

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

To ensure that Suffolk residents will continue to have a pure and safe source of drinking water, our groundwater, the SCWA is at the forefront of aquifer protection measures. Maintaining, safeguarding and improving the quality of our groundwater are critical for our public health, our economy and our environment. Source water protection also helps avoid costs associated with treating, monitoring and remediating contamination. Pollution prevention is always preferable to remediation.

Open Space Preservation

SCWA sponsored the bill that protected the Central Pine Barrens. This legislation has resulted in the preservation of more than 100,000 acres of land in central Suffolk, which overlies one portion of Long Island's federally designated sole source aquifer. We continue to provide resources to protect this unique resource.

Hydrological Research

We have partnered with the Long Island Groundwater Research Institute (LIGRI) at SUNY Stony Brook to study groundwater hydrology and chemistry and the impacts that certain practices have on our groundwater quality and quantity. The focus of this scientific research is Long Island's aquifer system, and the goal is to utilize the results in practical applications to resolve groundwater related problems.

We also support local research and data collection by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to assess the water quality and quantity of Suffolk's groundwater reservoir. The USGS performs on-going environmental and hydrologic surveillance and investigations including a long-term groundwater monitoring program, data collection on emerging contaminants and nitrate trends, geophysical surveys, and aquifer characterization. The USGS also maintains a database of this information, allowing for trend analyses.

Public Education and Outreach

Public education is an essential ingredient in maintaining the quality of our water resources. We provide an educational outreach program for students in the 4th through 8th grades that covers the water cycle and protection of our drinking water. We also have useful information on our website (scwa.com), in our Annual Report, and in billing inserts. Occasionally SCWA will distribute information to the public through newspaper ads, TV and radio announcements, and posters or plaques on our vehicles.

Additionally, group tours of our state-of-the-art water quality testing laboratory or one of our pump stations can be arranged, or we'll gladly make a special presentation to your civic organization.

Become a Groundwater Guardian!

The SCWA would like you to take an active part in preserving our local water supply by becoming a Groundwater Guardian.

The Groundwater Guardian program, an international effort by the Groundwater Foundation to educate the public about the nature and value of groundwater, is run locally by a group of dedicated individuals representing government, the business community, education, agriculture, and Suffolk citizens. The SCWA recently rejuvenated the program in Suffolk with the help of these local leaders, and is looking for volunteers to help raise awareness about the importance of preserving our groundwater. Potential public education campaigns may include poster and video contests in schools and the creation of a Suffolk County Groundwater Guardians website, among other efforts.

What You Can Do to Protect our Groundwater

- *Don't pour any hazardous or toxic household materials down the drain or toilet - old paint, cleaners, degreasers, oils, etc.*
- *Properly dispose of all expired or unused medications by dropping them off at your local Suffolk County police department precinct's drop box, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*
- *If you use any chemicals on your lawn and gardens (pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers) do so sparingly. In this case, more is not better.*
- *Don't overwater your lawn during the summer. Instead, irrigate less frequently and for longer durations to promote deep root growth and reduce runoff of any chemicals into the groundwater.*
- *Support open space preservation initiatives in your community.*

For further information, visit our website at scwa.com.

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Conserving Water

At least 36 states are anticipating local, regional, or statewide water shortages by 2013. In most of the United States, water conservation has become synonymous with limiting consumption and maximizing a limited resource. Here in Suffolk County, where fresh water supply is not restricted, these same measures may not be applicable. Our focus on water conservation isn't a matter of limited quantity, but rather a matter of efficiency and system optimization.

Although we have a sufficient water supply to meet present and future demands if managed properly, there are many reasons why it's important to conserve our most precious resource. Conserving water reduces the need for electricity to run our well pumps; reduces the need to construct new wells, water mains and tanks to meet increased demand; ensures that there will be an adequate supply for future generations; and ensures that there will be sufficient water pressure during peak demand periods for fighting fires. Conserving water also saves money.

How to Use Our Most Precious Natural Resource Efficiently:

Indoors:

- Fix Leaks - Check for leaky faucets and toilets. An American home can waste, on average, more than 10,000 gallons of water every year due to running toilets, dripping faucets, and other household leaks.
- Install Water-conserving Appliances and Fixtures - They are cost-effective and can dramatically reduce water use. The average home, retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, can save 30,000 gallons per year. Check for EPA's WaterSense label when purchasing new appliances.
- Don't Let Water Run - Turn off the tap while brushing teeth, shaving, and soaping up your hands. This can save gallons a day.
- Fill it Up - When running the clothes washer or dishwasher, always wash full loads.
- Aerate your Faucet - Installing a WaterSense aerator on your faucets is one of the most cost effective means to use water more wisely in your home. You can increase the faucet's efficiency by 30 percent without decreasing performance.

Outdoors:

Of the estimated 29 billion gallons of water used daily by households in the United States, nearly 7 billion gallons, or 30 percent, is devoted to outdoor water use. In the hot summer months, a household's outdoor water use can be as high as 70 percent.

- Irrigate Properly - Install a weather-based SMART irrigation controller which will ensure your irrigation system only operates when it needs to. Also, set timers properly and install rain shut-off devices and moisture sensors, if one isn't built-in, to reduce excess watering. Regularly inspect the sprinkler heads to make sure they are not damaged or malfunctioning. Adjust sprinklers so they are not spraying water on paved surfaces such as the sidewalk, driveway, or road. These steps will also save you energy.
- Choose Low-Maintenance Lawns - Consider using native ground cover that requires little water in place of lawn areas.
- Mulch - Mulch your gardens and flower beds to prevent water loss through evaporation and help keep your soil moist.
- Sweep vs. Hose - Sweep outdoor surfaces with a broom instead of using a hose.
- Go to the Car Wash - Wash your vehicle at a car wash that recycles its water rather than doing it yourself at home.