

Acton Water District

Water Words Notice

Summer 2004

Dear Customer:

The "West and South Water Supply District of Acton" was created in 1912 to supply potable water and fire protection to the south western area of Acton. The District was created in this way to ensure that only those people who were directly benefiting from the newly created infrastructure paid for it.

As time went by, the service area was expanded, and the name changed to the "Water Supply District of Acton". Presently the District encompasses the entire geographic boundary of the town of Acton, as well as a few parcels of property in Boxborough, and a single parcel of property in Littleton that was added through a special act of the legislature.

At the District's annual meeting this past March a great deal of discussion was prompted concerning an article which proposed considering an additional expansion of our service area to include property in Westford, along the border of North Acton. Ultimately, the voters soundly defeated this proposal.

While the article in question was for a specific development in Westford, the discussion grew to a much broader topic, that of regionalization of the District. One of the main considerations raised was whether there are any circumstances under which the District should consider expanding its service area beyond its current bounds, and what these circumstances might be?

In an effort to address questions around regionalization, the Board of Water Commissioners are in the process of reactivating the "Water-Land Management Advisory Committee" that was first created 25 years ago to help assist with the W.R. Grace groundwater contamination issue. This committee, which shall consist of 5 members, will be asked to review and study any issues relating to District expansion and to make recommendations to the Board of Water Commissioners concerning any future requests to expand our bounds.

The Board of Water Commissioners hopes to find a diversified group of motivated residents willing to serve on the committee. Anyone interested in being considered is asked to go to the Acton Water District website (www.actonh2o.com) to fill out the questionnaire. It can be found by selecting the "Advisory Committee Application" link on the home page. If you do not have internet access please call us or stop by for an application.

The goal is to have the committee in place by the end of the summer and to have final recommendations made within the following year. All interested residents are encouraged to apply.

Sincerely,



James Deming
District Manager



New developments near Acton's borders have raised the issue of regionalization of the Acton Water District.

Irrigation Audits Program

Did you know that irrigation system problems such as plugged equipment, broken sprinkler heads, or improper pressures or cycle times can greatly reduce an irrigation system's efficiency – costing homeowners hundreds of dollars a year in additional landscape costs and on their water bills? The Acton Water District is concerned about the inefficient use of water by improperly managed and maintained in-ground irrigation systems.

We are collaborating with Energy New England to offer Acton Water District customers with in-ground irrigation systems *free* irrigation system audits this summer. A certified auditor from Energy New England will be available to help you determine any inefficiencies in your irrigation system, and make recommendations for how you might make better use of irrigation water. Last year, AWD customers who participated in the indoor/outdoor water conservation audit program reduced their overall usage by forty-five percent!

If you are interested in receiving an irrigation system audit, please call the Water District (978-263-9107) to sign up. This complimentary service is available to a limited number of customers during the summer and early fall of 2004, so please call soon.



Energy New England auditors Russ McIntosh and Tom Robinson will be offering free irrigation system audits to Acton Water District customers this summer.

Kennedy Well Water Discolored

Some customers living in North Acton may notice a yellowish tinge to their water this summer. The Kennedy wells, which primarily supply water to the northern portions of Acton, have been impacted by a high groundwater table, nearby wetlands, and resulting “organic color.” Organic color is dissolved natural organic material that enters the groundwater under certain conditions. There is no known health concern associated with drinking the water, but due to the “aesthetic” complaints we get from customers, we are attempting to manage the color by minimizing the use of the most highly colored wells. However, as warm weather approaches, we will need to continue to use these wells, so some customers may continue to see “yellowish” water. We have been working on a long-term treatment system plan for color removal at the Kennedy wells, but this solution is at least several years away. We appreciate your understanding!



Beth Secinaro and Elaine Lawson Join the Acton Water District

Beth Secinaro and Elaine Lawson recently became the newest employees at the Acton Water District. Beth has taken the position of Accounts Receivable Secretary and will be handling our incoming water bill payments. Elaine has taken the Accounts Payable Secretary position and will be making sure that all *our* bills are paid on time!

Beth lives in Newton where she worked for the City of Newton's Water and Sewer Department for the past 16 years. While in Newton she was a Customer Service Clerk and Secretary. Elaine lives in Littleton. She previously worked for the town of Acton Highway Department for 24 years as an Administrative Assistant.

We are fortunate to have the talents of both Beth and Elaine here at the Water District. We know that you will find them very helpful and knowledgeable when you next call or visit our office.

