



MEDIA KIT

Office of Communications and Community Relations
(301) 206-8100 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.); (301) 206-4002 (After Hours)

Jim Neustadt, Director
Jerry Irvine, Public Affairs Manager
Ayoka Blandford, Public Affairs Unit Coordinator
Lyn Riggins, Producer/Writer
Luis Maya, Sr. Public Affairs Representative



WSSCWater



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Communications and Community Relations – (301) 206-8100
After normal business hours, call the Emergency Call Center
at (301) 206-4002.

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MEDIA RESOURCES

SUBSCRIBE TO NEWS RELEASES

To receive WSSC news on a regular basis, you are invited to subscribe to news release distributions by sending your request to: Communications@wsscwater.com. In the subject line of the message, write "Subscribe to WSSC news releases", and provide your name, media organization, e-mail address, and phone number in the body of the message. WSSC issues news releases on a regular basis. You will receive them in your inbox, without attachments.

INTERVIEW AN EXPERT

To find a knowledgeable source for a news story or feature on WSSC issues, facilities or programs, please contact the Communications Office at 301-206-8100 or Communications@wsscwater.com. We'll put you in touch with the right person for your story.

GET PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

The WSSC maintains a large photo and video archive. They may be used by media representatives and publications with permission and attribution, to illustrate WSSC events, programs and facilities. Members of the media who wish to use WSSC photos or video should contact the Communications Office at 301-206-8100. Media who wish to photograph or take video of WSSC facilities or programs for news coverage should contact a staff member once on site, if arriving unannounced, or call ahead to the Communications Office to make arrangements.

