



FILE PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Water wells at area residences that experience flooding may be contaminated.

Flood water may contaminate well water

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Rising water levels cause many different kinds of damage.

Structural is always the first type of damage that comes to my mind, but there are also oftentimes disease outbreaks which occur during or immediately following a flood. Why? Because we don't know what is in that flood water; there could be bacteria, viruses, or parasites. These microorganisms may contaminate water sources that were previously safe for human consumption including private wells.

The Minnesota Department of Health has a lot of helpful information regarding flooding and well water on its website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/natural/floodprecautions.html>

If you know that flood water reached your wellhead or well casing, you may consider your well water contaminated. If flood water came within 50 feet of your well, your well water may or may not be contaminated. If flood water did not get any

closer than 50 feet, your well water is most likely not contaminated.

If you know or suspect that your well water is contaminated, do not use it for any purpose in which it may enter a human body, such as:

- Drinking, making baby formula or other drinks, making ice, or brushing teeth.
- Cooking, washing dishes, washing hands, or showering/bathing.

To be safe, use bottled water for these purposes, or boil your well water for at least one minute after it reaches a full rolling boil. This also applies to lake water. If you have a treatment system that uses lake water, ensure it is working properly, and you may want to have that water tested prior to consuming.

Water testing can be done at Koochiching County Public Health and Human Services to determine the status of your well water. The cost of this service is \$25.

For more information or to pick up directions and a collection bottle, stop by our office on the second floor of the Forestland Annex, 1000 5th Street, between 8 and 4:30 Monday through Friday or call Public Health at 283-7070 for directions regarding testing your well water.

Community youth help sandbagging

Kids and teens respond to need for volunteers

BY ERIC MATHEWS
Staff Intern

Young and old have answered the call to help sandbagging efforts at City Beach and then later at Kerry Park over the past week.

Youth of all ages around the community have picked up a shovel or a sandbag to help out. Most had not been personally affected by the flood, but knew someone who was in need of the sandbags they provided.

For a lot of kids and teens, helping out during the flood was a fun activity which encouraged them to be outside and get some exercise this summer. It was also a good way to keep productive and help out the community. Many kids out sandbagging didn't see it as a chore, and kept the people for which they were volunteering in mind while donating their time and energy.

"I really like how the community is really coming together for people," Maria Shermoen said while sand-

bagging Friday. She also mentioned she is thinking of her grandfather and friend who have both been hit hard by the flood.

Many also helped for multiple days, not just for an afternoon. Some teens mentioned how inspirational and heartwarming it was to volunteer to help people with the flood, while also seeing how many other people are pitching in to do the same.

Some kids even expressed how much they would like to help out in other ways, such as help build dikes for those who need them to protect their homes and other buildings.

Teens who loaned their efforts in the hot sun Friday weren't too worried about sunburn; they were just hoping for no rain over the next few days.

Even kids as little as 8 years old were able to pick up a shovel their size and help fill bags.

Rainy Lake, the volunteers said, has provided memories of boating, fishing, swimming, and more, and kids understand they also need to play a part in helping when the lake gets bad, even if they are not



STAFF PHOTOS BY ERIC MATHEWS

Connor Tomczak helps his mother fill sandbags Friday at Kerry Park.



Local youth help out with sandbagging efforts last week at Kerry Park.

personally affected. By witnessing the volunteers, it seems people of all

ages care about their community and are willing to help work to make it better.

Common overlooked flood facts for homeowners

KOOCHICHING COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Often times during flood situations people are concerned with protecting their homes but they overlook some of the potential sources of damage or contamination.

Keep in mind that during periods of heavy rain all water usage should be minimized. Rainwater can significantly increase the amount of water going into both septic systems and wastewater treatment facilities. Too much water going into either one can cause major problems.

Below is a breakdown of common contamination

sources and what can be done to minimize health risks and damage to homes.

Hazardous Materials

Paints, cleaners, pesticides, antifreeze, fertilizer, car batteries and many other everyday products are potential risks for water contamination. These materials should be moved to a higher area to prevent well contamination and home damage.

Fuel Oil

Fuel oil tanks need to be secured so they don't tip over or leak. First make sure all the caps or covers are watertight and the valve on the bottom of the tank is shut off. Then stabilize the stand and secure

the tank. If necessary, contact a fuel oil company and have the tank emptied.

Septic Systems

If your system has a backflow preventer there isn't much else you can do. Systems without backflow preventers have a high risk of backing up into the home when floods occur. If floodwaters have reached the tank or drainfield stop using the system. If the water has not reached the system, cut back on water usage as much as possible. Other steps that may help alleviate problems include:

- Turn off water softeners and other water contrib-

uting devices.

- Cut the power to pumps, alarms and other mechanisms related to the septic system.
- Plug lower drains in the home to help prevent sewage from backing up into the home. This would include basement floor drains, sink drains, etc.

Wells

Well contamination is a major problem during and after flooding. If the floodwater has reached or is near your well casing, do not use the water. Once floodwaters have receded the well should be tested and disinfected before it is put into use.

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July 2014 Summer Food Service Menu

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 French Toast Strips Eggs & Ham Hashbrowns Orange Juice Milk	2 Cheeseburgers French Fries Corn Pickles Milk	3 Hot Turkey Sandwich/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Milk	4 	5
6	7 Spaghetti & Sauce Caesar Salad Mixed Fruit Bread Stick Milk	8 Turkey Subs Lettuce & Tomato Carrot Sticks Pears Milk	9 Chicken/Noodles & Peas Casserole Peaches Dinner Roll Milk	10 Hamburger Gravy Mashed Potatoes Corn Dinner Roll Milk	11 BBQ Chicken Hashbrowns Steamed Broccoli Bread Milk	12
13	14 Grilled Ham & Cheese Sandwich Tater Tots Pineapple/Oranges Milk	15 Chicken Nuggets Hashbrowns Broccoli/Carrots Dinner Roll Milk	16 Sloppy Jo on Bun French Fries Corn Milk	17 Fish Nuggets Mashed Potatoes Peas & Carrots Dinner Roll/Butter Milk	18 Chicken Stir Fry with Vegetables Rice Peaches Bread	19
20	21 Ham Scalloped Potatoes Candied Carrots Corn Bread Milk	22 Cheese Pizza Fresh Broccoli & Cauliflower Peaches Milk	23 Meatballs/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Bread Stick Milk	24 Grilled Chicken on a Bun Coleslaw Pears Milk	25 Macaroni & Cheese Turkey Dogs Peas Apples Bread, Milk	26
27	28 Nachos/Ground Beef Lettuce & Tomato Shredded Cheese Applesauce Milk	29 Cheeseburgers French Fries Corn Pickles Milk	30 Lasagna Corn Mixed Fruit Dinner Roll Milk	31 Pancakes Sausage Hashbrowns Scrambled Eggs Banana, Milk		

SFSP menu is sponsored by:

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Lunch served from 11:45 am to 1:15 pm daily