

NEWS RELEASE



AR226-1956

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

www.pca.state.mn.us

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FOR RELEASE: May 9, 2005

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GROUND-WATER INVESTIGATION CONTINUES TO FIND PFCs AT LOW LEVELS IN LAKE ELMO PRIVATE WELLS AS FOUR TEST ABOVE HEALTH-BASED CRITERIA

St. Paul, Minn. – The ground-water investigation continues for perfluorochemicals (PFCs) as four private wells in Lake Elmo test above the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH's) criteria for long-term safe use.

PFCs were detected in 41 of 110 wells sampled in April. Thirty-seven wells tested below the health-based criteria established by the MDH and 69 showed no presence of the chemicals. Residents of the four homes with PFCs above the health-based criteria have been advised to discontinue use of the water and are being supplied with bottled water by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

The MPCA suspects that the Washington County Landfill is a source for PFCs. The agency will take the necessary response actions since this landfill is in the Closed Landfill Program.

In March, the MPCA and the MDH tested for PFCs in 38 private wells and found eight wells contaminated above the health-based criteria in the western Lake Elmo area. The other wells showed low levels or no detection of PFCs.

The MPCA will provide all 12 homes above the PFC health-based criteria with a granular activated carbon filter to reduce the contaminant levels. The other wells with PFC levels below the MDH criteria will be monitored on a regular basis.

(more)

Ground-water investigation continues for perfluorochemical, cont. Page 2

A total of 173 private wells have been sampled in Lake Elmo as part of this investigation, with 63 wells showing low levels of PFCs. Previous sampling has shown the presence of PFCs in the Oakdale municipal water supply as well as one private well in Oakdale below the health-based criteria.

The MDH and the MPCA staff are closely examining the sample results to determine if a pattern exists based on well locations and depth. The full impact of the PFC contamination is not yet clear and additional well sampling in the area will be completed later this month.

Reporter's Note:

A map showing the areas where private wells have been sampled can be found at the following link:

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/sites/washington/lakeelmo/wellmap.pdf .

Background:

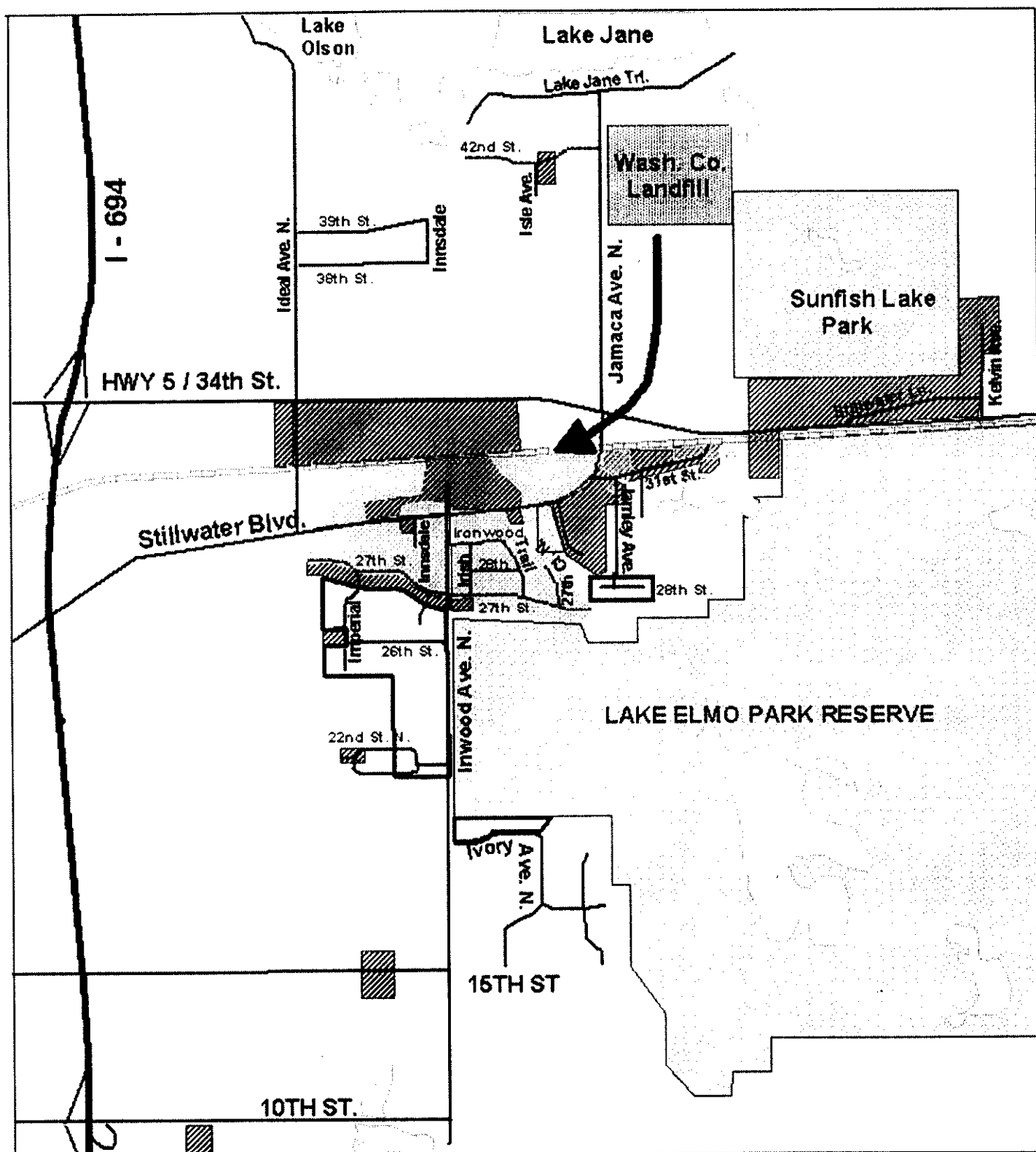
Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA) are in a family of manmade chemicals, PFCs, which have been used for decades to make products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease and water. Common uses include nonstick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, components of fire-fighting foam and other industrial applications.

