

Fall 2014

FAQs about Water

The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch

Is the water safe to drink at The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch?

Yes, the water is safe. The water comes from wells and it's treated with an anion exchange process and chlorine before it's distributed to customers. In accordance with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) regulations, the water is tested at least weekly for chlorine content and annually for any contamination.

Is there enough water at The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch?

Yes, there is enough water for the residents and any future residents. Because water is a public resource, its use is regulated by the Colorado Water Court System. The residents of The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch are allowed to use water indoors and for household maintenance outdoors – however, by law, this water cannot be used for irrigation.

Where do residents at The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch get their water?

All homes at The Piñons at Turkey Cañon Ranch are on a centralized public water system. The system is owned and operated by the Turkey Cañon Ranch Water District (TCRWD).

What is the Turkey Cañon Ranch Water District (TCRWD)?

TCRWD is a Colorado Title 32 special district, organized in the late 1990s, responsible for providing water service to properties within its boundaries. As a local government entity, the District is managed by an elected five (5) member Board of Directors and receives a portion of its revenues through local property taxes.

Who does TCRWD provide water to?

The District's service area is consistent with the boundaries of the The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch subdivision. All of the land within TCRWD has been divided into residential lots. Currently, TCRWD provides water service to approximately 43 homes, but will serve future homes on the other 15 vacant lots within the District's boundaries. The local fire station is also served by the TCRWD water system, in addition to eleven (11) fire hydrants in or around the District.

Where does TCRWD get its water from?

The District's potable water supply comes from the Manitou Limestone Formation, which tributary to (i.e., part of) the Arkansas River watershed. While TCRWD owns all of the water rights under its service area, the Colorado court system has limited the District's groundwater supplies to domestic in-house use (plus fire protection) only. In fact, when TCRWD pumps water from either of its two (2) wells, the law requires that some water be returned to "augment" the Arkansas River watershed. This augmentation requirement is met through septic return flows (leach field seepage) and scheduled release of water rights that TCRWD owns elsewhere in the watershed.

How does TCRWD provide water to its customers?

TCRWD draws groundwater from wells, treats it with both chlorine and an anion exchange process, and then pumps it into the distribution system, for use by its customers. The District's facilities include two (2) ground water wells, a water treatment plant, and an 180,000-gallon water storage tank. Most of the water system was designed and installed in the mid-1990s, with a second well added in 2009.

Will TCRWD customers have water if the power goes out?

Yes, they will. TCRWD recently installed two (2) propane powered backup generators to allow for "off the grid" well and water plant operation. Since the above ground community propane tank is turned off for safety reasons in a fire situation, the District installed a small underground propane tank at each generator site to ensure fuel supplies in the event of an extended power outage.

Who oversees the operation of TCRWD's water system?

As a public water system (PWSID #CO0121481), operation of the District's water treatment and distribution facilities is overseen by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). TCRWD's Board of Directors contracts with a state-certified water professional for hands-on operation and monitoring of its water system.

Does TCRWD also provide water for fighting fires?

Besides maintaining its fire hydrants and providing water to the local fire station, TCRWD reserves a large volume of water in its storage tank at all times to ensure adequate fire protection for the homes in the District. Emergency procedures have been developed to supplement existing water supplies in the event of a wild fire.

What sort of water pressure can residents expect?

Most homes in the neighborhood have water pressures somewhere between 45 and 75 psi, which is fairly typical in residential areas. The variation is due to the differences in elevation throughout the district. The above ground water tank, at the highest point in the district, has a pressure of about 10 psi while the water treatment plant (near the fire station at a lower point in the district) has a pressure of about 100 psi.

Can residents use water outside of their homes?

Unlike the larger supply of renewable (snowmelt) water that Colorado Springs enjoys, TCRWD draws its water from groundwater wells. As noted above, the District's water rights limit the use of its groundwater to in-house applications and household maintenance. While long droughts can affect some water supplies, there is still plenty of water in TCRWD's wells to meet customer demand, as well as provide the necessary resources for fire protection in the local area.

What does TCRWD do to maintain its water system?

The District's distribution system is flushed at least annually by blowing out the lines at the fire hydrants (or blow-off valves), which flushes out any sediment that has accumulated in the pipes over time. This task also helps to test the fire hydrants to be sure they will work when needed. The water storage tank and other facilities undergo routine maintenance and inspections on a scheduled basis. Approximately twice yearly, the anion exchange resin is replaced in TCRWD's water treatment facility.

What can I expect to pay for water?

All customers are charged a minimum fee of \$55 every month for usage up to 2,000 gallons. This minimum fee allows the District to cover fixed expenses. The monthly fee for water usage above 2,000 gallons is \$7.00 per 1,000 gallons. As a local governmental, TCRWD is a "not for profit" entity.

How are customers billed for the water they use?

Water meters are located on the edge of the property in an underground pit for each lot served, with an auxiliary reading unit on a nearby post. TCRWD is responsible for any and all metering equipment maintenance. Meters are read by District representatives on the 25th of each month, for subsequent billing purposes. Every customer should expect a water bill every month, delivered either via email or regular mail service. Payment in full is expected by the 25th of the month, otherwise a \$25 late fee will be added to the account.

Will I need to further treat my water for household use?

Calcium. TCRWD's water is on the "hard" side and, as such, can produce a gray flakey residue (calcium carbonate) in household fixtures. The problem can be exacerbated through the use of a "super" hot water heater – the kind that produces instant, scalding hot water – since heat brings calcium out of solution. Turning down the hot water heater a bit is recommended. Most customers install water softeners. They can be purchased fairly inexpensively at most of the big home supply stores. While the District cannot endorse any certain product, customers are cautioned about adding one chemical (sodium, as in salt) to treat for another (calcium).

Is there any fluoride in TCRWD's water? Should there be?

The American dental community and the EPA can't seem to make up their minds on this one. Fluoride occurs naturally in our water at about 1.5 mg/L. The maximum limit is 4.0 mg/L. There is no plan to try and add or extract fluoride from the water at this time.

Should I worry about any contamination in TCRWD's water?

CDPHE issued TCRWD an Enforcement Order in January 2009 for exceeding the Maximum Contaminant Limit for Uranium and Gross Alpha. Since that time and after exploring several alternatives, the District received approval from CDPHE and upgraded its treatment plant to include an anion exchange process. This additional treatment vastly reduces the level of these contaminants in the water produced. TCRWD is now considered to be in compliance with CDPHE's drinking water standards and will continue monitoring for these and other analytes on a regularly scheduled basis.

How can I find out what contaminants may be in TCRWD's water?

TCRWD's annual Consumer Confidence Report (issued in June) can be downloaded from The Piñons of Turkey Cañon Ranch Home Owners Association's website at www.thepinonshoa.com.

How can I be aware of and get involved with District issues?

Residents are always welcome and encouraged to attend meetings of the TCRWD Board of Directors. All regular meetings of the Board are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Robert F. Weller Fire Station, located at 15580 Cala Rojo Drive. Periodically, customer newsletters containing special announcements and reminders are distributed with monthly customer utility bills. Information can also be obtained by contacting the District directly, as shown below.

How do I contact TCRWD for more information?

Turkey Cañon Ranch Water District (TCRWD)
TCRWD Board of Directors – Jim Potts, Secretary
15582 Cala Rojo Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80926
Phone: 719.332.5186 *mobile*
Email: tcrwdistrict@gmail.com