



# 2023 Annual Report of Drinking Water Quality

# Coal Creek Connection

Spring 2024

Your newsletter for water and sewer-related issues and information in Newcastle and surrounding areas... since 1959

## Help Us Keep Our Water Safe

Coal Creek Water District does everything in our power to maintain the safety of your drinking water. However our customers are equally responsible to ensure the safety of any "cross connections" in their plumbing system. What's a cross connection? When your drinking water supply is connected to a non-potable water source—such as an irrigation system, a fire sprinkler system, hot tub, pond, or other equipment that uses water—this poses a risk of contamination to the public water supply, **unless there's a "backflow prevention device" installed at the cross connection.** These devices prevent contaminated water from "back-flowing" into the water supply whenever there's a sudden difference in water pressure between the two systems, which can happen during a waterline break, plumbing repairs, water meter change-outs, or a water shut off. Wondering if this applies to your home or business? Just give us a call at (425) 235-9200.

### Inside This Issue:

- Help Keep Our Water Safe
- Annual Water Quality Report Tables and Definitions - 2023
- Update on Lead Service Line Inventory Effort
- About Your Water Quality
- New Payment Portal
- PFAS and Your Water
- Water Use Efficiency
- You're Invited
- Backflow Prevention
- About Your Water Source

Coal Creek Connection: a publication by Coal Creek Utility District

**Finance Manager:**  
Jamie Crookston

Peter Zevenbergen

**Operations Manager:**  
Patrick Martin



**General Manager:**  
Robert Russell

Suzi O'Byrne

**Board of Commissioners:**  
Suzi O'Byrne  
Peter Zevenbergen  
Douglas Kunkel



6801 - 132nd Place SE  
Newcastle, WA 98059  
(425) 235-9200  
www.ccuud.org  
f / CCUD1

Douglas Kunkel

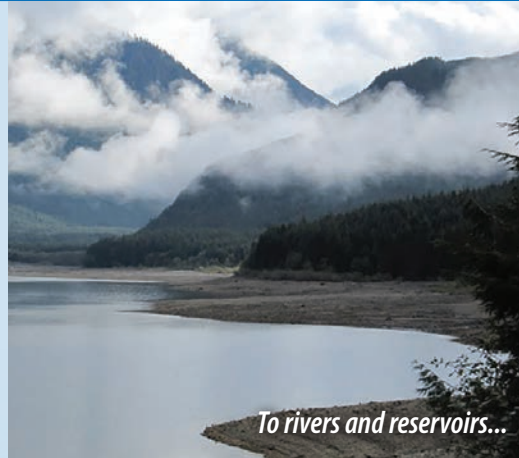


# Annual Water Quality Report for 2023

This snapshot of last year's water quality reflects Coal Creek Utility District's ongoing record of maintaining state and federal guidelines that are significantly below EPA maximum levels.



*From mountains...*



*To rivers and reservoirs...*



*To your faucet*

## All About Your Water

**Who:** Your drinking water is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which sets drinking water quality standards, establishes testing methods and monitoring requirements for water utilities, sets maximum levels for water contaminants, and requires utilities to give public notice whenever a violation occurs.

CCUD field staff collect microbiology and water quality samples each month, and monitor the chlorine disinfectant residual each day from our reservoirs, and from 9 water sampling stands located throughout the distribution system. Seattle Public Utilities staff likewise analyze for microbes and contaminants at their water quality lab in Seattle.

**What:** 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 (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-(800) 426-4791.

**When:** Your water is monitored for quality 365 days a year.

**Where:** Your water comes from two large, regional watersheds, the Cedar River and the Tolt River, operated and maintained by Seattle Public Utilities.

**How:** Last year your drinking water was tested for over 200 compounds and additional contaminants. Tests are done before and after treatment and while your water is in the distribution system. The Tables presented on the following

page list all of the contaminants detected in the most recent required water testing and compare them to the limits and goals set by the EPA and the State of Washington to ensure your tap water is safe.

Not shown are more than 200 additional contaminants that were tested for, but not detected, in your drinking water. If you would like to see a list of these other compounds or if you have other water quality questions, do not hesitate to contact us. Please note: asbestos monitoring is not required for our District because all the asbestos concrete pipe in our distribution system was replaced prior to 1999.

**The Best News:** Your water falls safely within state and federal guidelines for each and every contaminant, significantly below the EPA's levels.

## People Who May Be More at Risk

Some people may be more vulnerable to drinking water contaminants than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons including those 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. Appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-(800) 426-4791.

