Fall

• If you have a septic system, keep it in good working order and have the system pumped out regularly, at least every two years. Also avoid putting hazardous substances down the drain. Substances poured or flushed into household plumbing can pass through a septic system without being treated and contaminate groundwater.

• Maintain your vehicle and inspect it regularly for leaks so that fuel and other harmful liquids don't soak into soils or travel into nearby streams.

Public vs. private water supply

Municipal water departments work to provide safe drinking water to those connected to the public water supply. Preventing groundwater contamination around your home or business, however, goes a long way to keeping harmful contaminants from entering the water supply in the first place.

Private well owners carry primary responsibility for maintaining the quality of their well water and for preventing health problems. They must be especially careful to protect against harmful land use activities that can contaminate a well. For more information, see: http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/private-wells.html

Winter

• Check your fuel storage tank for leaks. In addition to a physical inspection (if the tank is above ground), you can compare the level of oil in the tank with recent delivery information to help identify any leaks. Tanks that are 20 years old should be removed because of the high potential for leakage and costly clean up.

• Use sand instead of salt for snow removal on driveways or sidewalks. Excessive application of salt can result in high sodium and chloride levels in drinking water supplies, which can produce harmful health effects in humans.

• Install reduced flow shower heads, faucet aerators, and low flow toilets when possible. As noted above, water conservation reduces the demand on groundwater resources.

• If you see activities that could adversely impact your local drinking water supply, please contact your local Board of Health.

For more information, see:
www.pvpc.org/bapac

May 2014

Your Drinking Water Supply: Protecting it through the Seasons

Barnes Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee

Tips for Protecting Your Drinking Water Supply through the Seasons

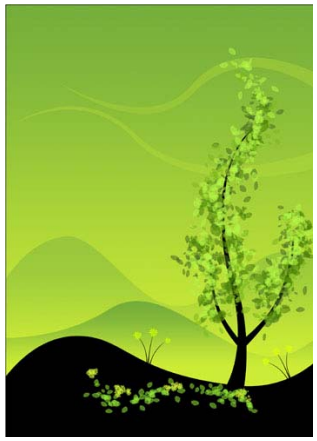
The journey of water to your tap involves drawing from the Barnes Aquifer, a precious groundwater source that is literally beneath our feet. This source is fed by rain and snowmelt that soaks deep into soils as well as flows that contribute from nearby rivers and streams.

So what we as a community, and what you, your family, and neighbors do aboveground can have important consequences for our drinking water sources belowground.

You can think of your property, and the larger surrounding area of Easthampton, Southampton, areas of Westfield, and west Holyoke as a giant sponge that soaks up not only rainfall but much of what may come with it.

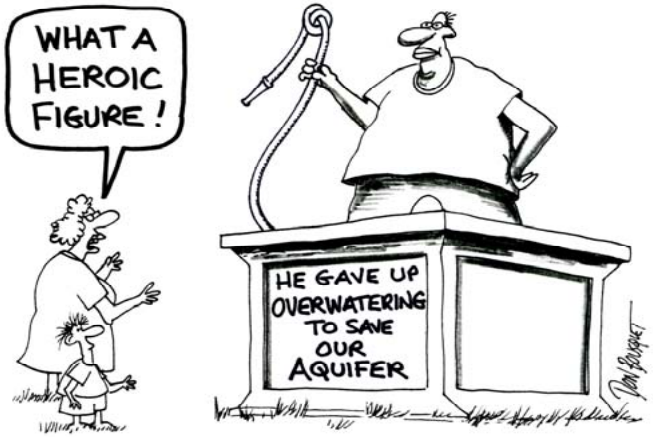
Following are a selection of important tips for how you can help ensure that our drinking water supply remains healthy and safe.

Spring



• As you do your Spring cleaning , be sure to dispose of hazardous and toxic chemicals properly. Check with your Health Department about upcoming local Hazardous Waste Collection events to dispose of such materials as lawn fertilizers and pesticides, paints, varnishes, photographic solutions, paint thinners, waste oils, antifreeze, wood preservatives, and household cleaners.

• Do not drain your car's used oil onto the ground or into storm drains. Bring your used oil with your sales receipt to service stations that have proper disposal facilities.



Summer

• Avoid using chemical pesticides or fertilizers on your lawn and garden. Some of these chemicals dissolve in rain or irrigation water and percolate through the soil into groundwater. These products can also present problems for groundwater supply if not properly stored or disposed. Good information on taking a chemical free approach is available at the following websites:

www.beyondpesticides.org/

www.portal.ct.gov/DEEP/P2/Individual/Organic-Lawn-Care-For-Consumers

• Eliminate or reduce outdoor watering whenever possible. A rain gauge will help. If you note that there has been an inch of rainfall during the week, you don't need to water at all. One inch of rainfall is sufficient for most grasses and other plants. Supplemental watering should be done in the early morning to avoid evaporation. Water conservation is critical to reducing demand on groundwater resources.