

## EPA to Study Health Effects of Arsenic in Drinking Water

*From an article originally appearing on WaterTechOnline, Aug. 5, 2002*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will conduct an unprecedented study in Fallon, Nevada to determine the health effects associated with arsenic-tainted drinking water. The EPA is seeking 1,000 residents who are at least 45 years old and who have lived in Fallon or Churchill County for at least 20 years to take part in the study, according to the Associated Press (AP).

“Fallon represents a unique opportunity to answer questions that may give us insight into what happens to people in a U.S. population who have had long-term exposure to arsenic in their water,” Dr. Rebecca Calderon, an EPA epidemiologist, said, according to AP.

For decades, Fallon’s municipal water supply has contained naturally occurring arsenic at 100 parts per billion (ppb) – 10 times the federal standard of 10 ppb, and private wells in the county have varying amounts of the metal, the article said.

Visit [www.watertechonline.com](http://www.watertechonline.com) for complete article.

## EPA Releases Wetlands Evaluation Series

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Wetlands Division and the Health and Ecological Criteria Division have released a set of 12 booklets entitled “Methods for Evaluating Wetland Condition.” These peer-reviewed booklets provide information on monitoring and assessing the biological and nutrient conditions of wetlands in order to evaluate wetland health. Eight additional booklets are planned for future publication. The booklets can be ordered from the EPA National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) by calling (800) 490-9198, or can be accessed through the Web at [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/publicat.html](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/publicat.html)

## EPA Launches Watershed Initiative

On Aug. 20, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the kick-off of a new competitive grant program. In celebration of the Year of Clean Water and the 30th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act, \$21 million has been requested for next year’s budget for this new watershed initiative. Once the funds are available, the agency plans to select up to 20 watersheds throughout the country for grants to support promising watershed-based efforts toward cleaner water.

The EPA officially inaugurated the new program by issuing a call for nominations. Governors and Tribal Leaders are invited to nominate the most meritorious watersheds and accompanying protection or restoration plans to EPA. Proposals will be evaluated using selected EPA criteria, essentially how the infusion of additional funds will help support projects that will readily result in cleaner water. Focusing on results, broad support and partnerships, innovation, and compatibility with other federal or state programs will be key to a successful nomination proposal.

Funding is contingent on approval of the FY 2003 appropriations request for the program. Awards will range from \$300,000 to \$1,300,000. The deadline for nominations is November 21, 2002. EPA expects to announce selections in January 2003 and complete the grant award process in the spring so that work to improve watershed health can begin as soon as possible.

Visit [www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative](http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative) for more information.

## EPA Wants States to Have Flexible Role in Waterway Cleanup

*From an article originally appearing on WaterTechOnline, Aug. 8, 2002*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said it will seek changes in a key federal Clean Water Act anti-

pollution program to give states more flexibility in planning and executing the cleanup of more than 20,000 dirty rivers, lakes and estuaries.

The new rules would set the process by which states would identify and list “impaired water bodies” and develop new water quality standards for achieving the “highest attainable” uses of those waterways, the Washington Post reported. The proposed rules would stress “voluntary efforts” and possibly the establishment of a system in which states could trade pollution credits, the article said.

EPA officials stressed that the new approach, while allowing the states considerable leeway, calls for tough federal oversight and review to ensure that adequate progress is being made, the Post said.

“We would not be proposing a radical shift in the Clean Water Act responsibilities of the federal government,” said Benjamin H. Grumbles, EPA deputy assistant administrator for water, in the article. “The states would develop the plans, and we would review and approve them.”

Grumbles said in the article that the proposed new approach would refine the existing program by implementing the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences and addressing the concerns of stakeholders, such as state and local sewage treatment and water pollution control agencies and farm groups.

But environmental groups are leery. Joan Mulhern of environmental legal defense group Earthjustice said the new system would be tantamount to abandoning the Clean Water Act program, said the Post.

“It is essentially telling American people to get used to the dirty waters they live near, because this means we will delay, if not derail completely, efforts to clean up,” she said in the article.

