

**ROAMINGWOOD SEWER AND WATER  
ASSOCIATION**

**Source Water Protection Program**

**P.O. Box 6 Lake Ariel, PA 18436**

**(570) 698-6162**

# What You Should Know About the Water You Drink



*Roamingwood Sewer and Water  
Association*

*(Printed on 30% post-consumer recycled paper)*

## **My folks have a private well. What should they do?**

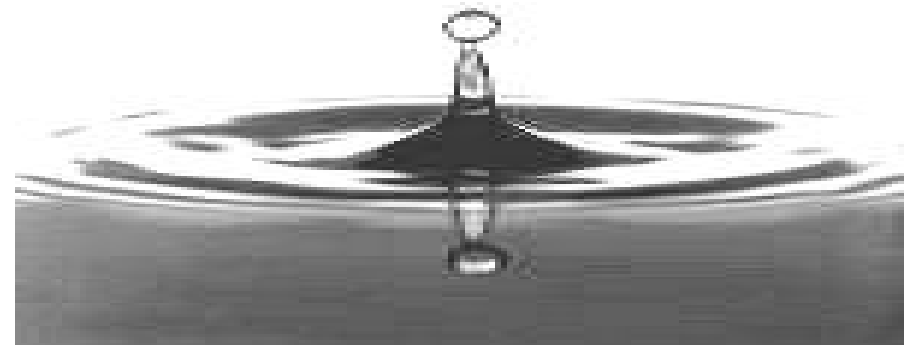
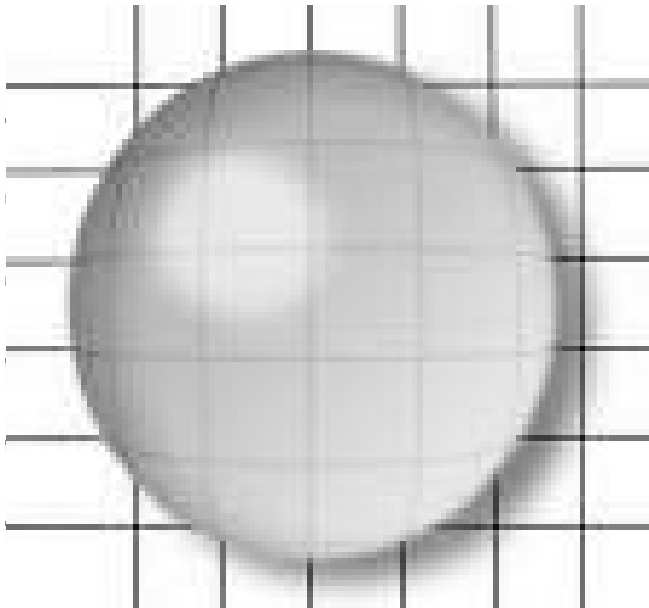
By all means, they should have their water tested at least once a year by a qualified laboratory. Private wells are more likely to pick up surface contaminants. If public water is available in the area where they live, they should give serious thought to hooking up to the public water supply.

## **Should I get a water filter just to be safe?**

If you are a customer of a public water supplier it is really not necessary. As we mentioned before, a public water supply is tested constantly to insure it is safe and meets all water quality standards. Some filters will remove chlorine, and traces of lead and copper that may be present in a home plumbing system. However, a water filter must be maintained, or it could serve as a breeding ground for bacteria that may cause illness.

## **Sometimes I get rust in my water. Why?**

It's really not rust that can sometimes show up in some customer's water; it's iron. Iron is a naturally occurring element in some areas. In its natural state, you can't see iron in water. However, as the water meets with air and mixes with chlorine, you *can* see it. It's not harmful, but it doesn't look very appealing. Some of the iron settles out in water mains and can be disturbed when fire hydrants are opened. This can sometimes cause iron in a customer's tap water.





# What You Should Know About The Water You Drink

## *Facts, Not Hype*

### **So how does a public drinking water supply stack up against bottled water?**

First of all, public drinking water is regulated by the EPA, and must meet very stringent water quality standards set by the state and federal governments, which requires testing for hundreds of chemicals. Bottled water is regulated by the FDA with standards which are less stringent. In studies conducted by independent organizations, some bottled water was not all that it claimed to be. In fact, much of it comes from municipal water systems. Then there's the issue of price. Public suppliers deliver 1,000 gallons of water to a customer's sink for about the price of 1 gallon of bottled water.

### **What about breast cancer? Some people think it's the water.**

There are no scientific studies suggesting that breast cancer, or any cancer, is caused by or related to groundwater sources being used for a public drinking water supply.

Compliments of:  
Roamingwood Sewer and Water Association  
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Protection.



