

“THE PUDDLE”

THE NORTH KINGSTOWN DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY NEWSLETTER

September 2023

No Filters, No Treatment: The Reality of Rain in North Kingstown



If you've ever dodged the rain, falling in sheets from the roof above you, only to have to wade through a giant puddle as you get to your car, then you've encountered stormwater. Most of us probably have noticed stormwater flowing down the street during rainstorms. But have you ever given thought to where that water winds up or what is actually in the water? The reality might surprise you.

In North Kingstown most stormwater heads either directly to the Narragansett Bay, or it gets there through storm drains emptying into the Hunt or Annaquatucket Rivers. While many people assume that storm drains lead to some type of treatment facility, that is almost never the case, and it definitely doesn't happen in North Kingstown. Whatever enters local storm drains eventually enters the Narragansett Bay.

The first obvious question is, “Why is that a problem?”. The problem is that stormwater is polluted water. When rain hits the pavement, it picks up and mixes with what's there. That includes everything from bacteria in dog waste that someone didn't scoop to oil leaking from a car. It includes the fertilizer that your neighbor spilled on the sidewalk and the soap that he used to wash his car in the driveway. It also includes the countless cigarette butts in the streets and sand from wintertime snow removal.

There are many sources of contamination for stormwater, leading to various consequences for local waters. Most notably, highly polluted stormwater runoff can contribute to closures of swimming beaches and shellfishing grounds and can contaminate drinking water sources.

The second, perhaps more important question is, “What can we do about it?”. Polluted stormwater is the result of local land-use policies and our everyday personal actions. We might feel that there's not much we can do about the former, but there's certainly a lot we can do about our daily practices. And it doesn't require big changes.

The rule of thumb that can make a huge difference with respect to stormwater is to keep as much water as possible off paved surfaces and to keep the water that does run off, as clean as possible. For example, if you own a home, divert your rain gutters onto the lawn instead of the driveway or sidewalk. If you spill fertilizers, pesticides, or grass clippings on the pavement, sweep them back onto the lawn. If you walk your dog along the street, pick up the waste.

And never, ever put anything down a storm drain or in the path of a storm drain. Because now you know, stormwater isn't just the inconvenient puddle that always manages to be right in front of your car door. It's a major source of water pollution, and it's headed directly to our Narragansett Bay.

For tips to help safeguard our waters, visit: <http://www.ristormwatersolutions.org>

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Home Health and Safety Alert

Many homeowners in North Kingstown have added various filtration systems to their home water supply lines. The same goes for many private well owners who also have these systems. Unfortunately, these filters, if not maintained and changed at proper intervals can become health hazards. This happens all in the home by either harboring dangerous bacterial colonies or once they are filled, they spew out concentrated streams of the very constituents they are supposed to remove. The bottom line here is – **when in doubt swap them out!!!** Change those filters at a timeframe no longer than manufacturers or installers have suggested and when you replace the filters, mark your calendar appropriately to be certain that you change them again at the same time every year.

Don't Forget "Call before you dig!"

The North Kingstown Water Department is not a Dig Safe member
Call us at your leisure before you dig - not in a panic afterwards!

So if you intend on doing or having any excavation work done on your property, please call the North Kingstown Water Department at 268-1521. We will go out and mark water mains and curb stops before you or your contractor proceed. There is no charge for this important service and it will save you the costs associated with an unnecessary emergency repair.

A finished basement is a wonderful addition to any home.

However, we **DO** need ready access to your water meter. The Town's Utilities Ordinance requires this. So, if you are thinking about remodeling, plan ahead and leave plenty of access to meter and shutoffs. Keep in mind that the valve at the water meter is the homeowner's quickest means of turning off water in an emergency. If you have already made changes that affect water meter access, please fix to avoid problems down the road.

Tampering with a Fire Hydrant is a Crime



Fire hydrants are an important component of the water distribution system and, of course, serve primarily to provide fire protection. The use of fire hydrants is limited to Water Department personnel and to members of the Fire Department. The use of hydrants for any other purpose is prohibited without the written consent of the Director of Water Supply. Please report illegal use of hydrants by calling 268-1521.

Water Dept Project Update

The Water Dept is excited to be involved in a collaborative venture with the Planning Dept and the USGS as we install a brand-new tidal gage in Wickford Harbor to track sea level rise over the long term. This project will include educational signage and an interactive webpage that can be utilized by residents, educators, and researchers to not only “see” water level changes in real time, but to interpret what has occurred in the past and interpolate what might occur in the future. Rising sea level will affect underground water dept infrastructure, homeowner septic systems and any private wells near the shoreline. Stay tuned for more details on this important subject.