Minnesota is one of the few states in the country where these chemicals were made. The 3M Company made PFCs at its Cottage Grove facility beginning in the 1940s and phased out the production of PFOS and PFOA by 2002. Wastes from the production process were placed in several local disposal sites, including Washington County Landfill and the 3M Oakdale Dump.

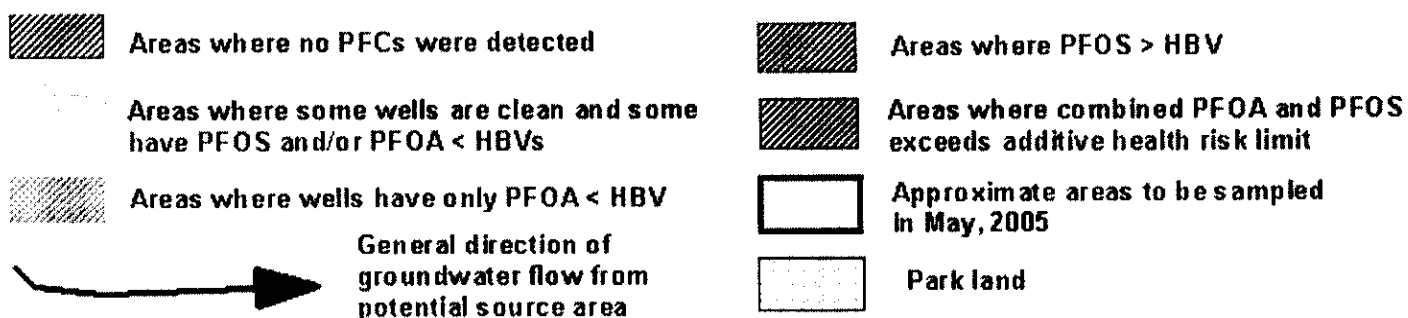
PFCs are very stable chemicals that do not change or break down in the environment. Therefore, they may build up in soil, sediment or in other places. Some studies indicated PFCs easily enter ground water and move long distances.

