



NASA Protects Water Supply for the Town of Chincoteague and Wallops Flight Facility

Since 2016, NASA has conducted routine testing of the water wells at Wallops Flight Facility, which serve Wallops and the nearby Town of Chincoteague, Virginia. In collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, NASA performs testing to identify the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) resulting from fire training activities at Wallops in the late 1970s to 1988. Firefighters conducted training with a firefighting foam that contained PFAS compounds. The foam was also used to extinguish fire from a plane crash at Wallops in 1998.

When PFAS were detected in the water wells at Wallops, NASA began evaluating treatment options to remove PFAS from groundwater.

Today, a groundwater treatment system designed, funded, and installed by NASA is removing PFAS from wells that supply water to the Town of Chincoteague. The system, which uses granular activated carbon to remove PFAS, has been fully operational since 2021. Ongoing testing continues to show the system is performing as designed and effectively removing PFAS to below detection limits.

NASA also installed a new well that went into operation in 2023 to supplement the drinking water supply at Wallops. The new well replaces a well that was shut down in 2019 after tests showed low concentrations of PFAS, likely due to the age of the well.

Beginning in 2022, routine sampling of the wells at Wallops reduced from monthly to quarterly. This was due to five years of data showing non-detections or less than one part per trillion detections. The shallow wells and finished drinking water are still sampled monthly.



NASA conducts routine testing of the water wells at Wallops Flight Facility (shown here) for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Due to five years of data showing non-detections or less than one-part-per-trillion detections, sampling of the wells at Wallops Flight Facility reduced from monthly to quarterly in 2022.



The Latest on Establishing Water Standards for PFAS

To date, there are no federal or state drinking water, groundwater or surface water regulatory standards for PFAS. EPA announced its PFAS Strategic Roadmap in 2021 and proposed in 2023 to establish drinking water standards for PFAS and other substances.

Contact

For more information, contact [Jeremy Eggers](#), NASA Office of Communications.