**If you would like to learn more about your water, or if you have questions about its quality, call Carla Snyder, our Lead Water and Sewer Compliance Specialist at (425) 235-9200.**

# Table 1: Water Quality Testing Results - 2023

Detected Compounds	Units	EPA's Allowable Limits (MCL)		Levels in the Cedar Watershed		Typical Sources
		(MCLG)	(MCL)	Average	Range	
<b>RAW WATER</b>						
Total Organic Carbon	ppm	NA	TT	0.76	0.42 to 1.12	Naturally present in the environment
<b>FINISHED WATER</b>						
Turbidity	NTU	NA	TT	0.38	0.19 to 3.5	Soil runoff
Arsenic	ppb	0	10	0.4	0.3 to 0.6	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium	ppb	2000	2000	1.5	1.3 to 1.7	Erosion of natural deposits
Bromate*	ppb	0	10	0.7	ND to 11	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Fluoride	ppm	4	4	0.7	0.5 to 0.8	Water additive to promote strong teeth
Nitrate	ppm	10	10	0.1	One sample	Erosion of natural deposits
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	NA	80	32.9	15.8 - 70.7	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Haloacetic Acids (5)	ppb	NA	60	22.15	13.6 - 32.8	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Chlorine	ppm	MRDLG=4	MRDL=4	1.04	0.27 to 1.89	Water additive to control microbes

\*SPU is required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards. In October 2023, a bromate sample was not analyzed for the Tolt supply, and therefore SPU cannot be sure of the quality of your drinking water during that time. However, based on historical data and results since October 2023, Tolt bromate levels are generally non-detect.

Residential testing is done every 3 years; the next testing will occur in 2024

# Table 2: Lead and Copper Monitoring Results - 2021

Parameter and Units	Ideal Goal MCLG	Action Level <sup>1</sup>	Cedar River Watershed		Coal Creek Utility District		Typical Sources in Drinking Water
			2021 Results <sup>2</sup>	# Homes Exceeding Action Level	2021 Results	# Homes Exceeding Action Level	
Lead, ppb	0	15	2.2	0 of 50	1.57	0 of 3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Copper, ppm	1.3	1.3	0.05	0 of 50	.141	0 of 3	

<sup>1</sup> The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

<sup>2</sup> 90th percentile: 90 percent of the samples were less than the values shown.

There is no detectable lead in Seattle Public Utility's (SPU) source water. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Where you live, when your plumbing was installed, and what type of plumbing you have all play a part in determining your potential exposure level.

While there are no known lead service lines in CCUD's water distribution system, individual homes and businesses may have other plumbing components that could corrode and introduce contaminants into the water. CCUD is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in homes and businesses. SPU treats the water to minimize the tendency for lead to enter the water through corrosion, and results show that they have been very successful at this.

The risk of lead contamination in water increases when water sits in pipes for longer than six hours. 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 present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. 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: 1-800-426-4791 or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead). Finally, remember that drinking water is only a minor contributor to overall exposure to lead. Other sources, including paint, soil and food also contribute.

## Table Definitions

### 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.

### MCL: Maximum Contaminant Level

The highest level of a contaminant allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

### 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.

### TT: Treatment Technique

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

### NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

Turbidity is a measure of how clear the water looks. The turbidity MCL that applied to the Cedar supply in 2023 is 5 NTU, and for the Tolt supply it was 0.3 NTU for at least 95% of the samples in a month. In 2023, 100% of Tolt samples were below 0.3 NTU.

**NA:** Not applicable.

**ND:** Not detected.

**ppm:** 1 part per million = 1 mg/L = 1 milligram per liter.

**ppb:** 1 part per billion = 1 ug/L = 1 microgram per liter

**1 ppm = 1000 ppb**

**umho** = the unit of measurement for conductivity, aka micromhos, which is the reciprocal of the unit of resistance, the ohm

