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WATER ISSUES

restoration, according to state officials.

Even people with private wells need to take precautions to avoid health risks after Helene's

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN WESTERN NC ARE

flooding, officials say.

WITHOUT WATER? About 3.7% of the region's public water systems, serving 24,330 people, were closed and not producing water as of Wednesday morning, according to the the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's tracker. An additional seven systems serving 238,967 people, including the City of Asheville's system, were down or limited due to water pres-

sure problems. Another eight systems had no power, and 48 systems serving tens of thousands were either running on back-up power or operated on stored

water only. Hundreds of thousands are under boil water advisories.

WHEN WILL WATER BE **RESTORED IN ASHEVILLE, WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA?**

Asheville's Mills River Water Plant is "fully operational," the city said Monday. That plant serves about 20% of the city's water system, according to the Asheville

Citizen-Times. But the North Fork Reservoir and its plant, which serves the other 80%, need more extensive and time-consuming repairs. City officials did not give an updated timeline Wednesday on when water would be restored but said previously it could be

weeks. Woody on Wednesday said crews are laying a

ing North Fork's treatment plant to the water distribution system and

Friday. Boulders clogging

pipes slowed down that

"That's just the con-

tingencies we have to be

to repair distribution lines

Woody said. The city is

partnering with the Envi-

Agency and engineers to

reservoir, which was con-

during the flooding from

it essentially flipped the

this sediment, pieces of

clay particles, are now

suspended in the water

Workers need to get

much of the sediment out

of the water before it goes

doing so could cause more

The city will also have

"Even when the water is

Asheville's water system

also serves parts of Black

Mountain, Henderson-

verville.

ville, Woodfin and Wea-

Issues in other water

systems include a lack of

consistent power, storm

debris that needs clearing

and damaged distribution

infrastructure such as

pipes and pumps, said

Josh Kastrinsky, spokes-

to repressurize its system,

which will likely lead to

the discovery of more

damage, Woody said.

able to leave the North

Fork treatment plant, the

process of refilling thou-

sands of miles of pipe is

going to take time," he

through the treatment

plant, Woody said. Not

damage that could take

months to fix.

reservoir," he said. "... All

"When the storm came,

taminated by sediment

Helene.

column."

prepared for," he said.

throughout the city,

ronmental Protection

purify the water in the

project, he added.

hope to finish that by

WATER? Officials are also urging caution for those in Western North Carolina using well water after Helene.

ronmental Quality.

ed improvements is

WHAT ABOUT WELL

broad," he said.

Floodwater can contaminate wells with livestock waste, sewage, chemicals and other contaminants Asheville also is working that can lead to illness, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services advises.

> Dug wells, bored wells and wells less than 50 feet deep are especially vulnerable to contamination, according to NCDHHS.

> Property owners should reach out to their local health department, the NC State Laboratory of Public Health or their local county extension about getting their well water tested after flooding, the agency says. Additional testing may be needed if the well is near animal feeding operations, fields that use pesticides or industrial chemical factories.

Test kits will also be available for pick-up starting Thursday at 30 Valley St. in Asheville, county officials said at their

Wednesday briefing. NCDHHS also recommends property owners reach out to their local health department or a licensed well driller to "shock chlorinate" their well — a process that disinfects wells using liquid bleach or chlorine — after flooding.

Mary Ramsey: @mcolleen1996

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