

Summary of the Tuftonboro Conservation Commission's Fourth Well Water Testing Initiative

This past August, Tuftonboro's Conservation Commission conducted its fourth well water testing initiative. Tuftonboro residents were informed via articles in the Granite State News, a block ad in the paper, an article in the Tuftonboro Times and notices posted on various bulletin boards around town. Test kits were made available at the Town Office(as has been the case for the past three years) and collection of the samples was completed on Sunday August 2nd.

Several members of the TCC volunteered to help with the collection and were joined by Lou Barinelli from the Public Health Laboratories in Concord who has volunteered for the past two years to be on hand to observe, answer any questions residents may have and has transported all the samples to the lab at the end of the day.

As anticipated since this was our fourth year providing this service, there were fewer kits taken and returned as in past years. Another possible factor in the reduced numbers was that we were unable to put a test reminder in resident tax bills this year.

The following is a summary of the number of test kits analyzed from 2012-2015 by the NH Public Health lab in Concord for the Town of Tuftonboro. The percentages shown represent the proportion of tests that exceeded the state and federal standards for public drinking water.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| # of Kits Tested | 122 | 163 | 94 | 47 |
| Radon | 25% | 35% | 22% | 24% |
| Arsenic | 34% | 23% | 35% | 22% |
| Total Coliform Bacteria | 22% | 25% | 18% | 26% |

The percentages have remained relatively stable over the past four years and are consistent with or higher than predictions based on the geology of the area. They also suggest that a significant proportion of our population is consuming water that is potentially damaging to their health, longevity and child development.

Awareness and concern for this problem is growing in the Northeast and New Hampshire. NH DES and Dartmouth Toxic Metals Research are focusing on new and more effective ways to educate the public on this issue. Many communities have begun well water education and testing programs but Tuftonboro remains well ahead of them in both public education and success in public participation.

The Conservation Commission continues to provide public information on well water issues and has links posted on its web connection on the Town of Tuftonboro's web page. Available on line is information on: "Arsenic in NH Well Water", "Arsenic and Child Development", "Do You Know What's in your Well Water" and a short video "In Small Doses". Soon to be added is a new app released by the NH DES "Be Well Informed". It is an on line well water treatment

application designed for private well owners to help them interpret their test results and select appropriate treatment options. It will help our citizens determine (based on their test results) whether their water requires treatment and what the appropriate treatment technology would be for the contaminants in their well water. (www.des.nh.gov and search “Be Well Informed”)