5th Street. It has a wide display of perennials, shrubs, grasses, and trees. The overall concept of the garden is to demonstrate species of plants that fit into different water-use zones, such as very low, low, and moderate water-use types. Interpretive signs are also arranged throughout the site.

The City of Fargo has a drought management plan that monitors water flow, river levels and the precipitation index. The city has adopted an ordinance that mandates citizen participation during drought activity to reduce the impact to all water users. For more information about the drought management plan visit www.cityoffargo.com/water

Observe Fargo's odd/even lawn watering schedule from Memorial Day to Labor Day to help reduce the peak demand.

CITY OF FARGO
Water Quality Report 2006

If you have questions about Fargo drinking water, or if you are aware of non-English speaking individuals who need help with the appropriate language translation, please contact the Water Treatment Plant at the number below. If you are a large-volume user, please distribute a copy of this Water Quality Report to consumers who do not receive a bill. If you would like opportunities for public participation in decisions that affect water quality, please attend City Commission meetings which are held every other Monday at 5 p.m. You can check the city's web site for exact meeting dates at www.cityoffargo.com/commission

Our public water system, in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Health, has completed the delineation and contaminant/land use inventory elements of the North Dakota Source Water Protection Program. Based on the information from these elements, the North Dakota Department of Health has determined that our source water is moderately susceptible to potential contaminants.

Fargo Water Treatment Plant
435 14th Avenue South
Fargo, ND 58103

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Fargo Water Treatment Plant
701-241-1469

Bruce P. Grubb
Enterprise Director

Ron Hendricksen
Water Treatment Plant Superintendent

fargo

Before the water can be delivered to your home, the City of Fargo must thoroughly test it in certified laboratories that can detect trace amounts of contaminants. The Fargo test results for last year are shown in the table below. **No contaminants were detected that exceeded Environmental Protection Agency limits in drinking water.**

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 and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity. Fargo water is monitored yearly for these regulated contaminants.

Key to Terms and Abbreviations in the Table

The **Level Found** can be the highest amount found in the water or the average of all samples analyzed, depending on the regulation. If multiple samples were tested in 2006, the lowest and highest detected values are listed under **Range of Detections**.

The highest level of a substance allowed in drinking water is the Maximum Contaminant Level (**MCL**), which is set by the EPA. Some contaminants also have MCL goals (**MCLGs**). This is the level of a substance where there is no known or expected health risk. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety. MCLs are set as close to MCLGs as feasible using the best available water treatment processes.

The MCL for lead and copper is known as the **Action Level (AL)**. This is the concentration which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements a water system must follow. Ninety percent of all samples tested must be below this concentration. During 2006, no samples from the Fargo system tested above the action level for either lead or copper. Because of the low levels, we have reduced monitoring to every three years.

Turbidity is a measure of water clarity monitored at the Fargo Water Treatment Plant. Certain treatment techniques (TT) are required to reduce the level in the drinking water. Regulations require turbidity to be <0.3 NTU 95% of the time and <1.0 NTU 100% of the time.

Other Definitions:
ppb: parts per billion
ppm: parts per million
pCi/L: picoCuries per liter, a measure of radioactivity
NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Units
ND: None detected

Substances are tested either weekly, quarterly, or annually. The levels of some things, however, change little over time, or the chances of detecting them are expected to be low. These contaminants are monitored less than annually. Substances that have been found in previous years' testing are also listed in the table, along with the year that they were found. The EPA regulates substances that are potentially harmful to human health and have at least a reasonable possibility of being found in either water sources or finished drinking water.

Fargo water is tested for nearly 100 different contaminants. Only those detected are listed in the table. Tested substances fall into one of five different categories:
Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.
Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or 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 industrial and petroleum process by-products and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff and septic systems.
Radioactive contaminants, which can occur naturally or result from oil and gas production and mining activities.

2006 Laboratory Testing Results for Fargo Water

Detected Substance	Units of Measure	Date of Analysis	MCL	MCLG	Level Found in Fargo Water	Range of Detections	Typical Source in Drinking Water
Total Coliform Bacteria	positive samples	monthly	present in 5% of monthly samples	Present in no samples	Present in 2% of samples in January	—	Naturally present in the environment.
Haloacetic Acids	ppb	9/30/04	60	—	26	3.16-51.4	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	9/30/04	80	—	9	0.743-33.4	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Uranium	ppb	7/30/03	30	—	0.754	—	Erosion of natural deposits
Turbidity	NTU	daily	TT; 1.0 and < 0.3 95% of the time	—	100% of samples < 0.3	Highest Reading: 0.16	Soil runoff
Lead	ppb	08/05	90% of samples must be <15 ppb (AL)	—	90% of samples < 5.0	No samples exceeded 15 ppb	Corrosion of home plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits
Copper	ppm	08/05	90% of samples must be <1.3 ppm (AL)	—	90% of samples < 0.11	No samples exceeded 1.3 ppm	Corrosion of home plumbing systems, erosion of natural deposits, leaching from wood preservative
Bromate	ppb	10/9/06	10	0	9.3	ND-9.3	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards and from glass and electronics production wastes
Barium	ppm	6/21/04	2	2	0.0235	—	Discharge from drilling wastes and metal refineries, erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride	ppm	6/21/04	4	4	1.25	—	Erosion of natural deposits, water additive, discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Selenium	ppb	6/21/04	50	50	1.61	—	Discharge from petroleum, metal refineries and mines, erosion of natural deposits
Nitrate/Nitrite (as Nitrogen)	ppm	4/19/06	10	10	0.82	—	Erosion of natural deposits, fertilizer runoff, leaching from septic tanks, sewage
Chloramine	ppm	2/28/02	4	4	3.9	1.61-3.93	Water additive used to control microbes

Total Organic Carbon (TOC) Removal Performance Requirements

Substance SOURCE WATER	Date	Highest Level Found	Units	Range of Detection
Total Alkalinity	1/11/06	321	ppm	108-321
Total Organic Carbon (TOC)	5/31/03	12.9	ppm	6.44-12.9

Substance FINISHED WATER	Date	Highest Level Found	Units	Range of Detection
Total Organic Carbon (TOC)	1/31/06	6.13	ppm	3.23-6.13

Bromide is being tested in our source water. The ozone disinfection by-product bromate can be formed in the finished water when bromide is present in the source water.

Bromide	12/11/06	0.122	ppm	0.026-0.122

Total Organic Carbon (TOC) Removal Performance Requirements

The Fargo Water Treatment Plant is required to remove total organic carbon (TOC) from the source water. During 2006, the required removal rate was 25 to 40%. Our removal rate varied between 37.2% and 62.5% in 2006.

What You Need to Know about Drinking Water Regulations

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that 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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

If You Have Special Health Requirements

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants found 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/Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).