

INFLOWMATION

Westford Water Department Newsletter

Water Commissioners:

- Leslie A. Thomas, Chairperson
- Douglas Deschenes, Secretary
- Robert Carter, Member
- Harold A. Fletcher, Alternate Member

Department Contacts:

- Warren Sweetser, Superintendent
- Robert Worthley, Treatment Manager
- Robin Fullford, Business Manager
- Elaine Major, Environmental Compliance Manager

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Cote Well Update.....

The Cote Well may be back on-line soon. The Water Department has worked with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and retained Comprehensive Environmental, Inc. to proceed with treatment to return the well to service. The treatment will take place at the pump station and will consist of vessels with ion exchange media to remove perchlorate from the raw water. When the first vessel loses efficiency, the second vessel provides 100% backup. This insures that the water supply will meet regulatory standards. A monitoring plan outlines sampling to insure safe operations and protect the public water supply. DEP has approved the treatment process. For additional information, call Elaine Major, the Environmental Compliance Manager, at 978-399-2457.



Environmental Compliance Manager Receives Award...

Elaine Major received an award from UMass-Lowell's Toxics Use Reduction Institute at the State House in June for increasing pesticide awareness with the public and the "Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families" project in Westford and 5 neighboring towns. The Water Department also received recognition from Rep. Geoffrey Hall and Jim Arciero of Senator Panagiotakos (Jim is pictured below with Elaine) for the successful completion of the project. A proposal is pending to continue the project for another year.



Plant Operator for a Day!

(This is second in a series of articles to describe various jobs at the Water Department.)

The Water Department treatment plants have several plant operators who serve on a rotating basis under the direction of the Water Treatment Manager. They start the day by meeting with the Superintendent, the Water Treatment Manager, and the other operations staff. The meeting serves to review all Department activities, evaluate operations trends, and discuss outlined tasks for the day.

The operator for the week then reviews the computerized information on the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that has been collected *(Cont. on page 2)*

Check out our Revised Website!

Look for our updated and more streamlined website. We hope the revised format will be easier to use and make information easier to find! Go to www.westford-ma.gov and click on Water Department.

World Monitoring Day.....

Since the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act on October 18, 2002, World Monitoring Day has been celebrated from Sept 18 to Oct 18 every year. It was designed to:

- Enhance public appreciation for the importance of our water resources,
- Celebrate water quality improvements,
- Build a better understanding of remaining challenges and solutions, and
- Rekindle the public stewardship ethic and support for watershed protection programs, and
- Educate our nation's young people.



For more information, go to

<http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/>

Local Brownie Troop 1111, led by Jamie Raso and Lisa Clina, will be monitoring at Burge's Pond for Westford!

Re-siding your House?

Meters are read through a rectangular-shaped receptacle on the outside of your house that is connected to your meter. If residing or remodeling, please call the Water Department to remove it until the work is completed. This will prevent loss or damage to the device and insure proper billing. You may be responsible for any damages or loss of the device!

Arsenic Limits Change

Effective Jan. 2006, the arsenic maximum contaminant level will change from 50ppb to 10ppb. Arsenic can be a naturally occurring geologic substance in the New England area and can be found in public and private well water. Arsenic has not been detected in the public water supply. If you have a private well and it has never been tested, you may want to consider testing for arsenic by a certified laboratory.

New Payment Drop Slot...

Coming soon—a payment drop slot so you can drop off your payments after hours! The secured slot will be just inside the front door at the 60 Forge Village Road main office.

Plant Operators... cont. from page 1

for the past 24 hours of operations and determines the status of all individual components. (The entire public water supply is monitored and controlled by the SCADA system.) Next, he meets with the Water Treatment Manager to review specific details that might need to be addressed at the plants. The two water treatment plants are manned 7 days a week, one shift per day. Should an emergency occur after hours, the SCADA system alerts the on-call plant operator, who responds to evaluate the situation. Someone is on stand-by for all Water Department emergencies 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

The operator also conducts laboratory testing at each plant to evaluate residual disinfection, pH, iron and manganese, fluoride, and turbidity levels. He/she records and monitors information critical for efficient plant operations such as water flow, filter efficiencies, and temperature. They also check usage and levels of potassium hydroxide, potassium permanganate, MIOX salt, and fluoride and replenish tanks as necessary.

