

Raspberry Falls Water System

Q & A

Updated January 19, 2010

Q. Will Loudoun Water wait for results from the proposed EPA Dye Test study before proceeding with the upgrades?

A. Loudoun Water needs to be assured that meaningful information will be gathered from the study. We are currently working with Loudoun County, Virginia Department of Health, EPA and other stakeholders to determine exactly what the study design should be and whether one should go forth. If the stakeholders can agree to a study design that is sound and will produce meaningful results, then we will proceed with the study and use the data to inform project decisions.

Q. Is Loudoun Water planning to host a meeting to present the Raspberry system upgrade plans to the Raspberry residents?

A. We currently do not plan to host a meeting to discuss the upgrades to the system. We have been communicating with the Raspberry Falls residents in various mediums often and the proposed system upgrades are consistent with the direction and approach Loudoun Water has always undertaken and communicated with the residents of Raspberry Falls.

Q. How much money did VMK contribute to the total project cost?

A. VMK contributed approximately \$1 million, which represents the majority of the cost of all the upgrades.

Q. How much of Community Systems' Repair and Replacement fund is being used for the upgrades to Raspberry's system?

A. The final amount is unknown. Any savings realized from VMK's contribution to the total project will be used in order to keep the amount taken from the R&R fund as low as possible.

Q. What will be the projected rate increase as a result of these upgrades?

A. The rate increase will be determined after the project prices are finalized. This improvement project was selected in order to provide high water quality, while minimizing cost to customers.

Q. You mention adding hydrants to the system. Will these be dry hydrants like the one here already by the pond, or will you use the non potable well by the pool, or is this a different plan?

A. We will be adding hydrants that are connected to your potable water distribution system to meet fire flow standards of 500 gallons/minute.

Q. Where will the new hydrants be located?

A. The location of the hydrants will be determined in the final engineering. It is anticipated that a hydrant will be installed on each cul de sac.

Q. Where can I obtain the latest water quality data for our well?

A. Water quality data through December 2009 is posted here at the Raspberry Falls page of our website. The file will be updated monthly.

Q. Will Raspberry Falls have more than one well in case something interferes with the provision of water from the new primary well?

A. Raspberry Falls will have four wells total: One new primary well, RASP-F, to work in tandem with the other primary well, PW-2 and back up supply can be provided from the original well, PW-1, and the original reserve well, PW-3.

Q. What are the present and planned storage capacities for the system?

A. The current storage tank is 40,000 gal. The final size of the new storage tank is yet to be determined, and it will be based upon fire supply needs and groundwater availability.

Q. Is there any recourse for compensation to home owners in the event that the Copper/CPVC transition fittings continue to cause what can be major expense to the homeowners?

A. Loudoun Water cannot answer the question as it has no oversight or responsibility for plumbing fixtures. The best thing Loudoun Water can do as your water supplier is to add orthophosphate (a corrosion inhibitor), which has sometimes successfully stopped problems of this nature. That is exactly what we are doing.

Q. How often and for how long have you shut off our well?

A. We follow a protocol whereby each time we detect bacteria above a certain threshold in the source water we turn the impacted well off as a precaution and rely solely on the other well. This typically occurs after considerable rain events and lasts a day or two. This has no bearing on the quality of your drinking water.

Q. Why is the source water contaminated?

A. In karst environments, groundwater may not be naturally filtered to the same extent it is in other geologies. Sinkholes, solution cavities, and/or other karst features allow the water to enter the groundwater more quickly. It is important to note that contaminated source water does not mean contaminated drinking water. Though we may find bacteria from time to time in your source water, the State has determined that the current treatment we provide through chlorination is sufficient for protection of your health.

Q. Have you investigated whether or not the buffalo grazing at the Wright farm is a source of the bacteria?

A. Geologists have determined that it is unlikely the buffalo grazing on the Wright farm would impact PW-1, which is several thousand feet away. The property line for the bison farm is approximately 700 feet from PW-2 and down gradient.

