



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS BALTIMORE DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21203-1715
(202) 764-0031 FAX: (410) 962-3660
CONTACT: Tom Jacobus
RELEASE 07-29

November 28, 2007

Leaves, low water levels in Potomac affect drinking water taste and odor

WASHINGTON — In response to customer complaints of taste and odor of the drinking water noted by the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority, Arlington County Environmental Services and the City of Falls Church Environmental Services, the Washington Aqueduct has resumed treating the water with powder-activated carbon to absorb odors.

Earlier this summer the low water conditions in the Potomac River and the warm temperatures spurred algae growth, which affects the taste of the drinking water. The current conditions of low water and the leaves falling from the trees are now contributing to an earthy taste.

“The water being provided to our customers is safe, and it meets all drinking water regulatory requirements,” said Tom Jacobus, General Manager of the Washington Aqueduct, the organization responsible for the water supply. “This condition is temporary and will be alleviated by colder weather and a good rainstorm throughout the Potomac River basin,” Jacobus said.

To adjust to the conditions resulting in detectable taste and odor, Washington Aqueduct adds powder-activated carbon to the water as it begins the treatment process at the Dalecarlia and McMillan Water Treatment Plants. These very fine carbon particles act as a “charcoal sponge” at the beginning of the water treatment process and absorb odors that may be present. These particles are subsequently removed in the sedimentation basins and the filters.

Water quality concerns may be referred to Washington Aqueduct at 202-764-0019; to D.C. Water and Sewer Authority at 202-612-3400; to Arlington County Environmental Services at 703-228-6555; and to Falls Church Environmental Services at 703-248-5071.

-END-

<http://www.nab.usace.army.mil>