

Washington County Groundwater Plume Sites

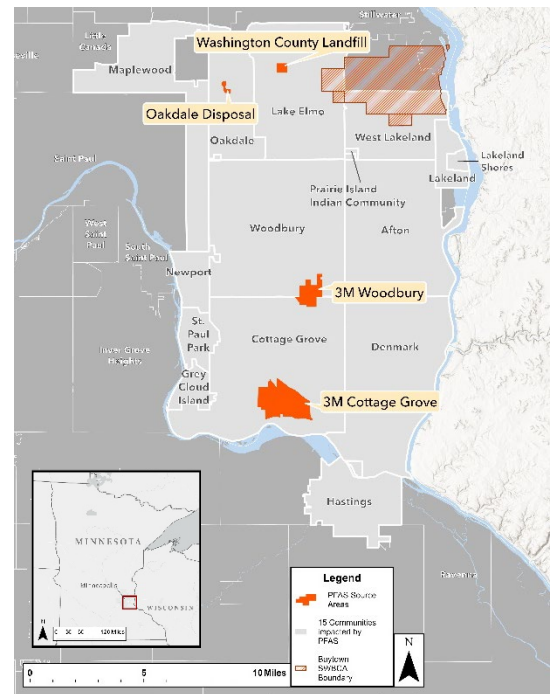
The [Baytown TCE Plume](#) and [3M / East Metro PFAS Plume](#) are the two main sources of groundwater contamination in Washington County. This fact sheet gives an overview of each, with FAQs and contacts. Refer to [What's in My Neighborhood](#) for an interactive map of all Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) sites and the [Groundwater Contamination Atlas](#) for in-depth info on sites with groundwater contamination.

Baytown TCE Superfund Site Overview

The [Baytown TCE Plume](#) is a 5-mile long trichloroethylene (TCE) plume that extends from its source area in Lake Elmo through Baytown and West Lakeland Townships and the City of Bayport to the St. Croix River. The source was a metalworking facility that operated in the 1940s-50s. It became a [state Superfund](#) site in 1988 and [federal Superfund](#) site in 1994, and MPCA and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have conducted and continue to conduct investigation and cleanup of the source area using state and federal Superfund dollars. Funds were also used to expand the City of Bayport's municipal treatment plant to treat for TCE in 2008 and 2015, and the City of Bayport is responsible for operation of their system.

The MPCA samples wells and provides and maintains [whole-house Granular Activated Carbon \(GAC\) filters](#) to existing Private Wells within the SWBCA when they have TCE above the Minnesota Dept. of Health (MDH) Health Risk Limit (0.4 ug/L) and the well:

1. is located within one of the new areas added to the SWBCA effective January 8, 2025, and approved for development on or before the effective date; OR
2. is not located within the new areas added to the SWBCA effective January 8, 2025, and approved for development on or before April 9, 2002.



The MPCA samples eligible private wells within the TCE plume, along with select non-private wells and wells outside the plume to track plume edges. Sampling frequency is based on TCE concentration; wells with more TCE are sampled more often than those with lower levels. **The owners of ineligible wells are responsible for following the West Lakeland Township Ordinance and Baytown Township Ordinance to conduct their own sampling.**

If the MDH Health Risk Limit is exceeded in an eligible well, a Well Advisory Letter is issued by MDH, MPCA obtains an Access Agreement from the owner, then MPCA organizes the GAC installation. These state-funded Baytown GACs have a changeout frequency of 1-6 years pending TCE sampling results. The MPCA initiates the sampling, sends results letters with next steps, and organizes GAC filter installs and changeouts. No action is needed by the homeowner other than cooperating with MPCA and their contractors and contacting MPCA Baytown Site staff with any questions or if something seems wrong. Federal superfund dollars cannot be used for the domestic well sampling or GAC filtration at Baytown because it is in the long-term operation and maintenance stage. **The MPCA is not able to use state Superfund dollars to pay for sampling and filtration at ineligible wells. The owners of these wells are responsible for following the West Lakeland Township Ordinance and Baytown Township Ordinance to conduct their own sampling and install their own GAC filtration and are often referred to as Ordinance Wells.**

All new wells drilled in the area must get permission from the MDH Well Management Section and adhere to the requirements of the [Baytown/West Lakeland Township Special Well Boring and Construction Area \(SWBCA\)](#). Permitted Ordinance Wells require initial sampling per the SWBCA, and after that owners of these wells are responsible for following the West Lakeland Township Ordinance and Baytown Township Ordinance to conduct their own sampling and install their own GAC filtration.

