



**Action Group Reports from “Protecting Our Taps” Forum**  
November 5, 2010

**Bottled Water Action Group**

**Possible Actions:**

1. Start a campaign to encourage people not to buy bottled water, bottled sport drinks and bottled soft drinks. Drink less or bring your own bottle.
2. Get more drinking water fountains working in the community (ones that you can fill a water bottle with and are sanitary)
3. Work on a warrant article to ban the sale of drinking water bottles in Concord
4. Work with school and parent groups to eliminate plastics with food and water in the schools.
5. Lobby for REACH type program in MA and US

**Comments:**

NYC Marathon sponsored by Poland Springs

Water is a distribution problem

Example of the stranglehold corporations have on public

Never thought about bottled water being a problem before Jean Hill's TM presentation

I have lead in my house water pipes so I use bottled water

Bottled water is not a necessity; it is a manufactured need

Who controls our water?

Worried about neglecting maintenance of our public water infrastructure if people become reliant on commercial bottled water

What are the liability issues around water stations and bubblers?

Do the athletic fields have bubblers?

There is only ½ person at FDA responsible for regulating bottled water. Water companies are responsible for monitoring and testing their own water.

Bottling companies do not want to see an expanded Bottle Bill. Instead they encourage roadside recycling because that is taxpayer subsidized whereas if the Bottle Bill passed they would need to take responsibility for product.

Would having an expiration date on water bottles help? No – quality depends on time and environment water is kept in – heat degrades the water & bottle.

**Actions:**

Discover why people buy bottled water.

Do taste testing at different locations, especially at CCHS

Initiate an education program

Support the Bottle Bill

Support / write a TM article to fund refill stations

Create a logo for town tap initiative – Drink Concord Water - It's in your Tap

## Carlisle Water Action Group

### Possible Actions:

1. Get involved - Join town boards / attend meetings
  - Conservation Commission-protect wetlands and watersheds
  - Board of Health - well water testing: require upon home sale (like Title 5) to create baseline (see Pepperall?), landscaping bylaw to ban (or limit) pesticides (see Pembroke?, Westford?, North/South Watershed?, Horsley-Whitten?)
  - Recreation Commission - organic field maintenance, greywater irrigation, drinking/filling station water fountains at fields,
  - School Building Committee-water conservation&greywater,
  - Energy Task Force-energy savings=water savings,
2. Start a campaign to raise public awareness about our well and septic systems
  - water conservation,
  - what not to put on lawns,
  - what not to put down drains,
  - what to do when the power goes out,
  - what to do during drought,
3. Investigate options for allowing greywater systems... - what legislation required?
4. Work with other groups in town to promote protection of our water system
  - Pesticide Awareness Group,
  - Garden Club,
  - Boy and Girl Scouts,
  - Carlisle Public School,
  - Churches (FRS, St. Irenes, Congregational)
5. Lobby for REACH type program in MA and US

## Concord Water Action Group

### Possible Actions:

1. Learn about Concord's Water Management(tour facilities, explore state of the art conservation programs and water related technologies, look at chemicals and testing used in Concord's water treatment process, look at new alternative processes, additional testing, etc).
2. Explore town water reuse and wastewater reduction and increase of public water availability. Encourage reduced consumption. Establish unused prescription drop-off program expansion.
3. Water education – Water ambassador program (communicate conservation, quality issues, awareness of threats to our drinking water, success stories, etc)
4. Map current drinking water fountains/filling stations in Concord and work with water dept to repair and install more.

### Discussion:

Alan (Concord Water & Sewer Supt.) stressed that we need hands-on action now to affect policy. Concord's water is GOOD. There are some problem areas: old private houses often have lead pipes which are replaced only when renovations or repairs are made. In the 50s and 60s copper pipes were used in these replacements. Recently, plastic is used.

Policies and regulations have expanded. Where testing used to be for bacteria, EPA now is concerned with chemicals as well. Nevertheless, problems do arise with storm water from watersheds which operate independently and are created in other towns.

Impervious covers (roofs, driveways, roads) create increased runoff. Storm water runoff creates additional problems of quality such as temperature, use of fertilizers, salt. We are concerned with fish life and the ecology of rivers and streams as well as potability.

There was a question about non-point pollution and if it can be removed with filters such as sand. Alan: fluoride passes through soil filters. Phosphorous is also a challenge.

There was interest in education on water conservation. Programs and messages. Alan repeated that he would like to concentrate on separating storm water and levels of its reuse.

It was stressed that money from a bottle bill could help solve Concord's needs. There are grant opportunities for water use purposes. Google is a good source of information re water reuse in the West that could be pertinent in Concord in 10-20 years.

Study possibilities for Concord Water Action Group:

- \* Tour our water facilities (Alan would be happy to have us) and study programs and technologies used and considered in water treatment;
- \* Explore water reuse and wastewater reduction. Have prescription drop-offs more often (now twice a year), explore the state plumbing code;
- \* Water education: communication with email, Twitter; hold events; grant opportunities (for ex.: Explore the use of a mobile water station at schools, sporting events; employ giveaways;
- \* Encourage drinking fountains in the schools, esp. the proposed new high school. (Any at Alcott School?)
- \* Create a resource list;

Groups should be combined as there will undoubtedly be overlap on reuse, grants, water ambassadors.