There's been a lot of talk lately about the water we drink from our faucets at home, work and school. Hardly a day goes by that we don't read or hear about our drinking water. Is it safe? Do we have enough? Will we have enough in the future?

These are all good questions. Pure drinking water is essential to life, and we should be concerned about it. This booklet is designed to answer many of the questions most of us have about drinking water. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this material, please feel free to contact us for additional information. Our telephone number can be found inside the front cover.

## **Where does drinking water come from?**

As a public water supplier, all the water we provide to our customers is drawn from underground rock formations known as aquifers. The aquifers are part of the Catskill formation consolidated rock strata, and lie beneath Salem and Lake townships in Wayne County, PA. The water drawn from these aquifers may have been in the ground for several thousands of years.

## **Occurrence of Groundwater**

Groundwater is stored in the voids, spaces, and cracks between particles of soil, sand, gravel, rock, or other materials. These materials form what is sometimes called the groundwater aquifer or reservoir. In most areas of the world, and specifically in Pennsylvania, water does not flow in, and is not stored in large underground lakes or rivers. The only exception to this might be the channels and caverns associated with limestone formations and mine shafts associated with underground mining operations.

## **Who keeps an eye on the laboratories?**

Good question? The PADEP performs proficiency tests at all commercial drinking water testing laboratories. Only after passing these tests can a laboratory become "certified" by the state. As part of these tests, laboratories are given samples of water, which contain minute traces of chemicals. Using very sophisticated equipment, the laboratory must identify the chemical, and determine how much of each chemical is in each sample.

## **If groundwater is so safe, then why all the testing?**

Science has made great advances over the past 50 years. New drugs have been discovered that have helped us live longer and healthier lives. New pesticides and herbicides have been developed to help increase crop production, feeding more people at a lower cost; fuel oils have allowed us to more dependably heat our homes and places of business; chemicals around our homes have given us conveniences that were unheard of before.

Unfortunately, some of these advances and conveniences have had an effect upon our aquifers. Our corner gas stations, green lawns, landfills, cesspools, septic tanks, and use of "new chemicals", while making our lives easier, have also had an effect upon our groundwater. Very simply, what we put on the ground eventually winds up in our groundwater.

## **So what does a supplier do if a chemical is found in the water that shouldn't be there?**

If a contaminant is detected in the water supply at a level that exceeds the maximum permitted, the contributing source of supply is shut down, and public notification is conducted by the water supplier, including specifics concerning the harmful effects of that contaminant. In some cases, a water boil advisory or "do not drink" order is issued, until the source is determined through testing to meet the standards established under the safe drinking water act.

## If there's so much water in the aquifers, then why can't I waste water?

As we pump more water, we use more electricity, and in the case of a public water supplier, disinfectant. This costs money. And, remember, you pay for the water you use.

## What is added to the water supply?

As a public water supplier, we add very small amounts of a chemical called chlorine to our water. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) requires that the water be disinfected prior to delivery. Chlorine kills any germs or bacteria that might be present in the water mains as the water is delivered to our customers. The water as it comes from the ground is generally free of harmful bacteria.

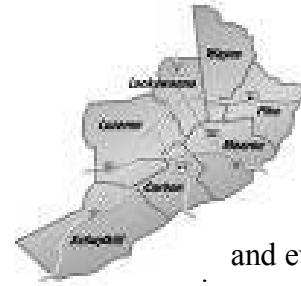
## Is the water safe to drink?

The water we deliver to our customers must meet very stringent standards according to the Safe Drinking Water Act established by the US Environmental Protection Agency. The water we provide is constantly tested to ensure that it is safe, and meets all water quality standards.



## Who tests drinking water?

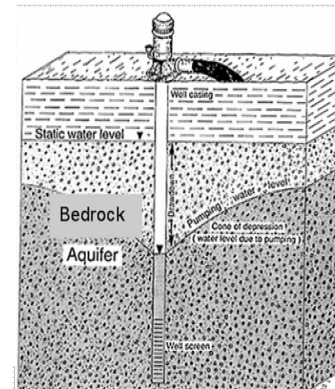
It is the water suppliers' responsibility to ensure the required testing is performed according to the Safe Drinking Water Act. Testing of public drinking water in Pennsylvania must be performed by a PADEP certified laboratory. Hundreds of tests are performed each year for a vast number of contaminants. There are currently no regulations governing the regular testing of private wells.



## How does the Water Get Into The Aquifers?

All the water in our aquifers comes from precipitation - rain, melted snow, and even melted ice from the glaciers. When it rains, or when snow melts, it slowly works its way through the soil beneath us and into the aquifers where it collects. The soil helps filter and purify the water as it works its way to our aquifers.

