



DRINKING WATER ADVISORY

August 23, 2022

Dear Guest,

The drinking water at Conestogo Lake Conservation Area is regularly tested by Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) staff to ensure it meets provincial drinking water quality guidelines. During recent testing, some discolouration of the drinking water was evident in samples from sources within the campground. Further water quality testing was conducted on raw water samples within the area in order to help identify the source of the discolouration. Those samples revealed levels of arsenic and sodium that exceed limits identified in the [Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard](#) and GRCA staff immediately notified Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health of the results.

As a result of these findings, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health has issued a Drinking Water Advisory for an exceedance in arsenic and sodium. Campers and day-use visitors are advised not to drink or cook using water from water taps within the conservation area until further notice; however, the water may still be used for handwashing, showering, etc. as arsenic is not absorbed through the skin.

Arsenic Exceedance

Sampling of the drinking water on July 27 and August 9, 2022 found arsenic at a concentration of 0.0175 mg/L and 0.0125 mg/L, which exceeds the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard of 0.01 mg/L.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element found in ground water when mineral deposits or rock containing arsenic break down and dissolve in water. As a result, some deep drinking water sources, like those found at Conestogo Lake Conservation Area, can have elevated concentrations of arsenic. Consuming drinking water with elevated levels of arsenic over a prolonged period may increase the risk of cancer.

Sodium Exceedance

Sampling of the drinking water on July 27 and August 9, 2022 found sodium levels to be 21.6 mg/L and 21.9 mg/L. The reportable Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard is 20 mg/L.

Sodium is a mineral found naturally in the environment and in our drinking water. The human body needs sodium to maintain blood pressure, control fluid levels, and for nerve and muscle function.

Sodium in drinking water is not a health concern for most people, but may be a concern for people with severe hypertension, congestive heart failure, or on a sodium-restricted diet.

Next Steps

The GRCA is currently working with a drinking water consultant and water system supplier to determine the best means of treatment for reducing arsenic levels within the drinking water

system to meet or exceed Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard guideline. Additional filtration is also being investigated to reduce the iron content within the water system, which was identified as the source of the discolouration.

The GRCA is working as quickly as possible with the consultant and suppliers on securing a treatment system; however, a timeline for installation is unknown at this point. Conestogo Lake Conservation Area staff will provide visitors with an update once a treatment system has been installed.

A fact sheet about arsenic and sodium in drinking water is included with this letter. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health 1-800-265-7293 extension 4753.

Regards,

Pam Walther-Mabee
Manager of Conservation Areas
Grand River Conservation Authority