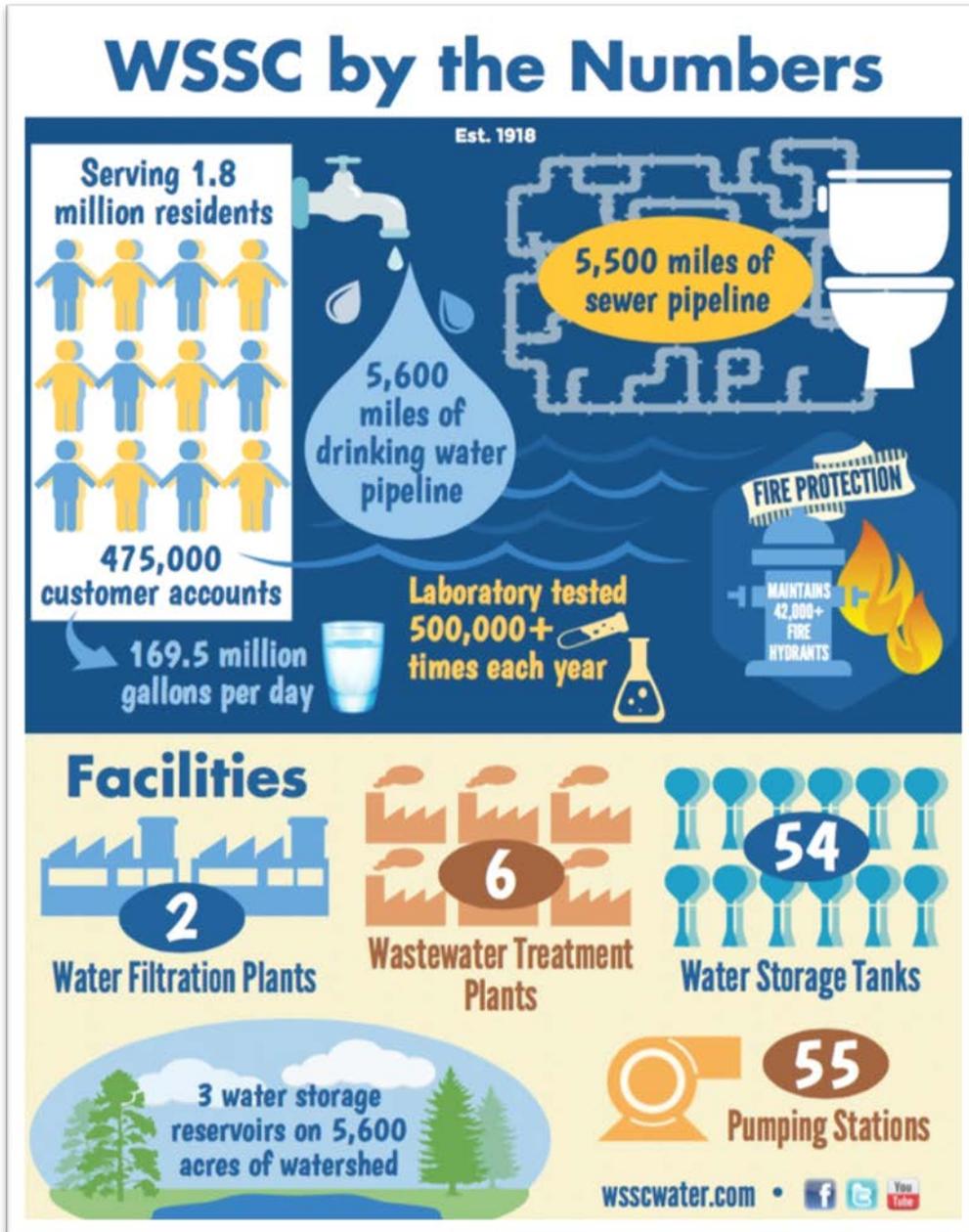
LOGOS AND ARTWORK

If you would like to obtain WSSC logos or other graphics to accompany an article, please contact the Communications Office at 301-206-8100 or Communications@wsscwater.com.

ABOUT WSSC

OUR MISSION

We are entrusted by our community to provide safe and reliable water, life's most precious resource, and return clean water to our environment, all in a financially and ethically responsible manner.



WSSC OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE:

- Two water filtration plants – the Patuxent (max 56 MGD) and the Potomac (max 285 MGD) plants produce an average of 170 million gallons per day (MGD) of safe drinking water
- Six wastewater treatment plants – Western Branch, Piscataway, Parkway, Seneca, Damascus and Hyattstown, with a total capacity to handle 74.1 million gallons of wastewater per day
- The Blue Plains Water Pollution Control Plant handles as much as an additional 169 MGD under a cost sharing agreement with the WSSC
- Three reservoirs – Triadelphia, Rocky Gorge and Little Seneca with total holding capacity of 14 billion gallons (Note: Little Seneca is regionally shared)
- 54 water storage tanks
- 55 pumping stations
- More than 42,000 fire hydrants
- State-of-the-art laboratory that performs 500,000 tests annually to ensure water safety and quality

WSSC FACTS AT A GLANCE

WSSC is governed by six Commissioners (with equal representation for each county) appointed by the Montgomery and Prince George's county executives and approved by the county councils.

- No drinking water violations in 98+ years of service
- Replaces over 55 miles of drinking water system infrastructure per year
- Attends approximately 100 community events per year
- Serves approximately 460,000 customer accounts
- Provides water and sewer services to nearly 1.8 million residents
- Hosts annual environmental clean-ups on the Patuxent watershed
- Manages 5,600 acres of the 86,000-acre Patuxent River watershed
- Serves an area of nearly 1,000 square miles
- Employs approximately 1,600 people

CONNECT WITH WSSC

WSSC Mobile App



Customers can access WSSC information easily anytime, anywhere! Pay bills, report problems or emergencies, check water usage and search job listings.

WSSC Social Media



[facebook.com/WSSCWater](https://www.facebook.com/WSSCWater)

Like us on Facebook! Learn what WSSC is doing in the community and for the environment, as well as for water and sewer infrastructure.



twitter.com/WSSCWaterNews

Follow us on Twitter! Articles on industry issues, environment, community outreach, WSSC programs. Don't miss up-to-date information on breaks, traffic closures, WSSC news & events.



[youtube.com/WSSCVideos](https://www.youtube.com/WSSCVideos)

Visit our channel to check out the latest videos from WSSC.



