

Public Statement from Trinity County Waterworks District #1 on Water Quality Concerns

Dear Hayfork Community,

We've heard your concerns on social media about the brown or yellow discoloration in your water, and I want to address this issue with transparency, humility, and care. At Trinity County Waterworks District #1, our small team of four is working tirelessly to provide safe and reliable water. As your General Manager, I've personally been the primary person operating the water treatment plant and distribution system since 2014, and I'm fully committed to serving our community. I'm here to explain what's happening, why, and what we're doing to address it.

Why is the water discolored?

The discoloration is caused by naturally occurring dissolved solids, such as iron and manganese, present in our water source from Big Creek and Ewing Reservoir. Our standard water treatment plant is designed primarily to ensure water safety by removing harmful contaminants, but it doesn't fully remove these minerals. When disinfectants, like chlorine, are added to keep the water safe in our distribution system, they can react with these dissolved solids, causing iron and manganese to oxidize. This oxidation turns the water brown or yellow, especially during seasonal changes or system maintenance, which we warned might occur in last month's bill.

Is the water safe?

Iron and manganese are classified as *secondary standards* by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California State Water Resources Control Board. This means they affect the appearance, taste, or odor of water but are not considered a health risk at the levels typically found in drinking water. However, as a precaution, if your water is discolored, please do not drink it until it runs clear. Our routine testing confirms that your water meets all primary health-based standards for safety, and I assure you we're closely monitoring the system to keep it safe.

What are we doing?

We are actively investigating the current conditions and adjusting our treatment processes where possible to minimize discoloration. The district recently completed a planning grant for a new water treatment plant to better address issues like iron and manganese, and we are currently working with Pace Engineers to secure a construction grant to fund this critical upgrade. While these long-term improvements are in progress, our small district faces funding constraints, and we appreciate your patience as we work to enhance our infrastructure and address the challenges posed by our aging system and source water characteristics.

How can you help?

If you're experiencing water quality issues, please call us directly at (530) 628-5449 or (530) 356-1090. Reporting issues helps us pinpoint problem areas and respond quickly. I kindly ask for your understanding and respectful communication, as personal attacks on our small team can hinder our ability to focus on solutions. We're your neighbors, working hard with just four staff members to manage both water and wastewater services.

Moving forward together

I take pride in serving Hayfork and am committed to keeping you informed. Communication is a two-way street, and if you have concerns, I encourage you to bring them directly to me so we can address them promptly and effectively. This is our first social media post, and we'll use this platform to share updates on water quality and other district matters. Thank you for your support as we navigate these challenges and strive to improve service for our community.

Sincerely,

Shane McDonald

General Manager, Trinity County Waterworks District #1