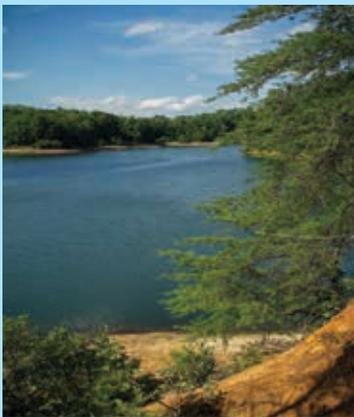


### Keeping You Updated: Little Creek Dam

You may have noticed the reservoir level at Little Creek has been lower than usual. Our dam maintenance program includes regular monitoring and inspection. Waterworks customers, as well as James City County staff, will be kept informed of improvements recommended by our consultants when the information becomes available. For updates, please visit [www.nnva.gov/371/Projects](http://www.nnva.gov/371/Projects).



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### NASA LaRC Meter Upgrade Improves Worker Safety and Data Reliability

Since 1979, Waterworks' meter readers have stopped along a busy road to manually read the water meter that serves NASA Langley Research Center (NASA LaRC). The cinder-block box housing the meter (also called a meter pit or vault) frequently filled with water, especially after a heavy rain. At those times, the pit had to be pumped out before a reading could be taken.

After nearly 40 years, the meter had reached the end of its useful life, and the meter pit, which had started to crumble, was in need of an overhaul. The new meter and vault needed to stand up to harsh environmental conditions, because experience showed they might be submerged for days—even weeks—at a time.



*Lego design makes for easy access*

#### Waterworks Is Here To Help

We understand the concerns you may have from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including how to keep up with bills. Options are available for customers who are experiencing financial difficulties due to COVID-19. Email [wwcs@nnva.gov](mailto:wwcs@nnva.gov), connect with us through your customer portal account, or call (757) 926-1000 to speak with a customer service assistant for details on installment plans.

Large meter upgrades are long and complicated projects. In May 2019, Waterworks began planning for the meter and pit to be replaced. Employees met with NASA LaRC

staff to discuss the project. Since the aging meter was no longer providing accurate readings, the first step was to install data loggers. The actual flow and usage information gathered would ensure the replacement meter was properly

sized to accurately monitor the water volumes supporting the research center's needs now and well into the future.

Prior to the actual meter installation, Waterworks staff consulted with NASA LaRC and local fire departments to ensure everyone was ready for a brief interruption in water service. To minimize risks, Waterworks distribution crews set up a second, temporary supply line to the center.

A new box was built to Waterworks' specifications by a company in Ireland that makes custom-designed meter vaults. These vaults are assembled on site by snapping the pieces together like Lego blocks. A Waterworks crew assembled the vault in approximately six hours. A concrete pad was poured around the pit, and bollards were installed on each corner to stop anyone from driving or parking over it.

*Continued on back*

**WATERWORKS MISSION:** To provide high quality drinking water and support public health, safety, and the community with a professional team of dedicated employees, committed to excellence.



*Continued from front*

The top panels of the new vault come out easily, allowing for unrestricted access to the meter and its support components. Waterworks Distribution crews also built a new bypass line to supply water to the research center while annual meter maintenance is being performed.

The project was finished this summer. With the completed upgrades, meter readers can now stay in their vehicles and safely drive by to obtain meter readings through radio frequency to a collector mounted on the vehicle dashboard.

### Glad You Asked!

Q. Which is better, bottled water or tap water?

A. Blind taste tests consistently find that most people cannot tell the difference between tap and bottled water. Tap water is tested and regulated by the EPA and the Virginia Health Dept. And your tap water costs less than a penny per gallon.



*Drinking tap water is safe, convenient and inexpensive*

## The Complex Waterworks System Delivers

Our lives would differ drastically without clean water delivered directly to our homes. At Newport News Waterworks, we maintain five reservoirs, a brackish groundwater desalting plant, two surface water treatment plants, 11,000 fire hydrants, eight storage tanks, and a network of more than 1,700 miles of pipes. This complex infrastructure plays a vital role in maintaining public health and safety (e.g. firefighting, sanitation, etc.), thus ensuring you have access to drinkable tap water. With this reliable water system in place, Waterworks improves the quality of life for more than 410,000 residents on the Virginia Peninsula while supporting economic development.



## Prepare Your Pipes To Face The Freeze

Below are tips for protecting your home's plumbing this winter.

### OUTSIDE PLUMBING

- Caulk around pipes where they enter the house.
- Close all foundation vents.
- Wrap outside faucets with insulation or use molded foam-insulating covers, which are available at hardware stores.
- Disconnect garden hoses and drain in-ground irrigation systems

### INSIDE PLUMBING

- Seal air leaks or cracks in the crawl space or basement. Air vents should be closed or covered from the inside.
- Make sure doors and windows near water pipes in the basement and garage are kept closed during cold weather. Insulate pipes in unheated areas, such as attics, crawl spaces, and basements.
- When below-freezing weather is forecast, open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms so these pipes will get more heat from inside your home.
- Let a slight drip of cold water run when temperatures dip below freezing.

### What if the pipes freeze?

Thaw plumbing lines safely with a hair dryer or heat lamp. (NEVER use a blow torch!) Once the pipe has thawed, make sure to leave a little water running so the pipe doesn't freeze again.

Do not open the water meter box near the curb. This could increase the chance of freezing water at the meter!

### What if a pipe breaks?

Close the main water shut-off line to your house. Most shut-off valves are located where the water line enters the house or near your clothes washer or water heater. Turn off the water heater. Locate the dedicated shut-off valve to the cold water inlet.

Remember, the repair of broken pipes on the customer's side of the meter is the customer's responsibility. Contact a plumber for repair work.

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