

Considerable misinformation continues to be circulated and posted to the internet regarding BGCD operations, ethical behavior, regulatory oversight, and system water quality. Our water is sourced from deep underground. While the water that is distributed is high in mineral content and is not filtered prior to distribution (*as is the case in Lafayette as well as many other cities and towns in Indiana*), it is treated continuously and tested daily and exceeds all state and federal standards.

If you are experiencing an issue with your water, or are concerned about its quality or safety, please let the Water Superintendent or the BGCD board know so that we can offer assistance and collect appropriate data to better understand the health of the system overall.

Statement Found Online

Accurate Information

“Water towers are drained during the day from usage which leaves us at risk for fire issues at night.”

The water towers are never drained; they cycle. There are sensors that activate the pumps when the water drops to a specified level in the tank. This occurs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is the industry standard procedure.

“Some folks have had as low as 7psi into their homes.”

Water is provided throughout the system at 40-60psi and most customers have greater than 40psi within their homes. If a homeowner is experiencing low pressure within their home, it usually points to a residential plumbing issue to be resolved.

“When water pressure drops below 20psi, a boil advisory must be issued...Little warning or notice is given to citizens as no legitimate alert system is in place.”

Notification begins immediately when the Water Superintendent has assessed that there is a need for a boil order advisory. The financial clerk initiates the emergency text and email alert system, posting on the website, and contacting media outlets of local radio and television stations.

“Restaurants in town are not notified of boil advisories.”

Restaurants in the affected areas are notified via personal visits and phone calls by a designated board member. Yard signs are placed in high traffic areas.

“When asked in a public meeting if restaurants were notified, the Water Conservancy operator [sic] lied to the board & public with no repercussion.”

The Water Superintendent has *NEVER* lied about notification to restaurants and it is irresponsible and misleading to say that he did. A particular challenge is speaking to an on-site employee at one of the restaurants and having the information appropriately escalated to management. To prevent a break in communication, the Board Chairman personally went to every business to inform management of the boil advisory during the last event. A list of manager names and phone numbers is maintained for this purpose. Updates are provided daily until the boil advisory is lifted.

Statement Found Online

Accurate Information

"In the event the Water Conservancy was dissolved the responsibility and oversight of water would fall under the Town of Battle Ground as it originally was before 1977."

The petition being circulated would not turn the water system over to the Town of Battle Ground. A court would determine what is in the best interest of Battle Ground. The newly elected Town Council is supportive of the Conservancy and has no interest in taking over the water system.

"They don't hold proper elections and actively avoid bringing attention to their elections."

Elections are held during the annual meeting per Indiana Code 14-33-5-4.6 and are advertised by a legal ad in the newspaper, on signage, by direct mail, and on the website.

"The majority of downtown Battle Ground is supplied water on a 4" main...State (IDEM) requires a minimum of 6" mains..."

IDEM requires a 6" main to fire hydrants, not to flushing hydrants or universally to other supply lines. Fire hydrants are on 8" and 6" mains.

"The replacement water tower... will likely only increase water pressure for those residents below the hill."

It is true that customers in Historic Battle Ground and River Bluffs will see the most increase in water pressure. However, the new tower benefits all customers by providing increased water capacity (from 40,000 to 150,000 gallons) for consumer use and increased fire protection.

"Property taxes are likely to increase... 'easy way to hide the real cost of our water'."

The Town of Battle Ground has a property tax rate and the Conservancy has a tax rate. Each unit holds a public hearing before the rate and levy is set for the next budget year. The BG town tax rate for 2020 is 0.0651 compared to the Conservancy rate of 0.003. The budgets reveal what the tax will be used for. The Conservancy levy is used for capital improvements, and is not hidden.

"We are paying for unfiltered, untreated well water."

Battle Ground water comes from the Teays aquifer, an underground water source and is not under the influence of surface water. It is naturally filtered, but not filtered as part of water treatment. Lafayette gets its water from the same source and does not filter water prior to distribution either. The water is continuously treated. The water is tested daily and reports are monitored by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Past leadership in Battle Ground researched filtration as part of water treatment; however, they determined the process was not cost effective. Home filters can do the same thing at point of use for less cost.

Statement Found Online

Accurate Information

“Selling the water system will provide all freeholders with a one-time cash payment...Indiana American Water would then create a long term plan to upgrade our aging infrastructure...Because Indiana American Water would own the system, this infrastructure cost would be paid for by them.”

The infrastructure cost would not be paid for by them; they will recover the cost from the users as a surcharge. The board encourages customers to review recent cases of utility sales to this privatized, for-profit entity; details can be found at the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC). IAWC would recover the cost for replacing old infrastructure through a distribution system improvement charge tacked on to each bill. IAWC charges for water service and water usage. Rates charged for service may vary based on a customer’s meter size. All customers within the same area pay the same rate for water usage. IAWC may also charge additional fees for fire protection or to provide water usage data (i.e., for the town to determine the sewer bill).

A July 8, 2017 article was printed in the Washington Post titled, *Towns sell their public water systems and come to regret it*, which stated:

“Privatization will not magically relieve Americans of the financial burden of upgrading their water infrastructure. Water customers still foot the bill. And although there is no reliable data to compare the service or safety records of public and private utilities, studies show that in most cases, the tab rises when for-profit companies are involved...That is in part because state regulatory agencies allow private operators to earn a profit on their investments – American Water Works’ Indiana subsidiary collects 6.6% on these costs – giving them a strong incentive to upgrade systems more quickly than government-owned facilities would be.”

“The Conservancy is financially broke.”

All Conservancy financial records are public record. The Conservancy is financially solid and building a maintenance fund for future projects and improvements.

“The Water Conservancy spent \$80,000 in lobbying fees to be removed from the IURC. Afterwards they found out they were never in the IURC, wasting \$80,000 of our money.”

The Conservancy was at one point under IURC jurisdiction and investigated what it would take to exit the IURC, but no action was taken and no money was spent. Many other government units sought to reduce the high fees associated with reporting to the agency and left the Commission. Currently, the Commission regulates only a very small fraction of the state’s water utilities. A professional rate study reviews comparable community data independent of IURC status. There has been no expenditure locally either for or against this regulatory body.