Much lower counts of bacteria are detected in this well than in PW-1. The sinkholes as determined from the Loudoun County carbonate map are at least twice that distance from the well.

Q. Is the builder bound by any legal responsibilities to the community, monitored by Loudoun County, to have enough water-to-homes ratio?

A. The developer is contractually obligated for any deficits on operations and maintenance expenses until 90 percent of the ultimate number of homes are connected to and using the system. All the work completed so far to trouble shoot the current issue has been paid for by the developer. The developer has been very cooperative. The system at Raspberry was built to meet requirements set by Loudoun Water. The capacity for the community permitted by the state is 83,000 gallons per day. For 180 homes (ultimate buildout), that equates to roughly 450 gallons per day per home.

Q. Why doesn't Raspberry Falls' water system have an established "contact time" standard for chlorination before water is distributed to the community?

A. The Virginia Water Works regulations require surface water sources to have an established contact time and groundwater sources that chlorinate to have at least 30 minutes detention time. We are currently running our storage tank near full. That means that we have a detention time of about 12 to 24 hours.

Q. There is an extensive drainage system on the golf hole next to the well at issue due the "sunken" topography. Where does this water drain? Is it designed as a French drain?

A. The drainage system on the golf course is a piped system that drains stormwater to local waterways. The specific drainage system near our impacted well drains east toward Rte. 15.

Q. Does the Golf Club pay the same rate as the rest of the community? If not, what are their rates? Further, if they pay different rates, why was this not included in the Public Hearing Notice on rate increases?

A. The club has the same water and wastewater rates as you. Loudoun Water does not differentiate residential and commercial accounts with respect to rates. They do use a reasonable amount of water to support their commercial enterprise and are actively discussing ways they can conserve water while maintaining their business.

Q. Why didn't Loudoun Water place a moratorium on building by Marquis/Van Metre until the water issue is settled?

We have not felt it necessary as the developer has been fully cooperative in addressing the issues.

Q Will our water system be expanded to include the Selma or Wright areas? If so, will that bring down the rates? Would our system even be able to sustain the Wright Farm development if it takes place?

A. Loudoun County approval would be required for an interconnection with Selma. We have not yet determined that interconnection would provide significant benefit. The prospect for development at the Wright farm may or may not affect Raspberry. We had originally discussed the concept of interconnecting and/or expanding, where the Wrights would provide additional water and storage for the water system and contribute to a greater expansion of the wastewater system as Selma was proceeding. We'll see what can occur if the Wrights move forward on development plans again. If the development proceeds, Loudoun Water will push for interconnection to help improve reliability of the water systems and keep operational costs to a minimum for the wastewater system.

Q. What's the purpose of the new meters (Orion) that were installed this past year?

A. The Orion meters have added capabilities, including the ability to track your individual water usage on an hourly basis. This is an effective leak detecting tool, as the meter will send a signal through the system to alert us to a possible issue.

Q. Why was the water capacity set at 83,000 gallons a day, if that will never sustain a green lawn for each homeowner?

A. The capacity for your system was not set to ensure green lawns of the size built in your community. It's set to ensure more than adequate water to each homeowner for all their public health and safety (hygiene) needs and a little leftover for modest outdoor use. The current capacity of 83,000 gallons allows approximately 450 gallons of water per day per home, more than ample for a family of five with some minimal, careful outdoor watering.

Q. What was the feedback from Oct 28, 2008 meeting attendees surrounding costs?

A. Costs were only touched on in the "big picture" sense. The main point we tried to get across was the difference in who pays for items "wanted" versus items required." If the state requires a fix prior to 90 percent buildout, it's the developer's responsibility to pay. If the state requires a fix after buildout, Loudoun Water will use your Repair and Replacement fund to cover it, and a rate increase, if needed. If the community decides they would like a fix that is not required by the state, then the residents themselves will be responsible for the cost.