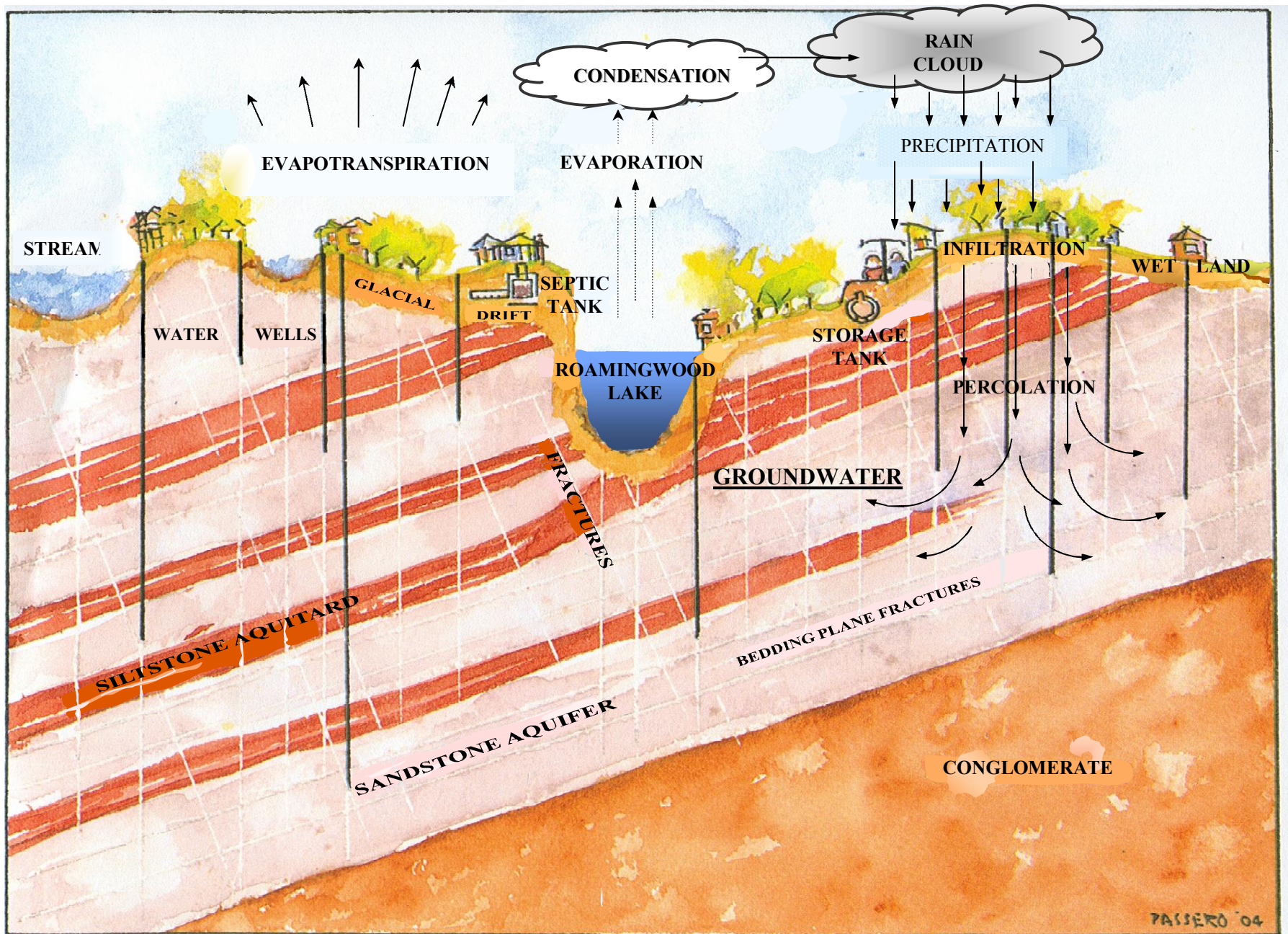
## How do we get the water from the aquifers?



There are approximately 34,000 public and private wells drilled in Wayne and Pike counties, ranging in depth from 50 to hundreds of feet deep. Electrically driven pumps draw water from the aquifers as needed. The water is then delivered to a home plumbing system, or large pipes called water mains for transport to a community.

## Do we have enough water in the aquifers, or will we run out someday?

Scientists believe there are between **65 and 120 trillion gallons** of water stored in the underground aquifers. Billions of gallons are pumped out and used each year, all of which is replaced annually by rain and snow absorbed into the aquifers. Annual precipitation in Wayne County alone is in excess of **500 million** gallons, much of which runs off into streams, creeks, ponds and lakes.



NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA WATER CYCLE AND GROUND CROSS SECTION