

# A<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>O

## Quality Water Matters

Brought to you by the City of Ann Arbor  
Volume 1, Issue 2 | June 2019



On the heels of water awareness month, I want to thank the hundreds of attendees who participated in our annual Water Treatment Plant Open House on May 11. It's gratifying to see such a high level of engagement and interest in Ann Arbor's drinking water. Attendees took tours of the water treatment plant, and engaged with our many partners, including the Huron River Watershed Council, Ann Arbor Hands-on Museum and the American Water Works Association. We also had taste tests of the city's water up against both bottled and well water, and I don't think I need to tell you which came out on top!



Recently, there has been intense media coverage on emerging contaminants known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as PFAS). In May, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services published new health screening levels for five PFAS: PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, PFHxS and PFBS. It's important to know that even with the announcement of these new levels, the city's current PFAS management strategy continues to meet the most restrictive public health criteria. We anticipate that new information on PFAS health impacts will continue to be released and debated during the coming months. We are committed to informing our residents of

new information and guidelines as it becomes available via monthly Quality Water Matters reports and our website. Sign up for email notification about water topics at [www.QualityWaterMatters.org](http://www.QualityWaterMatters.org).

Even though the city's PFAS levels are well below the Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory levels, that's not good enough for us, which is why we continue to improve our treatment processes. This spring, we completed the installation of a new type of granular activated carbon in our filters to improve water quality by reducing PFAS even further below health advisory levels.

Finally, last month I was honored to provide testimony before the House Environment and Climate Change Subcommittee in Washington, D.C., regarding a series of bills intended to address PFAS contamination. The invitation to give testimony underscores Ann Arbor's reputation not only in Michigan but throughout the country for seeking innovative solutions to address water-quality challenges and stay ahead of potential threats.

**Questions?** Email us at [water@a2gov.org](mailto:water@a2gov.org) or call us 734.994.2840.

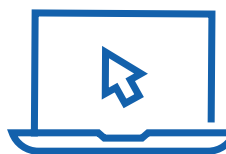
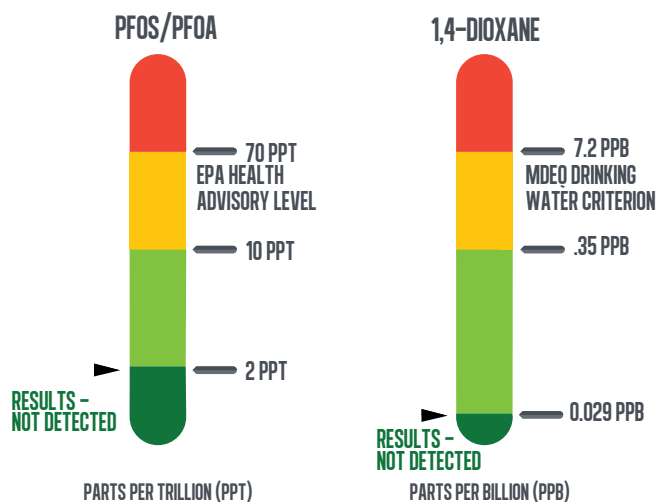
Your questions are always welcomed and your concerns are taken seriously. Next month's issue will focus on 1,4-dioxane and what actions the city is taking today to address this emerging contaminant.

Respectfully,

*Brian Steglitz*

Brian Steglitz, P.E., Drinking Water License F-1,  
Water Treatment Plant Manager, Ann Arbor resident

## MONTHLY WATER QUALITY DASHBOARD



### WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER?

The current Water Quality Report is available online at [www.a2gov.org/WaterReport](http://www.a2gov.org/WaterReport) and to view all data and monthly sampling results visit: [www.QualityWaterMatters.org](http://www.QualityWaterMatters.org).



### JUNE EVENTS:

Mayor's Green Fair, Main Street  
Friday, June 14, 6-9 p.m.

Pop-up Water Events, coming this summer to a space near you!