[pinterest.com/whereH2Omatters](https://www.pinterest.com/whereH2Omatters)

Check out WSSC board and pin our graphics!

CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (CNS)

WSSC offers a Customer Notification System (CNS) to alert residents about WSSC-related incidents that may affect service or daily routines. CNS uses a "neighborhood mapping system" to pinpoint affected areas and notifies those who might be inconvenienced.

Register on-line to get alerts for water service disruptions or traffic issues due to WSSC work, near a specific address. Notices and alerts can be sent via cell phone and/or e-mail for any street address selected within the WSSC service area.

GO GREEN

Go Green with paperless billing! This free service allows online access to billing history and statements while saving on postage and paper. Sign up is fast and convenient. To date, over 100,000 customers have enrolled.

ROUNDUP

WSSC launched “RoundUp,” a program that offers customers a convenient way to contribute to the Commission’s Water Fund. The Water Fund helps our customers who are having a hard time paying their past due water and sewer bills. Ratepayers can now round up their bill payments to the nearest dollar, with the extra change being donated into the Water Fund. Our employees also contribute to the Water Fund with one-time donations or paycheck deductions.



Approximately 150 customers per year are helped by the Water Fund. With “RoundUp”, we hope to help more of our customers in need.

A little change can make a big difference! [Click](#) to enroll in RoundUp.



CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

The Customer Assistance Program (CAP) is a new program that provides a partial credit to low income residential customers. Eligibility is based upon participation in the Maryland Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP). CAP provides relief for the two components of the Ready-To-Serve Charge and will be shown on a customer bill as one credit. Learn more or check eligibility at www.wsscwater.com/CAP.

WATER MAIN BREAKS AND AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Q. Why do water mains break?

A. In general, because of the pipe's age, temperature fluctuations and soil conditions. After more than 98 years of service, we are faced with old, decaying pipes and valves. Approximately 2,229 miles of our water mains are 50+ years old (38 percent). Nearly 2,153 water mains are 25 - 50 years old (37 percent). The older pipes are either cast iron or asbestos cement, and have reached their natural life span. The aging process is driven by corrosion from the soil water in cases of internally unlined pipes.

Q. What is zinc-coated ductile iron pipe?

A. Zinc-coated ductile iron pipe and V-Bio® Enhanced Polyethylene Encasement is part of WSSC's new specs as of fall 2016. These pipes last over 100 years! The protective zinc coating on the ductile iron pipe provides active corrosion control. The V-Bio® encasement is an additional level of active protection that works in concert with the zinc coating. It targets anaerobic bacteria activity and inhibits the formation of corrosion cells under the wrap.

Q. How does WSSC determine the order in which old water mains are replaced?

A. Several factors are considered: maintenance history, pipe material, unlined pipe interior, and the age of the pipe.

Q. How often are water mains inspected?

A. The small diameter (16 inches and smaller) water mains are not physically inspected. However, every time a pipe breaks or leaks, when it is repaired we have an opportunity to see the condition of the pipes in the trench. Severely deteriorating conditions are reported to our engineers for further investigation. We carry out a continuous review and analysis of "events" that have occurred along the pipelines. Examples of these events are breaks, leaks and discolored water occurrences. We combine the frequency of these events with the pipe's age, material and diameter to determine whether the pipe should be replaced.

Q. What about large transmission water mains?

A. Inspection includes visual and sounding, sonic/ultrasonic, electromagnetic survey, acoustical leak testing and long-term acoustical monitoring. WSSC first used visual and sounding methods to identify deteriorated areas and the delamination of Prestressed Concrete Cylinder Pipe (PCCP) pipes in 1981.

In the 1990's WSSC added sonic/ultrasonic pulse echo to identify micro-cracks and concrete out of compression. Electromagnetic testing was added to the PCCP inspection program in 2001 to identify broken pre-stressed wires in each pipe section.

