

CURRENTS

Understanding Your Water Quality Highlighting PWSA's 2022 Water Quality Report

▶ As stewards of a vital natural and public resource, PWSA is committed to providing safe and reliable drinking water to the approximately 500,000 consumers we serve. That's why we're proud to release our [2022 Water Quality Report](#), which shows a **clean bill of health for the quality and safety of your drinking water**. Our drinking water customers can have confidence that the water you rely on meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements.

We encourage you to read that full report, found on our [Water Quality & Treatment](#) webpage, to learn more about our treatment process and the effectiveness of water quality testing. Because water treatment and quality is a technical topic, we wanted to condense and summarize some of the important techniques our talented teams use to ensure the water coming to your tap is safe and reliable.

Measuring pH. pH is essentially a measure of how acidic or basic a water-based solution is. Looking at a pH scale, a pH of 7 is neutral, a pH above 7 is basic, and a pH below 7 is acidic. Too much acidity is harmful

to consumers and can cause corrosion in our pipes.

The pH of our raw water source, the Allegheny River, is consistently between 7 and 8. When that water is first pumped into our plant, we add ferric chloride – a coagulant – causing the pH to drop. This drop is a critical part of the process, better enabling particles to coagulate and settle out of the water.

After additional treatment steps, the water is adjusted through the addition of soda ash until a pH of 7.4 to 8.0 is reached.

Building Orthophosphate Scale. Orthophosphate is a food-grade additive PWSA began using in 2019 to reduce lead in homes that have lead service lines or plumbing. It forms a protective barrier – or “scale” – in the interior of a pipe and prevents it from corroding and leeching lead into tap water.

Orthophosphate is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and successfully used in water systems all across the country.



Paramount to the safety of your drinking water are our employees at the Water Treatment Plant. Shown here is just one of those teams: our Lab group. Back row, left to right: Chemists Robert Gomez, Jonathan Seward & Erich Schafrick. Front row, left to right: Chemist Angela Carney, Lab Manager Linda Leopold & Chemist Alana Reynolds. Not pictured: Chemists Lavinia Falck & Paris Bundridge.

Controlling for Turbidity. Turbidity is most simply described as water cloudiness. The cloudier the water, the higher potential there is for possible microbial breakthrough, so turbidity is measured continuously throughout the treatment process and distribution system.

Many treatment adjustments are made by our teams throughout the year to keep turbidity as low as possible. The turbidity of the Allegheny River can soar following heavy rainfall, which can stir up

sediment and move land-bound pollutants to our waterways. Here we can again use ferric chloride, the coagulant, causing the suspended solids in the raw water to clump together, lowering turbidity. After a few more treatment steps, the water moves to our sedimentation ponds to allow for extra particles to settle out, and is then brought back to the treatment plant where it receives additional disinfection – for instance, it's put in contact with chlorine at the Clearwell – before it's put into the distribution system. ♦

Chief Executive Officer Briefing by Will Pickering

Your ratepayer dollars explained



▶ As a publicly owned and operated water utility, PWSA does not have shareholders and does not generate a profit – **instead, every dollar we receive is reinvested back into the water systems you rely on each day.**

We all understand how important our water systems

are, which is why PWSA is making unprecedented levels of investments in those systems. Since 2018, we've invested approximately \$524 million to renew critical drinking water infrastructure, culminating in landmark successes: the [removal of our 10,000th lead service line](#), the completion of the first phase of Water Reliability Plan projects, some of the lowest recorded lead levels since 2020, and much more.

As we continue to responsibly invest your ratepayer dollars back into our system, we wanted to take a moment to shed some light on where those dollars go and how they're used for the benefit of our



Your ratepayer dollars in action: Aerial view of crews installing a 48" water main in Highland Park. The pipe is wrapped in a protective plastic covering to prevent corrosion from the soil.

entire community and the water services we rely on each day.

I encourage you to check out the [summary document](#) we

created on this topic, which details the key ways PWSA reinvests your ratepayer dollars back into our water distribution system. ♦

TEAM PGH2O

Employee Spotlight: Kevin Wood

▶ *Kevin Wood, Senior Manager of Water Quality, oversees PWSA's Water Quality and Laboratory departments. Alongside our dedicated team of water professionals and public servants at the Water Treatment Plant, he helps deliver on our organization's greatest promise – the production and delivery of safe and reliable drinking water for all communities we serve.*

What made you decide to join PWSA? I joined PWSA after almost five years with the Oakmont Water Authority – which is just up the Allegheny – because it seemed like a great next step in my career. I look forward to making my own contributions to the transformation that I already

see very much underway at the organization.

What are your favorite challenges to tackle? I love tackling a challenge of any kind, but my favorites are always chemistry- or math-related. One of the more exciting parts of this industry is that us professionals face new challenges in water treatment almost every day.

What sort of impact do you hope to have on the Pittsburgh community? I hope to optimize our water quality and treatment processes even more to continue to deliver all-important potable water to every consumer. Through public outreach, my group also hopes to build relationships with our local schools and help

support their STEM programs around the topics of chemistry and water quality and show to young people how rewarding a career in the public water utility sector can be.