## COUNTY NEWS:

### MDHHS reminds Michiganders to avoid foam on lakes and rivers with high levels of PFAS



With the summer recreation season here, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is issuing a reminder that everyone should avoid foam on Michigan lakes and rivers known to have per and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the water. Foam on these water bodies can have much higher amounts of PFAS than the water, and swallowing foam with PFAS could be a health risk.

Swimming or bathing in water containing PFAS is not a health concern because the amount of PFAS is typically low compared to the foam. Although swallowing PFAS is the main way to get it in your body, an accidental swallow of river or lake water is not a health concern. The amount of PFAS in lake and river water and in foam matters in determining if a health concern exists. MDHHS will continue to evaluate surface water and foam data and will issue further recommendations if necessary.

Health advisories for foam exist on these waterbodies:

- Van Etten Lake, Oscoda
- Lake Margrethe, Grayling
- Rogue River, Rockford
- Thornapple River, Grand Rapids
- Huron River, Southeast Michigan

PFAS-containing foam can have high amounts of PFAS. Although, current science indicates PFAS does not move easily through the skin, it's best to rinse off foam after contact and bathe or shower after the day's outdoor activities. None of this information changes recommendations for people's water used at home. The City of Ann Arbor is exploring the installation of hand-rinsing stations in close proximity to the city's canoe liveries this summer. These will be in addition to hand-washing facilities available in public restrooms at the liveries.

An MDHHS evaluation of how young children might recreate on lakes and rivers shows a health risk could exist from repeated, prolonged whole-body contact with foam containing high amounts of PFAS. Repeated prolonged contact is considered to be three hours per day, five days per week, over three months of a year, representing a summer season. MDHHS' recommendation to avoid foam with PFAS is protective of everyone, including young children.

Additionally, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development recommends that people not allow their animals – especially dogs – to come into contact with or swallow the foam. Dogs and other animals can potentially swallow foam collected in their fur when grooming themselves and should be thoroughly rinsed off with fresh water after contact with foamy water. Not all foam contains PFAS. There is naturally occurring foam that piles up in bays, eddies or river barriers such as dams. This foam is off-white and/or brown in color and may have an earthy or fish smell.

#### PFAS foam:

Can be bright white | Is usually lightweight | Can be sticky  
Tends to pile up like shaving cream | Can blow onto the beach

More information about PFAS and foam is available under the PFAS Foam section at [www.Michigan.gov/pfasresponse](http://www.Michigan.gov/pfasresponse).

## Avoid Foam



Foam may have high amounts of PFAS.

Rinse off foam after contact. Rinsing in the lake or river is okay.

Bathe or shower after the day's outdoor activities.

PFAS contaminated foam can:

- Be bright white
- Be lightweight
- Pile up like shaving cream
- Be sticky
- Blow inland

Touching the water is not a health concern. Enjoy swimming, boating, and fishing.



For more information, call MDHHS at 800-648-6942 or visit [www.michigan.gov/PFASresponse](http://www.michigan.gov/PFASresponse).



Foam advisory signage (example above) will be posted along the Huron River at city canoe liveries.



## WATER CHAMPION:



Laura Rubin

Each month, the city will feature a member of our community who is working to protect one of the city's most valued resources: water.

This month, the city and our partners want to recognize **Laura Rubin** for her more than 20 years of dedicated service as the executive director of the Huron River Watershed Council. In June, Laura will be joining the Great Lakes Coalition, Healing Our Waters as its director. This is a coalition of 150 environmental and conservation groups working to restore and protect the Great Lakes. This coalition leads the effort to solidify the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative strategies, priorities and federal funding. They have an active presence in Washington, D.C., educating elected officials about the importance of Great Lakes investments and priorities, working with conservation leaders in Great Lakes states, and working with the media to tell the story of the Great Lakes and restoration. We wish Laura all the best as she continues to work on behalf of Michigan residents to protect and restore our water resources.

Contact Us! 734.794.6426 • [water@a2gov.org](mailto:water@a2gov.org) • [www.QualityWaterMatters.org](http://www.QualityWaterMatters.org)