One group member reaffirmed that residents should check for and replace lead pipes. Shower water could be repiped for use in toilets. Residents should be motivated to reduce water use and be aware that in drought conditions especially, this is imperative. Discourage the use of bottled water and promote the use of good products, through Google, etc.

#### **Additional Town Actions:**

1. Water Reuse: Look nationwide (especially out West) at available systems
2. Communication:
  - Give talks on water to organizations such as the scouts, Elks
  - Update water departments communication system to include newer technologies-twitter, etc.
3. Events: Hold community events that focus on water and / or represent the water department at environment related discussion
4. Increase use of public water:
  - Apply for grants for new equipment such as mobile water filling stations
  - Work with CCHS to have water fountains/filling stations and water reuse systems designed in
5. Water Treatment, Testing, and Distribution:
  - Examine current levels of chlorination, fluoridation and addition of anti-corrosives in our water
  - Look at replacement of old pipes (copper, lead etc.) with plastic (how healthy is plastic?)
  - Review the filtration waiver for our Nagog Pond water
  - Work with the water dept to test levels of contaminants and medication levels in Concord water
6. Integrated Water Management: explore what other communities are doing re:optimizing sources of water (where water is obtained), managing storm water, handling waste water.
7. New technologies: look for energy saving or energy generation possibilities of our current water system

## Household & Personal Action Group

### Possible Actions:

#### **CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE WATER USEAGE**

1. Explore greywater systems and how to make them legal in town

##### **Actions:**

- contact Town plumbing inspector on current regs
- divert shower water to tank for watering grass, shrubs etc.
- schedule a tour of David Bearg's grey water system and year round gardening
- identify potential funding sources to defray homeowner costs to install
- Divert toilet water (with urine) from septic systems and use to fertilize plants

2. Summer reduction of water

2010 water rationing was voluntary: usage went from 2.5 million gallons to 4 million gallons of water. 2011: Spell out consequence: ie, not enough water to fight grass or home fires etc

##### **Actions:**

- a. Increase positive incentives/rewards and negative consequences in order to reduce watering landscapes during drought conditions.
- b. Motivation Incentives to inspire change
  - Reinstate the Water Challenge run by Water Department two years ago
  - Appeal to irrigation system homeowners and landscapers to avoid watering when it is raining; do hand watering instead
  - Highlight households that use less water:
    1. photos of unwatered grass/gardens in August and how they look in October (green again)
    2. articles in the news media about steps taken by various homeowners to reduce useage
    3. Personal commendation and appearance at Board of Selectmen meeting for good citizen/good neighbor awardees etc.
- c. Negative Consequences:
  - Impose Higher Fees: dramatic increase in fees for those exceeding moderate use thresholds.
  - Publish water useage of top five (anon.) guzzlers with other residents
  - Provide photos of lush grass vs unwatered grass as normal

#### **PERSONAL ACTIONS CAMPAIGN**

##### **Actions:**

1. Infrastructure:
  - a. Alert homeowners of houses built before XX year to check water connections (one member found and replaced lead/tin in pipes )
2. Conservation:
  - a. Use a basin to collect running water used to wash hands, vegs and use it to water indoor or outdoor plants, or to flush toilets
  - b. Do not water plants, gardens with drinking water!
3. REACH: Learn about what products are effective (do they do what they say) and are good for the environment:
  - a. [www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com)
  - b. go to stores you trust

##### **Bottled Water Actions:**

- Do NOT buy bottled water
- Use tap water and non-plastic refillable water bottles instead
- Install filters (turn one way for drinking water, the other for general use. )

**Facilitator’s summary:**

Strongest unifying note from this diverse group was: We need and want to learn more. We know that watersheds are crucially important, and we know that lots of players are involved—from governmental bodies at all levels to private businesses to non-profit stewards/ watchdogs—but we’re not convinced they’re talking to each other, much less the public. We want to understand what watersheds are and how the water cycle works. We’d like to know who our neighbors—particularly businesses (manufacturing & agriculture)—are, and what their impact is on our watersheds. We want transparency from regulatory bodies.

<b>Watershed Protection Action Group</b>
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**Possible Actions:**

1. Join the NRC, attend NRC meetings
2. Join and work with organizations such as CLCT, SUASCO
3. Start a campaign to raise awareness of threats to our drinking water (what not to put on your lawn, what not to pour down your drain, what not to wash your car with,...)
4. Start an education campaign about native landscaping and preservation/appreciation of wetlands and rivers
5. Communicate with neighboring communities and work toward common goals regarding watershed protection
6. Lobby for big updates of recycling programs, unused prescription drop –off programs, studies of emerging issues that contaminate water resources (land use, plastics, personal and business habits, )