What do you like doing outside work? I love being outside or doing anything that gets me outside, including any sports activity. Spending time with my family is of utmost importance to me. The beach is my happy place, and I enjoy wake boarding or surfing when I can get to the shore!

What's the best advice you've ever heard? This is an easy one. I got this from my parents when I was young: *challenge yourself every day.* Never be or become complacent. Complacency



erodes to laziness. This can be applied to every aspect of life.

What's the weirdest fact you know? Pigeons were once trained by the U.S. Coast Guard to spot people lost at sea. In testing rounds, the pigeons spotted targets on the first pass 90 percent of the time – far greater than their human counterparts. ♦

PWSA Awarded \$52.4 Million Loan from the EPA



► We're excited to announce we've been awarded a more than \$52 million loan for our [Water Reliability Plan](#) investments – a series of once-in-a-generation improvement projects, which will modernize our water distribution system and provide customers with more reliable water services.

In celebration of this loan,

PWSA was recently joined by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assistant Administrator for Water **Radhika Fox**, Mayor **Ed Gainey**, Congresswoman **Summer Lee**, and Representative **Sara Innamorato** near the Highland Park Pump Station Project.

This loan will modernize Pittsburgh's aging water

system by funding three Water Reliability Plan projects – Rising Mains 3 & 4 Upgrades, the Highland Park Reservoir II Liner and Cover Replacement, and the upcoming Bruecken Pump Station Reconstruction. The work will culminate with the complete restoration of the Clearwell, a century-old facility where water is disinfected with chlorine before entering the distribution system.

This funding, part of the EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), is the first of a series of loans that will support large-scale water improvements in the service area while reducing the burden on ratepayers. For more information, please read our [press release](#). ♦

PGH2O IN THE COMMUNITY

PWSA Hosts “Mayors Are Rebuilding PA” Tour

► PWSA was honored to host Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey and four mayors from four cities across Pennsylvania during the recent “Mayors are Rebuilding PA” Tour. The purpose of this tour was to showcase how American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding is being put to good use across the Commonwealth for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

ARPA, also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package or American Rescue Plan, was a nearly \$2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed in 2021 to speed up the country's recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession.

PWSA received \$17 million in



ARPA funds from the City of Pittsburgh to replace lead lines in our service area. To-date, we've invested over \$11 million of those funds and will continue in earnest to move through our neighborhoods and replace lead lines in our most at-risk communities. In early 2023, we celebrated the removal of the 10,000th lead service line

and are on track to remove all lead pipes from our water distribution system by 2026.

Thank you to Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk, Scranton Mayor Paige Gebhardt Cognetti, Williamsport Mayor Derek Slaughter, and Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace for coming “aht to the ‘Burgh!” ♦

Tips to Help You Save Water & Money This Summer

During the warmest months of the year, you may find that your household's water usage is higher than usual.

Outdoor activities — like gardening, lawn care, home maintenance, and car washing — can all use a lot of water. However, some of that water is wasted if it evaporates in the heat, forms puddles in the yard, or runs off hard surfaces.

Try following some of the below water conservation tips to help reduce your water usage and bill during the summer months:

- Check hoses, irrigation systems, and spigots for leaks and then repair them as needed.
- Water your plants in the morning or early evening to reduce water lost to evaporation.
- Use an automatic shut-off nozzle for your gardening hose to control the flow.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only — not the street or sidewalk.
- Wash your car using a water bucket over your lawn or a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- Sweep your sidewalk, steps, and driveway instead of hosing off those areas.

Learn more on our [Water Conservation](#) website.

Team PGH2O Excellence

Our PWSA Operations crews are working around the clock for all our customers.

Shown here are, from left to right, **Anthony Colapietro** (Licensed Utility Worker II), **Chuck Schmitt** (Truck Driver), and **John Kuth** (Utility Worker I) digging a curb box for Dina of Point Breeze.

Thank you, Dina, for making our day with this fantastic photograph!



Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief to income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in these programs.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium**, **Bill Discount**, **Flexible Payment Plans**, **Hardship Grant**, and **Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit our **Customer Assistance Program** page or contact the PGH2O Cares team at 412-255-2457 or cares@pgh2o.com.

Additional Assistance: The **Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Clean Water Assistance Fund** is available to eligible residential customers. It is administered by Dollar Energy Fund. To learn more and apply for assistance, visit the **Clean Water Assistance Fund** page.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If you can, consider donating to our **Hardship Grant Program** (www.pgh2o.com/give).

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our **online billing and payment portal** (www.pgh2o.com/ebilling) ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

Track Water Use

Visit our **Customer Advantage Portal** to track water use in real time and receive alerts when there's a spike in water use.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages?

It's important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

To Update Your Contact Info:

- **Call PWSA Customer Service: 412.255.2423 (Press 5)**
- **Visit our [Update Contact Information portal](#).**

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