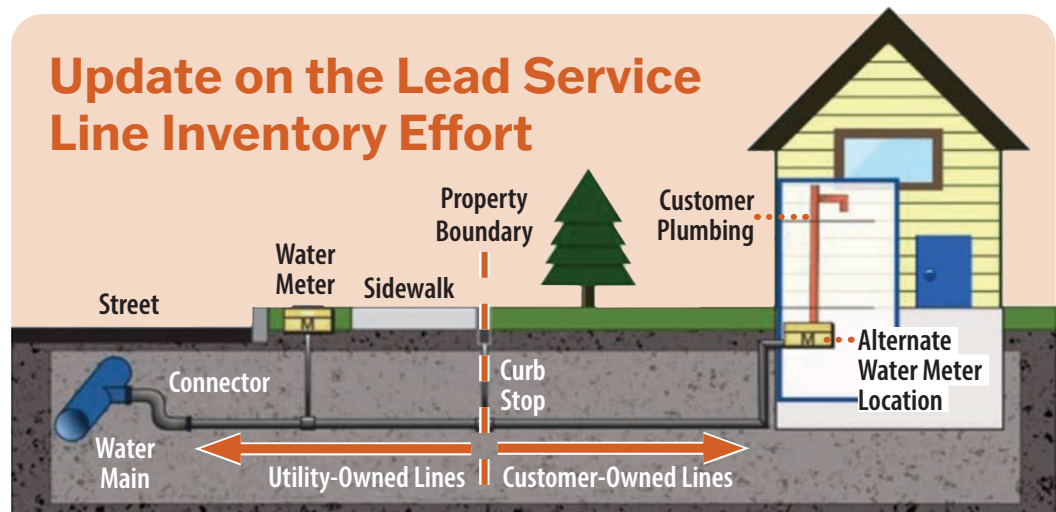
## Table 3: Water Quality Aesthetics - 2023

Parameter	Units	MCL	Cedar River Watershed Distribution
pH	pH Unit	6.5 - 8.5	8.28
Hardness, Grains	Grains/gallon		1.61
Alkalinity, Total	mg/liter		24.2
Conductivity	umho/cm	700	70.9

Your water is not only monitored for various chemical compounds, it is also monitored for overall aesthetics, which can be impacted by algae.

Source water from the Cedar River, and to a lesser extent from the Tolt Reservoir, can experience naturally occurring, seasonal algae blooms. Typically these blooms occur in the late Spring, but due to a number of environmental factors including sunlight and temperature, blooms can occur at other, unexpected times of the year. For similar reasons, some blooms are more intense than others. Although the algae we see in our water supplies is not associated with health concerns, it can create tastes and odors. Thankfully these are well controlled with current UV and ozone treatments.

Since the Cedar River supply is unfiltered, customers who filter water at home may experience their filters clogging sooner than usual during an algal bloom. To help alleviate this, you can either install an inexpensive pre-filter that can be periodically removed and cleaned with a brush, or replace your existing filter with a new one.



## Update on the Lead Service Line Inventory Effort

Mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Health have tasked all Public Drinking Water Systems (including CCUD) with developing an inventory of all water service lines within their service areas—including both utility-owned and customer-owned sides of each meter—with the overall goal of prioritizing and removing lead risks.

CCUD is utilizing our Geographical Information System (GIS) to accomplish most of this inventory effort. Much of our District was constructed after regulations banned the installation of lead pipes, solder, and fittings. We are continuing to investigate the presence of lead in older service lines. Our inventory report is due in October 2024, and we will notify customers with unknown or lead-containing service lines at that time.



## About Your Water Quality

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) 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. In Seattle's surface water supplies, potential contamination sources include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoa from wildlife;
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which are naturally occurring; and
- Organic contaminants, which can result from chlorine combining with the naturally occurring organic matter.

Washington's Source Water Assessment Program is conducted by the Department of Health (DOH) Office of Drinking Water. According to DOH, all surface waters in Washington are given a susceptibility rating of "high" regardless of whether contaminants have been detected or whether there are any sources of contaminants in the watershed. Information on the source water assessments is available from the DOH website at [fortress.wa.gov/doh/swap](http://fortress.wa.gov/doh/swap)

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Environmental Protection Agency and/or the Washington State Board of Health prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration and/or the Washington State Department of Agriculture regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. We encourage you to learn more at any of the following:

**Coal Creek Utility District: (425) 235-9200**  
[www.ccuud.org](http://www.ccuud.org)

**Seattle Public Utilities: (206) 684-3000**  
[www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality](http://www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality)

**Washington State Department of Health: (800) 521-0323**  
[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw)

**Environmental Protection Agency: (800) 426-4791**  
[www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)

**U.S. Food and Drug Administration: (888) 463-6332**  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

**Washington State Department of Agriculture: (360) 902-1800**  
[www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov)

## New Payment Portal

As of May 7, our old auto-pay feature was replaced with a new customer portal hosted by TruePoint Solutions and Invoice Cloud, our new credit card / electronic payment processor. This new portal lets you access billing activity, go paperless, set up auto-pay, or use quick pay. PLEASE NOTE: YOUR CURRENT AUTO-PAY SET UP WITH "PAYMENTUS" WILL NO LONGER WORK. Visit our website's payments page to get set up on the new portal. Thank you for your patience as we transition to a better system!