Q. What is Acoustical Fiber Optic (AFO)?

The largest AFO/PCCP Monitoring System in North America

In 2007, WSSC began adding Acoustic Fiber Optics (AFO) to detect the sounds associated with pre-stressed wire breaks on PCCP sections while the pipelines are in service. Once installed, the AFO system continuously monitors the integrity of all the pipes and provides notification to trained personnel if a potential problem is detected in any pipe section.

By the end of calendar year 2016, all of WSSC's 77 miles of PCCP water transmission mains 48 inches and larger will be equipped with continuous AFO-monitoring technology. Thirteen miles of PCCP mains 36 inches and larger have AFO-monitoring and WSSC continues installation on the remaining PCCP mains (36"+).

AFO is effective only for PCCP but not for other types of pipe in the system, such as ductile iron or cast iron because of the design. The cost per 12 miles for inspection and installation of AFO is about \$3 million.

Q. Why weren't old pipes replaced sooner?

A. Aging pipes are a nationwide problem; WSSC has always known that infrastructure deteriorates over time. We have had a plan to replace pipes, but the problem has exponentially outpaced our plan. Annually, we are aggressively replacing miles of water and sewer pipes.

Q. How much does it cost to replace water mains?

A. About \$1.6 million per mile. That's partly why the EPA estimates the nation's water and wastewater systems need an investment of up to \$1.2 trillion over 20 years.

Q. What does WSSC do to get ready for winter weather main breaks?

A. A "24/7" rapid response center handles emergency calls and quickly dispatches crews. Crews that work to replace water mains and replace and line sewer pipes in warmer months are diverted to repair breaks during the winter months. More than 200 personnel are trained to quickly respond to and repair water main breaks; teams are strategically placed in both counties to respond to weekend and overnight emergencies. For water or sewer emergencies, please call **(301) 206- 4002**.

WSSC also has a pool of emergency contractors who can quickly mobilize for the larger jobs.

Q. What is WSSC doing to prevent Sanitary Sewage Overflows (SSO)?

A. We implemented programs to educate the public on the environmental impact of discarding fats, oils and grease down the drain. This includes the “Can the Grease” program for residential customers and the “FOG” program aimed at getting restaurants and other food service establishments to properly discard fats, oils and grease in a manner that does not lead to clogged drains and sewer backups. Sewer lines are inspected through Closed Circuit TV (CCT), reviewed and placed on a maintenance interval schedule for cleaning and chemical root control. Roots are a common cause of SSOs. However, the most frequent cause is blockage due to fats, oils and grease.

Q. What is WSSC doing about emerging contaminants in the water?

A. In June 2008 the WSSC, Fairfax Water and Washington Aqueduct carried out tests of 19 emerging contaminants (ECs) found in the water supply. Emerging contaminants are commonly described as chemicals or materials that have a real or perceived threat to human health or the environment or have a lack of published health standards. They include endocrine disrupting compounds (EDCs), pharmaceutical drugs and personal care products.

The compounds detected were found at the part per billion or part per trillion levels. The best research to date does not demonstrate that there is a human health risk due to the extremely low levels that were found in WSSC's drinking water. One part per billion is equal to ½ teaspoon in an Olympic-size swimming pool. One part per trillion is equal to one drop in 26 Olympic-size swimming pools. The ECs that were found in WSSC's source water are: atrazine, a commonly used herbicide for maize crops; carbamazepine, an anti-epileptic drug; and sulfamethoxazole, an antibacterial antibiotic.

For more than 98 years, WSSC has always met or exceeded — and continues to meet or exceed — prevailing federal drinking water standards.

Q. What is a Boiled Water Advisory?

A. A Boiled Water Advisory (BWA) is a precaution taken following major water main breaks. BWAs are issued as a precautionary step due to the loss of pressure in pipes which can allow potential contaminants to enter the system. WSSC issues BWAs in consultation with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Q. Is my water safe to drink following a water main break?

A. Yes, the water is safe to drink. There may be some discoloration and allowing the cold

water to run for a few minutes, from the highest faucet in your home, ensures the water is safe for drinking unless otherwise notified. To avoid discoloration, do not wash clothes until it runs clear.

