

Air Force awards drinking water contract for private well sampling

KOMAN Government Solutions will begin contacting private well owners to request a time to receive a free PFAS water test now through Nov. 20, 2018.

The Air Force awarded the contract for drinking water sampling in the southern Colorado area of Windmill Gulch and Widefield Aquifers for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), including those wells previously sampled by El Paso County. The contractor will work with well owners to schedule the sampling at the owners' convenience. The sampling is part of an ongoing assessment of the drinking water impact of past firefighting activities at Peterson Air Force Base, according to Sharon Stone, Peterson AFB Remedial Program Manager.

Residents who are connected to a public drinking water system and receive a water bill will not be contacted for sampling. Residents who do not receive a water bill may be served by a private well and will be contacted for sampling.

For more specific information determining if you are in the affected area or would like to make contact with the contractor, please contact 21st Space Wing Public Affairs at 719-556-5185.

The commercial public water systems in Fountain, Widefield and Security significantly decreased the use of their wells for the past two years, and these aquifers have recharged and groundwater flow direction may have changed. The private well sampling results will be used to build a current model of the groundwater movement in the aquifers and help determine where and how these chemicals are now impacting our community, Stone explained.

PFAS are a class of synthetic fluorinated organic compounds used in many industrial and consumer products, including firefighting foam used by commercial industries and the armed services to extinguish petroleum-based fires. In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established health advisory levels in drinking water for two types of PFAS - perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

The Air Force has committed more than \$49 million toward the southern Colorado community in an effort to reduce the two PFAS below the EPA health advisory level in residents' drinking water, and remains committed to partnering with the affected communities to search for long-term solutions to PFOS and PFOA concentrations that exceed EPA health advisory levels as a result, at least in part, from Air Force firefighting training and response activities.