

Acton Water District

Water Words Notice

Winter 2000

Acton Water District One of the Best in the State

On National Drinking Water Day, May 11th, 2000, the Acton Water District was honored in a ceremony held at the Massachusetts State House for providing safe, clean drinking water to its customers. The Acton Water District received a Massachusetts Public Water System Award, which recognizes community water suppliers each year for outstanding performance.

The award program, jointly sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts Water Works Association, and the Northeast Rural Water Association, recognizes outstanding performance in providing clean, dependable drinking water, and complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The 522 community water supplies in the state are rated in a variety of areas, including compliance with drinking water regulations, source protection and distribution programs, contribution to the drinking water profession, certification and training of operators, water conservation efforts, and community outreach activities. The Acton Water District received one of the highest scores in the state. This year, only twenty public water supplies received the award.



In photo, from left to right, Lauren Liss, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection, Robert Durand, Secretary, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Jim Deming, District Manager, Acton Water District, Jane Ceraso, Environmental Manager, Acton Water District, Pam Resor, State Representative, Jae Kim, Massachusetts Water Works Association.

Assabet II Well is Replaced

Due to increasing iron concentrations and related problems, the Acton Water District put a new well on line in early November to take the place of the Assabet II well. The new well, located 45 feet from the old Assabet II well, passed all water quality tests and has been approved by the DEP. Over time, customers in the southeast portion of town should experience improved water quality due to the substantially lower iron concentrations in the new well.

Visit our New Web site!

The Acton Water District's Web site is up and running! The Web site was developed to provide readily-available information on a variety of pertinent topics. The site was a joint project between Water District staff, our summer intern Jen Hom, and Web design students at the Acton Boxboro High School. The Web site contains information on Water District operations, water quality, water conservation, and our School Education Program. Customers can even download the most recent copy of the Annual Report on Water Quality! Please visit the site at www.actonh2o.com and let us know what you think!





Jen Hom in the lab.

Summer Intern Works with Water District

During the past summer we were fortunate to once again have Jen Hom, a recent Acton/Boxboro Regional High School graduate, as our intern. Jen's primary task was to prepare the Water District's new Web site for publication. Water district staff and students from an Acton/Boxboro High School Web design class had prepared much of the basic Web site graphics and materials. Jen worked hard to finalize the Web site by editing and collating these materials and graphics into a unified and visually appealing site. Jen also helped to research and compile drinking water curriculum materials for the Water District's School Education Program. This fall, Jen started her first year at Columbia University – we wish her the best of luck!

Adopt a Hydrant

The Acton Water District and the Acton Fire Department ask that all residents consider adopting a fire hydrant this winter. If there is a fire hydrant close to your home please consider taking a few minutes to clear away any snow from it so that fire fighters have access to it in case of a fire emergency. This could save precious minutes in critical fire situations; your family's and neighbor's safety could depend on it. When plowing or shoveling, avoid piling snow in front of or on hydrants as this may damage the hydrant. Your cooperation is appreciated!



Sewer Project Update

Acton's Middle Fort Pond Sewer District Project continues to move ahead as anticipated. Work on Mass. Ave., Prospect St., and River St. is nearly complete. The major focus of the construction effort is now centered around Main St. and Parker St. Although there have been some unavoidable water main breaks due to the construction, disruptions to water service have been kept to a minimum. District personnel have worked closely with Roads Corporation and will continue to do so. We appreciate the understanding and patience that the public has shown so far during this project.

Water Wise Garden – take two!

On a glorious Indian summer day this past October, Allison Ryan, a Girl Scout with Troop 2001, and a small group of volunteers met to plant an extension to the water wise garden in front of the Water District office on Massachusetts Avenue. The garden is Ryan's Silver Badge project. She worked closely with Lynn Bruce, Pat Cumings, and Sue Whitcomb of the Acton Garden Club, who assisted in the design and selection of drought resistant plants for the garden. Acton Garden Club members and Homestead Nursery donated plants for the garden. Lenox Nursery donated all the mulch. Several Brownie troops made brick stepping stones for the garden. Please stop by the Water District office to see the garden and to learn some ways to make the most efficient use of our precious water resources.



Pat Cumings and Ed Niple help plant new garden.

“Water Wise” Acton Residents



Rainer Maas oversees the installation of his new “waterwise” lawn.

When Rainer Maas and his family moved into a new development in Acton last summer, he saw it as an opportunity to design a landscape that met their needs. Rainer wanted to design a low-maintenance, water-wise landscape. “It’s not so much that I’m a big conservationist,” he said, “I just don’t want to be a slave to my lawn!” He visited the Water District’s water wise garden and spoke with us about his desire for a yard that was attractive, colorful, low maintenance, and required minimal water. Rainer opted to put the money he would otherwise have spent on an in-ground irrigation system into planting a sustainable yard. He put down a four-inch layer of rich, organic soil, seeded the yard with tall fescue grass seed mix, and planted a drought-tolerant foundation bed. Although he calculates that the initial investment in extra materials for this year may have been slightly more than an irrigation system would cost, he figures the investment will be more than paid back in savings on his water bill—and time he will not have to fuss with his lawn.

Many of us inherit existing lawns and landscapes when we move into our homes. This was the case with Debra Simes and David Gerratt, who have lived in Acton for seven years. Like Rainer, Debra and David desired an attractive, low maintenance yard. “We felt that the more lawn we could get rid of, the better,” said Debra. Debra and David elected to “hardscape” the eastern entry to their home with a molded concrete patio, and eliminate additional lawn by planting a large drought-tolerant foundation bed that encircled most of the house. The bed has thrived, watered only by natural rainfall. The patio adds an attractive entry to their home and provides a wonderful place for sitting, playing, and potted plants. Better yet—it uses no water and needs virtually no maintenance.



The Simes/Gerratt “hardscaping” saves water and provides an attractive addition to their yard.

The Acton Water Districts applauds the creative solutions that these residents have implemented. Please let us know if you would like information on making your yard more “water wise”. If you have implemented features into your yard or landscape to help conserve water that you would like to have featured in this newsletter, please let us know!

Acton Water District Awarded State Grant

The Acton Water District was recently awarded a grant of \$42,600 to conduct a study of land uses within the Zone II areas of all its wells. The Zone II is the area immediately surrounding each well, and the most critical to water quality. In order to protect groundwater, Acton’s Zoning Bylaw restricts certain land use activities within the Zone II areas. The Water District is pleased to be awarded this grant, as it will allow us to obtain information with which to better inventory activities near our wells, and ensure the highest quality water into the future. Because portions of the Zone II areas for our wells in West Acton, North Acton, and East Acton extend into adjacent towns, this project will involve collaboration with these towns. We expect to be hiring a contractor to begin work under the grant this spring. Look for a project update in the Spring 2001 Water Words.

Acton Water District



P.O. Box 953
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Thank You...

To all our customers who followed the new watering restrictions this past summer. Due to your diligence in conserving water outdoors (and the wet summer) we easily made it through the May through September "high demand" season. Thank you for your efforts to conserve!