Daniel Rosenberg, a lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said it appears that the EPA will try to weaken the program by making it harder to add new bodies of water to the list of impaired water

bodies and by downgrading the definition of usable water, the newspaper reported.

Visit [www.watertechonline.com](http://www.watertechonline.com)

## NADB Authorizes \$80 Million for Water Conservation Fund, Approves \$11.8 Million for New Project Construction

At its meeting on Aug. 21, the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank (NADB) authorized the creation of an \$80 million Water Conservation Fund for financing water conservation projects on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. The fund, which is in part expected to help finance infrastructure improvement projects for irrigation districts impacting the Rio Grande, will be capitalized with a portion of the NADB's retained earnings. Funds will be equally distributed for projects on both sides of the border. The NADB Board of Directors proposed detailed guidelines for operation of the grant fund. The NADB, created under the auspices of NAFTA, is a financial institution established and capitalized in equal parts by the United States and Mexico for the purpose of financing environmental infrastructure projects along their common border.

Visit [www.nadbank.org](http://www.nadbank.org)

## Phoenix Fined for Water, Waste Violations

*From an article originally appearing in WaterTechONLINE, June 25, 2002*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Justice have fined the city of Phoenix \$198,532 for numerous hazardous waste and water violations at its drinking water facilities on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

The EPA said in a news release the city will also spend \$401,468 to buy an emergency response vehicle for each of the tribal communities affected by the violations.

Phoenix, which owns and operates the Verde Treatment Plant, stored corrosive, hazardous waste without a permit,

according to EPA; mistakenly combined ferric chloride and sulfuric acid – two incompatible acids; and moved the toxic mixture to an above-ground tank. The 63,000 gallons of chromium- and cadmium-contaminated hazardous waste were stored for over a year, exceeding the allowable 90 days, the agency said.

The city also failed to immediately notify the National Response Center after it released approximately 14,000 gallons of the highly toxic mixture into tributaries of the Verde and Salt Rivers, the EPA said.

Visit [www.watertechonline.com](http://www.watertechonline.com) for complete article.

## California to Set Perchlorate Standard

On Sept. 7, California Governor Gray Davis signed State Bill (SB) 1822 to amend the Health and Safety Code to incorporate perchlorate standards in public water systems. SB1822 requires the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA) to adopt a public health goal for perchlorate concentration in drinking water by Jan. 1, 2003 and to adopt a primary drinking water standard for perchlorate in public water systems on or before Jan. 1, 2004. Public health goals are not enforceable but primary drinking water standards are. According to The Daily Environment Report, the OEHHHA is finalizing a draft public health goal for perchlorate of 6 parts per billion. California is the first state to adopt legislation to set a standard for perchlorate in drinking water.

The text of the bill is available at [info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb\\_1801-1850/sb\\_1822\\_bill\\_20020909\\_chaptered.html](http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb_1801-1850/sb_1822_bill_20020909_chaptered.html)

## California DWR Releases SWP Delivery Reliability Report

California's Department of Water Resources has released, for public review and discussion, a draft report on the delivery reliability of the State Water Project (SWP). The draft "State Water Project Delivery Reliability Report" provides information on the SWP's ability to deliver water under existing conditions and 20 years into the future and updates information to the State Water Project contractors regarding reliability of the SWP component of their water supply. It also provides data that will assist local water and planning agencies in developing or revising water management plans and in determining local system sufficiency in meeting demands of proposed developments.

The DWR report is available at [swpdelivery.water.ca.gov/](http://swpdelivery.water.ca.gov/)

## International Boundary and Water Commission Posts Colorado River Delta Symposium Proceedings

On Sept. 11-12, 2001, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), along with several other federal agencies from the United States and Mexico, held a symposium on the riparian and estuarine ecology of the Colorado River delta. The proceedings are now available online, in English and Spanish, at [www.ibwc.state.gov](http://www.ibwc.state.gov); click on the "foreign affairs" link.

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