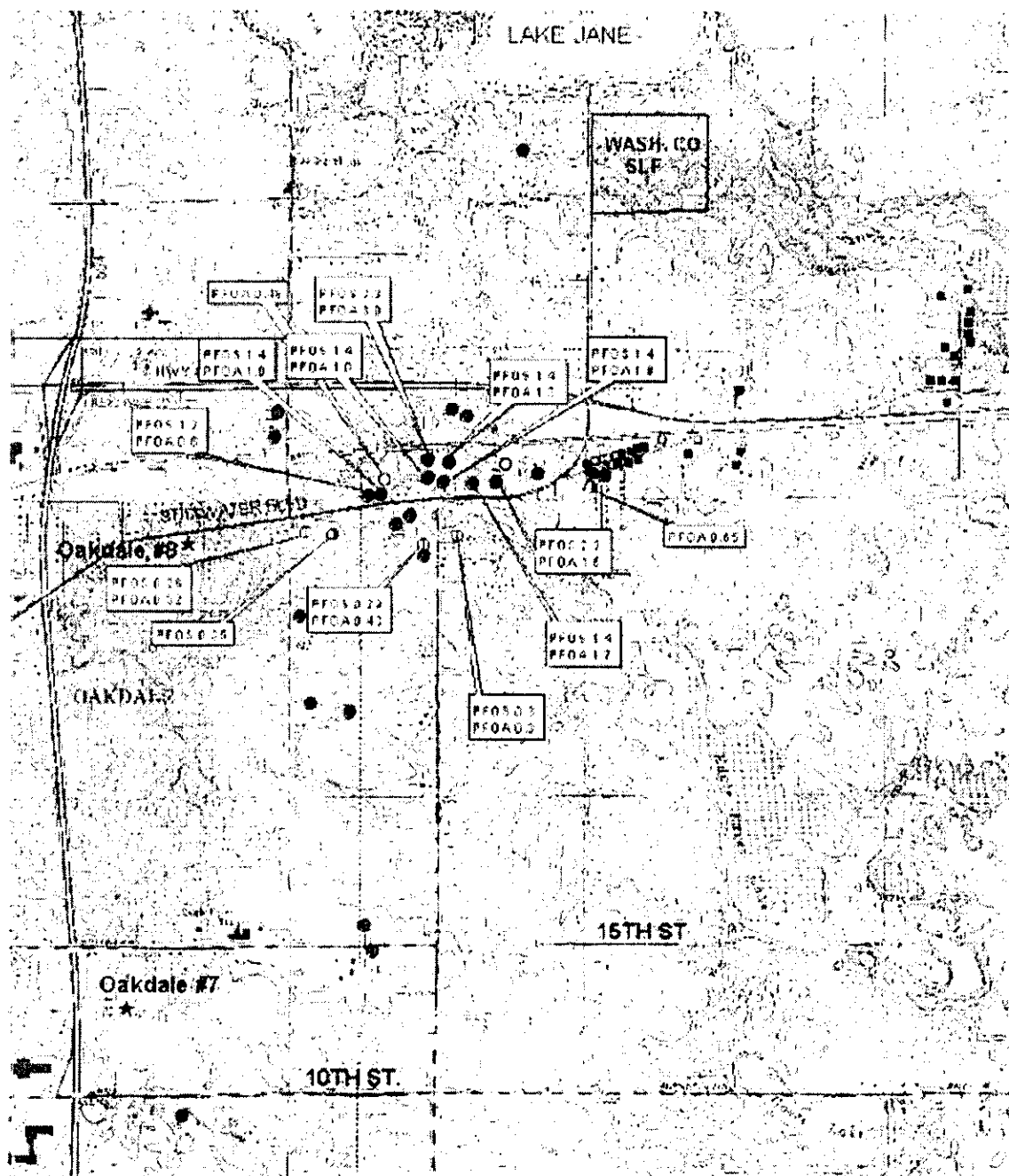
While there is only limited information about human health effects, animal studies indicate high concentrations of PFCs harm the liver and other organs. Developmental problems have been seen in the offspring of pregnant rats exposed to PFCs.

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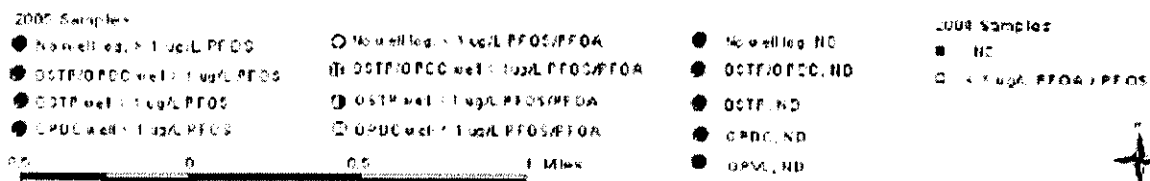