Plant operators routinely inspect equipment, make repairs, and conduct preventive maintenance to ensure that the operations continue as seamlessly as possible around the clock. In addition to the treatment plants, they are also responsible for the maintenance and operations of 8 well stations, 3 booster stations, and 5 storage tanks that are part of the public water supply system. The operators are required to attend training opportunities to keep their license certifications up to date.

Thanks for Using Rainbarrels...

More residents purchased rainbarrels this spring at a discounted price with aid from a MA DEP grant to the Town. The 55-gallon barrels collect rainwater from roof runoff and are wonderful for watering outside plants and gardens. The barrels also help to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Participating residents were mailed a survey so DEP can evaluate the grant program. For more information, go to www.nerainbarrel.com We appreciate your participation in the program!



Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families.....

Look for signs around town that say “Ask me about My *Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families!*” The initiative, led by Elaine Major of the Water Department, has promoted pesticide awareness in Westford and several neighboring towns. Funding has just been approved by the UMass-Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute to continue the project for another year. The project focus is to build public awareness about the health risks from pesticides, provide information about alternative organic methods that are safer, sponsor workshops for lawn care providers, reduce pesticide use on a regional scale, and establish local committees with the purpose of developing pesticide bylaws or policies for the towns involved. Go to www.healthylawnsforhealthyfamilies.com for more information about local learning opportunities, pesticides, and organic lawn care.



We need your help! Please contact Elaine at 978-399-2457 or emajor@westford.mec.edu to help us gather some information. We need (1) contact information for your lawn care provider and (2) local residents interested in serving on a committee to develop and recommend pesticide and/or lawn care policies for Westford.

Water Conservation Policy!

Thank you for following our conservation policy! Because customers followed our policy, we had no problems meeting demand throughout the summer..

Drought Tolerate Garden!

The drought tolerate garden beside the Water Department building at 63 Forge Village Road. was recently weeded and spruced up! The garden was installed by volunteers in 2002 from the Westford Academy Community Service team. The Middlesex County Sheriff's Office Community Work Program assisted the Water Department with the clean-up. Visit the site to see the wide variety of drought tolerant plant materials and how they look full-grown!



Irrigation Controllers

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has published a book on irrigation controllers to support water conservation efforts. Efficient irrigation also helps conserve precious water resources by reducing the amount of drinking water used for landscape irrigation and helps reduce runoff and nonpoint source pollution. The best controller for each situation will handle diverse landscape and weather situations and be programmable. Go to www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency and then click on irrigation controllers for more information. The website offers great information about other types of water conservation too.



Volunteer Stream Monitoring!

Efforts are underway in Westford to once again begin water quality monitoring of local surface waters. Stony Brook and Nashoba Brook are being monitored to characterize current conditions and create baseline information to evaluate water quality changes over time. These efforts are an important step in understanding watershed-level changes and minimizing impacts to our precious water resources and the biological communities that they support! Parameters evaluated include temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, nitrate and phosphate, and the macroinvertebrate community. Interested in volunteering? Contact Peter Severance at 978-392-8885. Support and technical assistance is provided by the Westford Water Department, Westford Conservation Trust, Organization for the Assabet River, and EOEAs Riverways Program.

**Westford Water Department
October 2005 INFLOWMATION**

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Hydrant Flushing!

Flushing will begin October 3 and continue for approximately 6 weeks in and around the Nabnasset area, usually between the hours of 8am and 3pm Monday through Friday. Occasionally, flushing may occur between the hours of 10pm and 2am. During flushing, water pressure may be low and the water discolored. Let the water run awhile and it should clear up quickly. Thanks for your cooperation!



Hours of Operation:

7am to 4pm Monday-Friday
(except Holidays)

Numbers at a Glance:

Main Phone Line (978)692-5529
Superintendent (978)399-2454
Water Treatment Manager (978)399-2456
Billing and Property Transfers (978)399-2452
Accounts Payable (978)399-2451

Upcoming Events...

October 18 World Monitoring Day

Free Presentations:

November 2 Pesticide Awareness Presentation at the Westford Garden Club meeting, Fletcher Library at 10:15am

Bottled Water Suspected of Contributing to Cavities

A sudden rise in tooth decay in children was noted recently at the World Dental Congress in Montreal. *Medpage Today* notes that fluoride has been established as a preventative for tooth decay in young children. A caution was issued to parents that excessive use of bottled water may mean they and their children will not get enough fluoride to build strong teeth and prevent decay. Proper diet and good oral hygiene are also important elements of dental health. For the full article, go to www.awwa.org/communications/mainstream/2005/0927/Lead09cavities.cfm