Under the Township Ordinances, Ordinance Well owners are required to sample their well every 2 years and install a GAC filter if TCE is at or above 0.1 ug/L. If a GAC filter is needed, they are required to perform GAC changeout every 3 years and notify their Township Clerk of its completion. The Townships have enforcement authority and oversee enacting, tracking, notification, and carrying out their Ordinances. Generally, it is up to the owner to initiate the required sampling, GAC install, or GAC changeout. The Ordinances require Township Clerks to provide letters to Ordinance Well owners when their sampling or changeout is overdue.

The MPCA and MDH recommend Ordinance Well owners contact Washington County for sampling. Although owners can utilize any accredited lab for the required VOC sampling, Washington County samples are analyzed by the Minnesota Public Health Laboratory so the results will be reviewed by MDH staff, who then send the results in a letter. **For more information on cost and how to request a sample, see Washington County's [Water Tests](#) webpage.**

The MPCA cannot pay for sampling and filtration of new Private Wells because the owner is creating their own new human health risk by choosing to drill a well in an area of known contamination. The decision to have Township Ordinances govern sampling and treatment of Private Wells installed after April 9, 2002, was implemented by West Lakeland Township and Baytown Township to allow new wells in this area with contaminated groundwater to be approved by the MDH well management program. The Townships were not in favor of developing municipal water systems at the time the remedy alternatives were being evaluated, and instead chose to establish these ordinances as to provide protection for new wells.

3M / East Metro PFAS Settlement Site Overview

On February 20, 2018, the state of Minnesota settled its 2010 lawsuit against the 3M Company for its production of chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that contaminated drinking water and damaged natural resources in the Twin Cities East Metropolitan (East Metro) area. The settlement of \$850 million (\$720 million after legal and other costs) will finance projects in the East Metro, administered by the MPCA and the Department of Natural Resources.

The [3M PFAS Settlement](#) funds drinking water protection, new or expanded municipal treatment plants to treat for PFAS, and connecting more homes to municipal water in Cottage Grove, Hastings, Lake Elmo, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Newport, Oakdale, Prairie Island, St. Paul Park, and Woodbury.

The 3M Settlement also funds [whole-house GAC filter systems](#) installed at Private Wells where PFAS (or combined PFAS + VOCs) are above a [Health Index \(HI\)](#) of 1.0 in Afton, Cottage Grove, Denmark Township, Grey Cloud Island, Lake Elmo, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Maplewood, Newport, Oakdale, St. Paul Park, West Lakeland, and Woodbury. MDH issues Well Advisory Letters when HI is above 1.0. The MPCA and MDH conduct PFAS sampling in the area to support these efforts. A well's sampling frequency is based on sampling requests, age and quality of lab analysis of the last sample, concentration of PFAS, changes to PFAS drinking water guidance values, and a well's proximity to the plume boundaries. **To see where PFAS sampling is occurring, see the MPCA [East Metro website](#) for an interactive map. To request PFAS sampling see the online [request form](#).**

The GAC changeout frequency is one year for Private Wells contaminated with PFAS that are managed by MPCA under the 3M settlement. The MPCA sends sample results letters with next steps and organizes GAC filter installs and changeouts. No action is needed by the homeowner other than cooperating with MPCA and their contractors, and contacting MPCA 3M PFAS Site staff with questions or if something seems wrong.

Next steps for the Settlement include enhancing aquatic resources, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreational opportunities in the East Metro.

How do I request other sampling?

Sampling for other contaminants is not covered by the 3M PFAS Settlement or Baytown TCE site but you can pay to have your water tested by an accredited lab. [Washington County](#) offers well water testing services. See MDH's [Owner's Guide to Wells](#) for testing recommendations and to search for accredited labs.

What if my property is outside the affected areas?

Sampling outside of the affected areas is not covered by the Baytown TCE or 3M PFAS Settlement sites but you can pay to have your water tested at an accredited lab. The MPCA and MDH can help you interpret your results, however no decisions regarding drinking water advisories or a provision of alternate drinking water (such as bottled water, treatment, or connection to city water) will be based on privately collected samples.