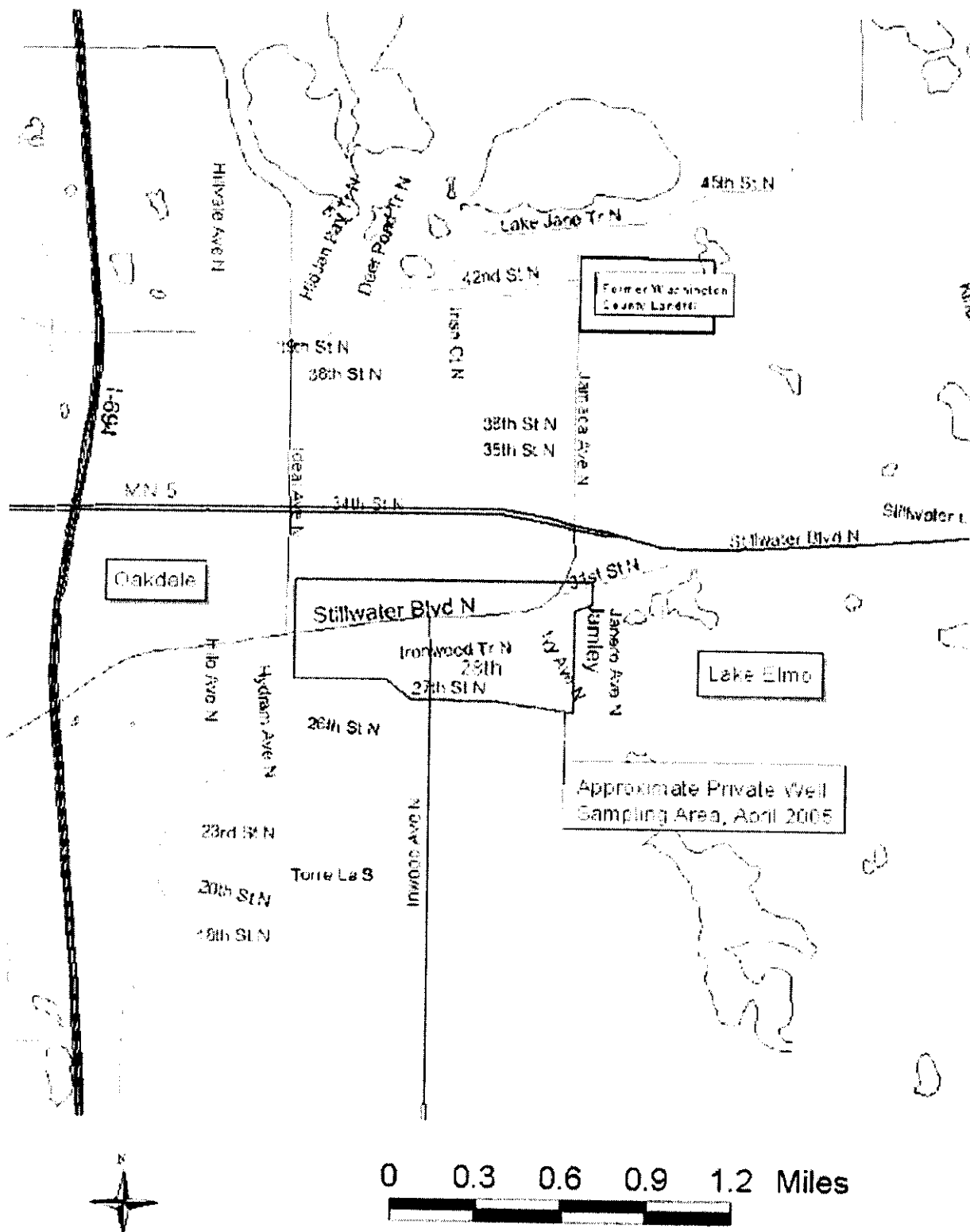
Private Well Sampling in Lake Elmo - 2004 and 2005





Private Well Sampling in Lake Elmo, Near Wash. Co. SLF - 2004 and 2005







Oakdale Wells FAQ's (frequently asked questions)

January 24, 2005

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OAKDALE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Which wells have PFOS and PFOA? How much?

Samples were collected from the active city wells, numbered 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 in late December 2004 under the oversight of City of Oakdale and MDH staff. Well #3, located north of MN Highway 5, showed no detection of PFOS or PFOA. Wells #1 and #2, located at the southern edge of the city, had the lowest concentrations of PFOS and PFOA, less than 0.1 parts per billion (ppb). Wells #5, #7, and #8 had higher concentrations, up to 0.97 ppb PFOS and 0.86 ppb PFOA. Well #9, located near well #5, was not sampled at that time due to a mechanical problem. Future sampling efforts will include well #9, and may include other public and private wells in the area as well.

The concentrations detected are below the MDH Health Based Values (HBVs) for PFOS and PFOA of 1 ppb and 7 ppb, respectively. MDH considers the HBVs to be protective for all users of the water.

What is the concentration of PFOS and PFOA in the water at my home/apartment/workplace?

Because of the constant mixing that occurs in the system, we expect that the concentration of PFOS and PFOA at any particular location in the city should be somewhere between the lowest and highest levels detected in the individual wells. Given that the well with the highest concentration of PFOS and PFOA are below the HBV, no users should be receiving water that has PFOS or PFOA at concentrations above the HBV. The chemicals will not "build up" in the storage tanks or system.

