



UP THE CREEK

February 1, 2009

Important Public Health Notice

As you may know from previous notices published in this newsletter during 2008, USCDWUA has been challenged by the occurrence of the substance Haloacetic Acid (HAA) in our water. This notice is to inform you that in the 4th quarter of 2008, the maximum permissible level of HAA, expressed as an *annual average*, was exceeded. This is a violation of the Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations.

The Colorado Department of Health and Environment has established a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 60 parts per billion (ppb) for HAA. The level of HAA measured in the 4th quarter of 2008 was 42.4 ppb. Although this is below the MCL, it must be averaged with sample results from the preceding three quarters. Here are the sample results for 2008:

- First quarter 91.8 ppb
- Second quarter 81.0 ppb
- Third quarter 44.7 ppb
- Fourth quarter 42.4 ppb

From these results it can be seen that progress has been made in reducing the HAA levels. Assuming this trend continues, the system will return to compliance in the first quarter of this year, as the calculation of annual average will no longer include the abnormally high sample from the first quarter of 2008.

HAA is formed by a reaction of chlorine with certain natural organic compounds dissolved in the water. These natural compounds are typically tannic acid, fulvic acid, and humic acid. They come from the soil and from decayed plant material, such as leaves.

The presence of HAA in the water does not pose an immediate health risk. It is not necessary for you to use a different source of water. The HAA cannot be removed by boiling or by ordinary home filters. According to the EPA, people drinking water with HAA in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer.

USCDWUA is pledged to continue its effort to reduce HAA by refining our water treatment and by reducing the age of the water reaching your tap. (“Age” in this case refers to the time the water spends in the distribution system.) We have learned that the age of the water is important in the formation of HAA. It can be reduced by flushing long distribution pipes, either manually or by the installation of automatic flushing stations.

The sampling site for HAA represents the point of maximum water age in the system. Therefore, our samples represent the worst case for HAA formation. Most of the system can be expected to have a lower concentration than what is found at the sampling site.

If you desire more information about HAA, and what our system is doing to control it, you may call, write, or email the system manager, Dan Hawkins, P.O. Box 70, Cedaredge, CO 81413. Telephone 970-856-7199, email danhawkins@uscdwua.com.