

# 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 took a very active leadership role in working towards the enactment of the legislation 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 [www.scwa.com](http://www.scwa.com).**

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## The Value of Water

*How often do you think about the value of your tap water? And yet it provides many things that no other water can.*

- *It delivers public health*
- *It delivers fire protection.*
- *It delivers economic development.*
- *It delivers quality of life.*

*Water services are delivered to you 24/7/365. A day without water can mean:*

- *No drinking, flushing or brushing.*
- *No showers, laundry, or dishwashing.*
- *No putting out fires or watering lawns and gardens.*
- *Increased risk of waterborne diseases.*

Drinking water services are not free. Tap water costs less than a penny per gallon – a true bargain considering the energy and expertise it takes to treat and deliver clean and reliable water to homes and businesses day in and day out. But like many basic services, the cost of treating and delivering water is going up for several reasons:

**Rising treatment costs** – increasingly stringent drinking water regulations add to the cost of providing water.

**Aging water infrastructure** – repairing and upgrading aging pipelines, pumps and other facilities accounts for a significant portion of your water bill.

**Increasing energy costs** – it takes a lot of electricity to pump, treat and deliver water. Rising costs for energy directly affect the cost of delivering water to you.

**Cost of developing new supplies** – water bills reflect the cost of developing new wells and well fields to meet peak demand periods.

Our customers get more than just a product for their money. We provide reliable service that includes ongoing maintenance, sophisticated water quality testing and treatment, and highly trained personnel. Simply put, it is one of the best deals around. To learn more, please visit our website at [www.scwa.com/environment](http://www.scwa.com/environment).

## Conserving Water

In many parts of the U.S. water conservation is about reducing consumption to maximize a limited resource. Here in Suffolk County it isn't a matter of limited quantity, but rather a matter of using our precious natural resource efficiently. Although we have a sufficient water supply to meet present and future demands if managed properly, there are many reasons why conserving is important. Conserving water reduces the amount of electricity we use to run our wells. It reduces the need to construct new wells, water mains and tanks to meet increased demand. It ensures that there will be sufficient water pressure during peak demand periods to fight fires. Conserving water saves money and ensures that there will be an adequate supply for future generations.

### Indoor Water Efficiency:

**Install Water-Conserving Appliances and Fixtures** - They are cost effective and can greatly reduce water use. The average home, retrofitted with water-efficient fixtures, can save 30,000 gallons per year. Installing an 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% without decreasing its performance. Check for EPA's WaterSense® label when purchasing new appliances and fixtures.

**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.

**Don't Let Water Run** - Turning off the tap while brushing teeth, shaving, and soaping hands can save gallons a day.

**Fill it Up** - When running the clothes washer or dishwasher, always wash full loads.

### Outdoor Water Efficiency:

**Irrigate Properly** - Install a weather-based "Smart" irrigation controller which will ensure your irrigation system only operates when it needs to. 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 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** – Use mulch to prevent water loss through evaporation. It helps 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.