Washington County Site Cheat Sheet

The [3M PFAS Plume](#) and the [Baytown TCE Plume](#) are the two main sources of groundwater contamination in Washington County. *This cheat sheet accompanies the Washington County Site Fact Sheet.*

Contacts	What topics to contact them about and Key Resources
<p>Baytown Township Nancy Healey, Clerk 651-430-4992 clerk@baytownmn.org</p> <p>West Lakeland Township Jenny Samec, Deputy Clerk 651-436-4773 jsamec@westlakeland.gov ffice2.com</p>	<p>Baytown TCE Ordinance Wells: Private drinking water wells, within each township <i>and</i> within the Baytown / West Lakeland SWBCA, that are platted after April 9, 2002, or January 8, 2025 in the newly added areas of the SWBCA.</p> <p>Ordinance well TCE sampling and results: Sampling every 2 years</p> <p>TCE GAC filtration: Needed when TCE is at or above 0.1 ug/L, changeout frequency is 3 years</p> <p>Topics: Ordinance questions, Ordinance Well tracking, reminder letters</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baytown Well Management Ordinance • Baytown Township website • West Lakeland SWBCA Ordinance • West Lakeland Township website
<p>MPCA Baytown Brigitte Hay – Project Manager 651-757-2497 brigitte.hay@state.mn.us</p> <p>Mark Elliott - Hydrologist 218-302-6649 mark.elliott@state.mn.us</p>	<p>Baytown TCE Non-ordinance wells: Private drinking water wells that are not Ordinance Wells</p> <p>Non-ordinance well TCE sampling and results: Sampling frequency varies on TCE data</p> <p>TCE GAC filtration: Needed when TCE is at or above 0.4 ug/L, changeout freq. is 1-6 years</p> <p>Topics: Ordinance vs non-ordinance questions, Superfund site questions, questions or concerns regarding the installation or operation of a Baytown GAC filter system</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For site history, what cleanup work has been done, and what’s next see the Baytown Site Story on the Groundwater Contamination Atlas. • MPCA GAC Handout
<p>MPCA East Metro PFAS General inbox 651-757-2903 PFAS.Well.Sampling.MPCA@state.mn.us</p>	<p>East Metro PFAS-contaminated wells: Private drinking water wells containing PFAS from 3M</p> <p>PFAS sampling and results: Sampling frequency varies depending on PFAS data</p> <p>PFAS GAC filtration: Needed when PFAS* is at or above a HI of 1, changeout freq. is 1 year. *or PFAS and TCE combined</p> <p>Topics: General sampling/results/GAC/municipal water connections/etc., questions or concerns regarding the installation or operation of an East Metro PFAS GAC filter system</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Metro website • 3M Settlement website • MPCA GAC Handout • 3M settlement well sampling website has an interactive map of where MPCA and MDH have sampled and a link to the online request form for having your well water tested
<p>Washington County - Department of Public Health & Environment 651-430-6655 PHE@co.washington.mn.us</p>	<p>Topics: Setting up ordinance well sampling, sampling form, sample collection, PHL “contract” questions</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington County’s Water Test webpage • Wells platted or approved after April 9, 2002 that must sample per Township Ordinance: see Washington County’s Water Tests page and VOC Sampling Request Form for instructions to order VOC sampling. Washington County collects the sample, but MDH Lab runs the analysis. Contact MDH for questions about well results.
<p>MDH Site Assessment and Consultation Information Line 651-201-4897 health.hazard@state.mn.us</p>	<p>Topics: Ordinance well tracking, lab results, well advisory letters, results letters, drinking water guidance values/action levels, health concerns associated with contaminants in drinking water</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDH Baytown website • TCE and your Health • PFAS and your health
<p>MDH Well Management Patrick Sarafolean 651-201-3962 patrick.sarafolean@state.mn.us</p> <p>General Well Help 651-201-4600 health.wells@state.mn.us</p>	<p>Topics: Drilling new wells, Testing requirements for new wells, Results of initial well test, Special Well and Boring Construction Area (SWBCA) questions, general well result questions (including non-VOC and non-PFAS results)</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baytown/West Lakeland Township Special Well Boring and Construction Area (SWBCA) • Well Testing, Results, and Options - MN Dept. of Health (state.mn.us) •