

# TOWN OF WEST YELLOWSTONE

## PRESS RELEASE

Saturday, June 13, 2020

5:30 PM

### Water Contamination-Do Not Use Order LIFTED Health Advisory Issued

Sometime during the dates of June 5-9, 2020, the Town's Whiskey Springs collection area was damaged. Whiskey Springs is the primary water source for the Town of West Yellowstone. Water samples collected on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 indicated unsafe levels of bacteria contamination. The results of the tests were received by the Town on Friday, June 12, 2020.

On Friday, June 12, 2020, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) evaluated the situation and determined that the damage possibly introduced contaminants into the system, which could affect the health of those using the water. A Tier 1 Drinking Water Situation, Do Not Use order was issued by DEQ, which means the water was considered unsafe for human consumption. The Gallatin County Health Department also issued an order requiring all restaurants and food service establishments to close until safe water procedures could be established.

A new set of water samples was taken early in the morning on Saturday, June 13, 2020 using an emergency test kit provided by Gallatin County Health Department. The water samples were driven immediately to the lab in Helena for testing and were specifically analyzed for the presence of petroleum based products, also known VOCs. The results of the first round of tests were negative, meaning there was no detection of VOCs. Therefore, DEQ has rescinded the Do Not Use order. **This means the water is safe for human consumption. Restaurants and food establishments may operate normally.** There are more tests to be completed, therefore DEQ has issued a Health Advisory. A Health Advisory is not an emergency. Water does not have to be boiled or treated, but if there are specific health concerns a doctor should be consulted. People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, pregnant women and some elderly may be at increased risk.

The Town of West Yellowstone would like to thank the following agencies for their assistance during this event: Hebgen Basin Fire District, Gallatin County Health Department, State of Montana Department of Health and Human Services, Custer-Gallatin National Forest Service. The Town also expresses appreciation to the employees and their family members that sacrificed their day to distribute water to the community and conduct the testing as quickly as possible.

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