How was the problem of PFCs in the Oakdale wells discovered?

MDH often consults and advises MPCA in the investigation of Superfund sites throughout Minnesota. MDH specifically evaluates the impacts the site may have on people living nearby and advises on ways that exposures to people can be prevented or reduced. In the course of routine evaluation of the 3M Cottage Grove plant, PFCs were discovered in the groundwater beneath the plant.

This led to further investigation of sites where production wastes containing PFCs were disposed, such as the Washington County Landfill, and the Abresch site in Oakdale. PFCs were subsequently detected in the groundwater at these two sites, which led to the sampling of the Oakdale city wells. The actual source of the PFCs in the Oakdale wells is not known.

Is there a test to see if I have been exposed?

PFOS (and to a lesser extent PFOA) have been detected in the blood of people living in the United States and other countries. 3M has been monitoring these chemicals in the blood of Cottage Grove plant employees since the 1970's. Concentrations of PFOS and PFOA in the blood of the general population are many times less than that of the 3M

News Release



January 25, 2005

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Perfluorochemicals detected at trace levels in Oakdale municipal wells

Recent tests on five city wells have found water contaminated with two perfluorochemicals, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced today.

Concentrations of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in five city wells are below MDH's Health Based Values, levels of chemicals that are considered safe for human consumption over a lifetime. The HBV for PFOA is 7 parts per billion (ppb) and the HBV for PFOS is 1 ppb.

The City of Oakdale and the MDH will continue to monitor the situation.

Perfluorochemicals (PFCs) are a family of manmade chemicals that have been used for decades to make products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease and water. Common uses include nonstick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, as components of fire-fighting foam, and other industrial applications.

Letters have been sent to consumers with more detailed information. Staff from the City of Oakdale, MDH, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 3M, and Washington County are working together to address the contamination in the area.

More information is available on the MDH Website at www.health.state.mn.us

-MDH-



January 21, 2005

Dear Oakdale Water System Customer:

The purpose of this letter is to let you know about recent water testing results from wells supplying the Oakdale public water system. In late December 2004, the City of Oakdale, working with 3M, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and other agencies collected water samples from these wells to look for perfluorochemicals (PFCs).

Perfluorochemicals have been used for many years by 3M and other companies in products that resist heat, oil, grease, stains and water. Two of these compounds, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), were recently found in groundwater beneath two former waste disposal sites; the Abresch site, in the vicinity of T.H. No. 5 & Granada Avenue (a Superfund site), and the Washington County Landfill. Wastes containing PFCs from 3M's production plant in Cottage Grove were disposed at these two sites many years ago.

PFCs are an emerging worldwide environmental issue. Only recently have laboratories developed methods to detect small amounts of them in water. Because of recent detection in groundwater at the nearby disposal sites, the City, in consultation with MDH and the MPCA, decided it was prudent to test water from the City wells for PFOS and PFOA. These wells are routinely tested for water quality, and no other industrial compounds have ever been detected in the city wells.

The results indicate low levels, on average less than one part per billion (ppb), of PFOS and PFOA were present in five city wells. The average levels of PFOS and PFOA in the wells were below Health-Based-Values (HBVs) recommended by MDH (1 ppb and 7 ppb, respectively). The HBVs were developed in 2002 using the best available health studies. Exposure to compounds at concentrations below their HBVs is not considered to pose a health risk, even over a lifetime. Exposure is not limited to drinking water containing these compounds, as they are present elsewhere in the environment.

Animal tests have shown that exposure to very high levels of PFOS and PFOA (with concentrations orders of magnitude higher than found in the city wells) can be toxic to the liver and other organs, and may cause developmental effects. While animal studies suggest that exposure to very high levels of PFOA may promote certain types of cancer, it is not thought to cause cancer in humans.

To ensure that the city's water supply remains safe, the city wells will now be tested for PFOS and PFOA on a regular basis. The various agencies will also continue to investigate the potential sources of the PFCs. The City of Oakdale will continue to work with the MDH, the other agencies, and surrounding communities (because our systems share the same aquifer) to provide regular updates to our customers. Further information will be provided in the future by mail, and will also be available on the official city web site at <http://www.ci.oakdale.mn.us/>.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, you may contact us as follows: James Kelly of MDH at (651) 215-0913, or Brian Bachmeier, Oakdale Public Works Director at (651) 730-2730.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Bloomgren
Director, Environmental Health Division
Minnesota Department of Health

Craig A. Waldron
City Administrator
City of Oakdale