Q. How long will it take to repair the break?

A. On average, four to six hours. It depends on the type of break and where it occurs.

Q. If there is a delay in replacing the water main, how will residents get safe drinking water?

A. After six hours WSSC will supply residents with drinking water in one-gallon jugs, if necessary. It is not, however possible to do this for a long period of time. Also, it is not possible to furnish water to institutions when this happens.

Q. Who do I contact regarding any damages sustained to my property?

A. A WSSC customer claim representative (301) 206-7095. If you are experiencing a water or sewer emergency, call our 24-hour emergency line (301) 206-4002. For other customer service questions, call (301) 206-4001 or 1-800-634-8400.

FATS, OILS AND GREASE PROGRAM (FOG)

Overview

Sanitary sewers are designed and installed with sufficient diameter to carry the normal waste discharges from a residence or business. When FOG (fats, oils and grease) is discharged to the sewer, it cools and accumulates on the sidewalls of the sewer pipes. Over time, this accumulation of grease restricts the flow and causes blockages in the sewer which may result in overflowing manholes or basement backups. Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) can discharge to storm drains and creeks that ultimately flow to the Chesapeake Bay. FOG is the largest single cause of sewer overflows.

WSSC has partnered with the Restaurant Association of Maryland to help the food service industry understand the problems associated with FOG discharges and to provide business owners assistance managing FOG correctly through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). For more information on grease blockages and how to prevent them, go to www.wsscwater.com.

Education

Through a partnership with the Prince George's County Public School System, WSSC has developed a Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Environmental Science Curriculum for Prince George's County. Every sixth grade student in the county participates in a FOG lesson. Using hands-on learning activities, students explore the environmental impacts of FOG and how solutions used at home and school will keep Maryland's waterways cleaner and sewer pipes free of FOG.



The program covers how by-products of simple cooking can create contaminants that can clog pipes, restrict water flow and potentially result in sewer back-ups and overflows. These, in turn, can seep into recreational waterways, where they can harm aquatic life and cause risk of serious human illness.

Teachers outside PGCPs can request to have WSSC come to their class to lead the lesson by filling out the WSSC Education Tours & Programs.

CAN THE GREASE!

There are a lot of things that can go wrong in a house, but few troubles are more disgusting than sewage backing up into your basement. Fortunately, most sewer clogs are preventable, if homeowners only knew more about the care and feeding of their sewer system.

The easiest action that a person can take is to simply 'Can the Grease' instead of pouring it down kitchen drains. This one easy action can potentially prevent many messy and unhealthy sewer backups.

Expensive sewer backups are a hassle for homeowners and businesses, but grease can clog anywhere in the nearly 5,500 miles of WSSC sewer pipe that run through Prince George's and Montgomery counties. When the grease builds up in primary sewer mains, environmental harm can result as untreated sewer water overflows manholes and ends up in the many creeks and streams that eventually lead to the Chesapeake Bay.

Sewer system overflows are a national problem, with up to 75,000 major events reported annually to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In the WSSC service area, the percentage of overflows due to grease can reach as high as 60 percent.

"Can The Grease!" Tips

Fats, oils and grease can clog sewer pipes and damage your home and the environment. Follow these easy steps to prevent sewage back-ups and overflows:

- ✓ Never pour kitchen greases or oils down the drain, even if you think you are "washing it down" with hot water.
- ✓ Pour cooled grease into a can (a soup can or a jar works great) and throw it in the trash.
- ✓ Scrape grease and food scraps into the trash.
- ✓ Put baskets/strainers in sinks to catch food scraps. Toss scraps on a compost heap, or into the trash.

FATS, OILS AND GREASE PROGRAM (FOG)

Permitting Program

All Food Service Establishments (FSE) having the potential to discharge fats, oils, and grease (FOG) must apply to the Commission for a FSE Wastewater Discharge Permit. The establishments may include restaurants, cafeterias, grocery stores, hotel kitchens, church kitchens, school kitchens, bars, or any other commercial or industrial operation that discharges grease-laden wastewater. A valid Montgomery or Prince George's County Health Department Permit must also be obtained prior to discharge.

