Tribal Community

June 2017 Tribal Observer

SCIT Utility Authority Consumer Confidence Report and annual Drinking Water Report

(EDITOR’S NOTE: The following report was submitted by Water Operator Supervisor Joe Johnson.)

Is My Water Safe? During 2016, your tap water met all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water safety standards. Your Tribal employers also protect your water and supplies and are proud to report that your water system had no violations of maximum contaminant levels or any other drinking water quality standards this past year. This report will give you even more information about the safety of your water supply. Please read on for additional information. Informed customers are our allies.

Do I need to take special precautions? Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in water than the general population. Immune-compromised persons who have undergone organ transplants, persons 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. The EPA/ Centers of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Where does my water come from? Water for consumer use is derived from a variety of sources including rivers, lakes and other surface waters. Your Tribal supply comes from underground aquifers as ground water to your wells. A benefit of ground water is it is naturally filtered through rocks and soil. Our four best wells, Wells #3 is located off of Little Elk Road. Well # 4 is located west of Shepherd Road. Well #5 is located north of Remus Road. Well #6 is located north of Ogemaw. The water softening plant was put into operation on April 5, 2009. Please consider not using your home water softener for the following reasons: your water will have an increase in the sodium (salt) content and you water could become corrosive. The plant was designed and is operated to provide the tribal homes and businesses with water that is balanced and softened. Re-softernion can create a salty taste and cause you to use extra water to remove soap residues. The water plant does add fluoride to the water. If you have an aquarium with tropical fish, check with your local pet store for proper treatment of the water to avoid harmful effects on your fish.

Water system assessment and its availability: The tribe has worked with the U.S. EPA to conduct a source water assessment. This assessment consists of identifying the area(s) around the well(s), which need to be protected from contaminations, identifying potential sources of contamination, and determining the susceptibility of the wells to contamination. The assessment also gives us information we need as a tribal community to make sure our drinking water is safe now and in the future. We have a copy available at the water plant for review to anyone who wishes to read it. This was updated in 2009.

Vulnerability Study and Emergency Response Plan: We are required to do a vulnerability study and file it with the EPA. This has been completed as well as the Emergency Response Plan. These are available for review at the water plant.

Why are contaminants in drinking water? 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 (1-800-426-4791).

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. It can also pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activity.

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities. In order to insure that the tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations, which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water, that is provided by a public water system.

How to identify Utility staff employees: All Employees of the Utility Department of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe wear shirts that have the tribal logo on them, have a tribal employee badge and should be arriving at a residence in a company vehicle. If you have ever had a question about someone being at your residence and you are not sure if they are an employee, please call us at 989-775-5141 to verify that they are who they claim to be. How can I become involved in the safety of my drinking water? If you would like to become involved with your water safety, please call us at 989-775-5141.