## PFAS and Your Water

Your drinking water remains safe and protected from PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). This group of man-made chemicals is manufactured for a variety of industrial purposes, and has the potential to raise health concerns if detected in drinking water.

Even though PFAS were not previously regulated, Seattle Public Utilities/SPU (our source of water) tested for PFAS in 2015, 2018, and most recently in June, July, October, and December 2023. All samples continued to show no detections for 29 PFAS compounds.

In January 2024, Coal Creek Utility District began quarterly testing at the point where SPU's source water enters our distribution system, and like SPU, have shown no detections for PFAS in our system.

## Water Use Efficiency Report

In 2023, Coal Creek Utility District (CCUD) purchased 509 million gallons of water from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). Of this amount, approximately 8.7 million gallons were lost to leakage from all sources (from our pipes to your home), representing a loss rate of 1.7%, with a three year average of 3.9%. This is a relatively low level of leakage, and well below the Washington State standard of no more than 10% water loss.

The Saving Water Partnership (SWP)—which is made up of Coal Creek Utility District and 18 other water utility partners—has set a ten-year conservation goal: keep the total average annual retail water use of SWP members under 110 million gallons per day (mgd) through 2028, despite forecasted population growth, by reducing per capita water use. During 2023, we exceeded this goal by achieving 96.3 mgd.

# You're Invited

Coal Creek Utility District invites you to join our regular open Board meetings—either in person or via Zoom. These meetings are held at 2:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, at our headquarters building (6801 132nd Place SE in Newcastle). If a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday, it will be held on the next business day at the same time. Agendas can be found on our website under the 'Agenda' tab at [www.ccu.org](http://www.ccu.org)

To attend by phone, call (253) 215-8782, using Meeting ID: 210 020 5821, and Passcode: 6801. Those attending by phone will be able to hear everyone who speaks.

Should you wish to make a comment during a meeting, please contact us in advance—before 10:00 am on the day of the meeting at the very latest—by email at: [customerservice@ccud.org](mailto:customerservice@ccud.org) or by phone at (425) 235-9200.



*An example of a backflow preventer*

## Does Your Home or Business Need Backflow Prevention?

If you have any of the following...

- Fire Sprinkler system
- Lawn irrigation system
- Swimming pool
- Hot tub / jacuzzi tub
- Livestock watering system
- Decorative fountain
- Hydraulic boat lift
- Water makeup lines (to supply a boiler or hydronic heating)

...OR if you are a business of (most) any kind;

...OR if you raise farm animals...

The State Department of Health requires you:

1. Have a "Backflow Prevention Assembly" installed on your water service;
2. Get it tested annually by a certified backflow assembly tester; and
3. Have your tester send a copy of the test record to Coal Creek Utility District.

**Give us a call for more info: (425) 235-9200**



*Cedar River Watershed*

## About Your Water Source

Coal Creek Utility District purchases the water we provide from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), which sources its water primarily from the publicly-owned Cedar River, and on rare occasions the Tolt River watersheds. Cedar River Water is pumped to the Lake Youngs Facility, where it undergoes a treatment process that includes both ozonation and ultraviolet light (UV) disinfection, which kills disease-causing bacteria, giardia and cryptosporidium. The UV process limits the amount of chemicals required for disinfection and is not known to produce any harmful by-products. Finally, the water is fluoridated to help prevent tooth decay, controlled with alkalinity for corrosion reduction, and chlorinated.

## Unique Supply of Pure, Clean Water

Many cities source their drinking water from local rivers—the same rivers that are used for recreation, industry, and commerce. SPU's water is different. We capture our water as rain and melted snow in forested and protected mountain watersheds. As a result, we have one of the purest water supplies in the nation.

Two surface water sources provide all CCUD water: Lake Youngs, fed by the Cedar River from Chester Morse Lake, and the South Fork of the Tolt River. These two river systems begin in the Cascades and have large protected watersheds.

Since both watersheds are publicly owned, SPU is able to vigorously protect them through a comprehensive program that prohibits agricultural, industrial, and recreational activities in the watersheds, and no one is allowed to live within the watersheds. This means there is little opportunity for contaminants to enter the water. Even so, there is always some potential for natural sources of contamination, which is why your water is tested and treated so thoroughly.



*The Tolt River*

*photo by ragesoss via <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=51558185>*