Fee: an annual discharge fee of \$325 will be assessed for all permitted facilities.

Inspections

All Food Service Establishments (FSE) are subject to routine inspections. In addition, FSEs may be inspected at any time in response to complaints or reports of sewer blockages. During an inspection, WSSC FOG Investigators will verify that all required fixtures are connected to a grease treatment device and that the grease treatment device is adequately sized and installed according to the WSSC Code. Investigators may also review maintenance records or other documents related to the operation of the grease treatment device.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with any condition of a FSE permit will subject the permittee to penalties and other enforcement action as provided for in WSSC's Food Service Establishment Enforcement Response Plan (ERP). These enforcement actions may include Notices of Violation, Compliance Directives, Civil Citations (fines up to \$1,000), or termination of water and sewer service.

For more information on FOG and Can the Grease, visit www.wsscwater.com.

BUILDING THE TALENT PIPELINE: INVESTING IN STEM

WSSC helps to prepare the next generation of engineers, IT professionals and environmental scientists. We are in the community educating students about water, wastewater and the environment, investing in STEM activities and hosting unique programming.

Programs for grade and middle schools:

- Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Environmental Science Curriculum for Prince George's County
- Tours of wastewater treatment plants
- Annual Children's Water Festival
- Girl Scouts' WOW Journey
- Environmental education

Programs for (middle and) high schools:

- Engineering Academy
- Sewer Science
- National Engineers' Week (eWeek)

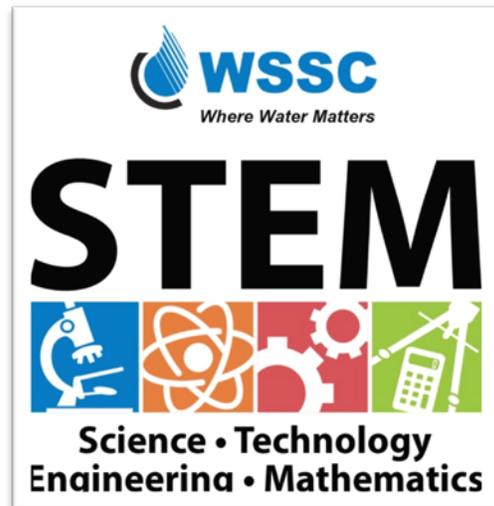
In addition WSSC is in partnership with MD Bio Foundation for Advancing Tomorrow's Leaders + STEM (ATLAS) Symposiums. These symposiums are designed to encourage high school juniors, seniors and college undergrads to learn more about careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Opportunities for college students:

- Annual engineering scholarship
- WSSC Summer internship programs

WSSC also provides speakers and materials for Maryland students to learn about exciting water-based careers in STEM through keynote presentations, individual conversations, and career panels with professionals from our diverse employee base.

For more information about our STEM programming, visit www.wsscwater.com/STEM or call Communications and Community Relations Department at 301-206-8100.



WSSC BI-COUNTY WATER TUNNEL

The WSSC Bi-County Water Tunnel is a new 84"-diameter water main constructed to meet growing demands and ensure continued reliable water supply to customers in Montgomery and Prince George's counties for decades to come. The new main delivers an average of 100 million gallons of water daily from WSSC's Potomac Water Filtration Plant to customers in the two counties. The western connection is located just north and east of where Tuckerman Lane passes under I -270 in Rockville and the eastern connection is located near the intersections of Beach and Stoneybrook Drives in Kensington.



Constructing a water main of this size can have significant community and environmental impact. To minimize these impacts, WSSC, with the support of Montgomery and Prince George's County officials and extensive community input, constructed the main using a deep rock tunnel instead of a traditional cut-and-cover method. The 5.3 miles of tunnel was constructed within solid bedrock between 90 and 280 feet below ground. It is about 12 feet in diameter and lined inside with 84" diameter pipe. The general tunnel alignment follows I -270 and the outer loop of the Capital Beltway. The tunnel went into service in February 2015; restoration of the area continues.

For more information, visit wsscwater.com . Pictures can be requested.