

Uranium treatment system running for Bass Lake region

By [Denise Aday](#)

(Updated Thursday, July 5, 2007, 7:39 AM)

Water company officials say residents and tourists at Bass Lake no longer need to worry about uranium in their taps and faucets. Officials from Water Remediation Technologies said the licenses have been approved and the Bass Lake uranium treatment facility is up and running.

"We are pretty excited," said Steve Welch, president of the Bass Lake Water Company. "We went online June 21, and everything has worked flawlessly. Right now we are using the system to replenish more than 1 million gallons of water for our storage tanks, in preparation for the Fourth of July Weekend."

Welch said the uranium treatment setup is a groundbreaking facility because it is the first of its kind in California and the first to be used on a well in a fractured granite water system, like we have in the Mountain Area.

"People won't see any difference in the water," Welch said. "Bass Lake water tastes great and is very soft water."

Cynthia Sobel lives on North Shore Road and has noticed a slight difference in the taste, but says she does not mind.

"We moved here from Moorpark and I hated the taste of the water there," Sobel said. "The water here in the Bass Lake area has a very clean taste, but I don't mind a slight bad taste to get rid of the uranium in the water."

Duane Bollig, vice president of environmental affairs at WRT, said his company is "focused on helping municipalities to remove neucleides from their water to comply with new (2000) EPA standards."

The Bass Lake Water Company has five wells. All five wells are blended and used to supplement the surface water system on the North Fork of Willow Creek.

"The well at School Road and Road 274 in Bass Lake has been in use for more than 20 years," Welch said. "It tested fine, early on. However, the uranium levels have increased over time, causing its use to be restricted to a few high-demand days a year, when it was blended with surface water."

The uranium concentration in the "School Road well" at Bass Lake was testing at 165 parts per billion, according to the WRT. The Environmental Protection Agency allows a maximum uranium presence of only 30 ppb. According to the EPA, the uranium is naturally present in water, but drinking high amounts of it over a long period of time can cause toxic effects to the kidneys and increase the risk of getting cancer.

WRT said the uranium levels are non-detectable in the water discharged from the Bass Lake system.



Water company officials say residents and tourist at Bass Lake no longer need to worry about uranium in their taps and faucets. The uranium treatment facility was designed and constructed by Water Remediation Technologies.

[Photos courtesy of Water Remediation Technologies](#)

Welch said the system cost in excess of \$120,000 for the equipment, design and engineering. There is also an on-going annual cost in the ballpark of \$20,000 to operate the system.

"We made a commitment to fund this a few years ago and we wanted to follow through," Welch said. "We wanted a reliable water source for present and future customers. The water supply is now adequate for the proposed townhouse subdivision in the Pines Village and to meet peak water demands in the summer."

Bollig said the Bass Lake facility may also benefit others in the areas.

"We have been extremely successful in getting the states to recognize the license format we propose," Bollig said. "We had excellent support from the radiological branch of the California Department of Health Services."

Bollig said WRT proposes a multi-site license for its new facilities. The state did an impact study for the effects of the multi-site license.

"We register the site specific information for the individual site going in," Bollig said. "Now that Bass Lake's treatment facility is in, it will be a simpler procedure to put in any setup needed by other companies like the Hillview and Broadview Terrace water systems. Our system can also remove arsenic and nitrates."

Using WRT for the treatment facility had huge benefits, according to Welch. WRT is licensed to handle and transfer liability for the uranium, eliminating the nuclear storage liability that usually burdens municipalities.

"Possession transfers to a uranium processor and it goes into the fuel cycle for nuclear power plants," Bollig said. "The treatment media we use is essentially is a synthetic resin, identical to what is used in uranium recovery operations. A uranium processor can take our media and they have no problem removing the uranium."

WRT has treatment systems operating for 19 municipalities, treating more than 40 wells around the country for radium or uranium.



The uranium treatment facility cost more than \$120,000 to engineer and build. In addition, the facility costs in the ballpark of \$20,000 a year to maintain.

Photos courtesy of [Water Remediation Technologies](#)