New Acton Homeowners Become Water-wise!

On May 18th, twenty-five new Acton homeowners attended a meeting at the Acton Water District to learn about making their lawns and landscapes more “water wise”. Attendees left with a book, supplies, and information on low-maintenance landscaping, the use of native plants, drought-tolerant lawns, alternatives to lawns, conserving irrigation systems, and examples of Acton residents who have successfully implemented water wise gardening and saved a lot of water!

The program was co-sponsored by the Acton Garden Club and the Acton Water District, and partially funded through a grant the Acton Garden Club recently received from the National Garden Clubs, Inc.



Trudy Walther of the Acton Garden Club speaks with new homeowners.

Did You Know...

- ◆ Most soils in Acton are sandy and need additions of organic material to maximize their water-holding capacity?
- ◆ Switching to a natural, organic fertilizer for your lawn can help reduce the water needs of your turf?
- ◆ Most native plants have deeper roots than turf grasses and can recover more quickly from drought conditions?
- ◆ Soaker hoses or drip irrigation systems use about 70% less water than conventional irrigation systems?



Rain Barrels Popular!

The Acton Water District celebrated Drinking Water Week on May 4th with a water conservation and rain barrel event. Over 100 Acton residents visited the Water District headquarters to pick up their rain barrels, which were offered at a discount by the Acton Water District through the New England Rain Barrel Company.

Each rain barrel collects and stores up to 55 gallons of water from roof runoff and allows residents to make use of “free” water, even during watering bans. This is the second year that the Water District has held this program, and now more than 230 rain barrels are located across town, collecting water from resident’s roofs to be used later in their gardens and yards. The program has been very popular, so the Water District is hoping to offer discounted barrels again next spring. Water District customers should check their spring water bills for a coupon announcing the program. The first 100 barrels are offered at a huge discount, so they go quickly!



Parker Sprague of Acton picks out a rain barrel for his yard.

Source Water Assessment and Protection Report Available

The Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) program requires states to assess the susceptibility of public water supplies to potential contamination. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has completed its assessment on each of the Zone IIs for the Acton Water District’s wells. A susceptibility ranking of “high” was assigned to each Zone II using the information compiled by the DEP. Copies of the SWAP report are available at the Acton Water District, Acton Public Library, Health Office, and online at www.state.ma.us/dep/brp/dws.

The Acton Water District has long recognized the susceptibility of its sources, and has worked closely with the town and state to maximize the protection of all of its Zone IIs. The Water District is fully in compliance with the DEP’s Source Water Protection Regulations. For more information, please call Jane Ceraso at the Acton Water District (978) 263-9107.



What was it?

The following readers correctly identified the “mystery photo” of the Great Hill Tank top in the last Water Words issue: Mike Gowing, Robert Hojem, Charlene Rose, James McDonough, Bryon Beilman, Diane Jenkins, Sam Nablo, the Lee-Smith Family, and Jim Snyder-Grant. Good job!

Acton Water District



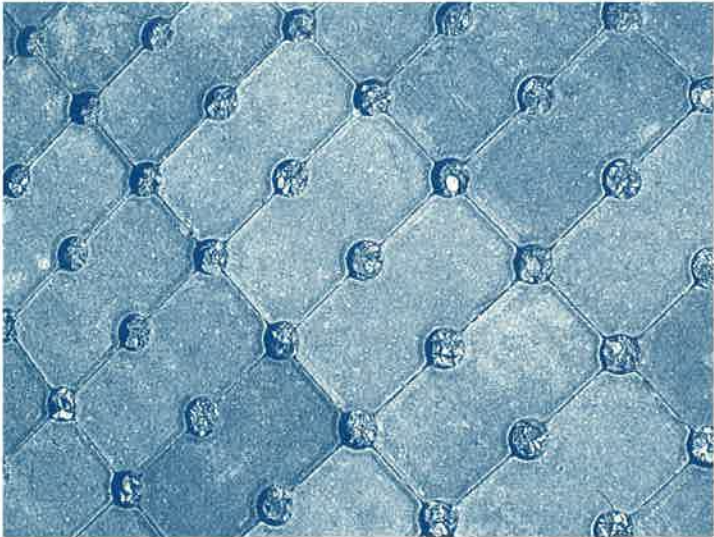
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What is it?

Please email your answers to webgeek@actonh2o.com. Winners (and the correct answer) will be posted in the next Water Words Notice