

# Dennis Water District

Board of Water Commissioners

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Paul F. Prue, *Chairman*  
Peter L. McDowell, *Vice Chair*  
Alan Tuttle

## Main-Line News

[www.denniswater.org](http://www.denniswater.org)

Appointed by Water Commissioners

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David Larkowski, *Superintendent*  
Sheryl A. McMahon, *Clerk & Treasurer*  
James Ritchie, *Asst. Superintendent*

Volume 28, No. 1

February 2021

## How Rainfall and Groundwater Impact the District

This past year saw a record demand for water by District customers. The Water Commissioners and District personnel are proud that it was able to meet this demand. The year began with the water table at a very high above-normal status as evidenced by the USGS monitoring point in Brewster. This was due to two consecutive years' of 19" and 11" of rainfall above the yearly average. This past year, the rainfall was normal over the course of late winter and spring until the summer arrived with warm weather and a serious lack of precipitation for most of the summer. However, the rainfall returned to normal in the fall until the end of the year.

Although the rainfall for the entire year was below average by about 11", the rain that did indeed fall was at the right time. What is meant by at the "right" time? Precipitation in the form of rain or snow is most effective in recharging the aquifer in late fall through late winter. During the summer months, rainfall either evaporates or is taken up by vegetation. As it turned out, having a warm and dry summer, with a water table that was substantially above normal at the start, was not as impactful as one might think.

Throughout the summer, the State issued a number of announcements about drought conditions. These drought conditions were most concerning for crops not receiving enough rainfall and surface water supplies that provide drinking water to many cities and towns across the state. Cape Cod is fortunate that the vast majority of its water comes from the aquifer. The District has been diligent in developing its pumping capacity by adding enough wells to meet demand. This allows the District to rotate pumping so as not to overtax any one source. Management continuously monitors conditions closely and recommends action as it becomes warranted. The Capes' aquifer remained above normal throughout 2020 and warranted no action by the District.

This is not to say that high demand is not a concern or that the District can pump as much water as it likes whenever it likes. Massachusetts public water suppliers operate under a Water Withdrawal Permit issued by the Department of Environmental Protection. The District's current permitted limit is 1.189 billion gallons. For 2020, the District pumped a record 1.24 billion gallons.

Early indications for 2021 are that the demands of the summer season will begin with a water table at or near normal. That means there will not be a large surplus to

## KEEPING SAFE DURING COVID

The District office is open under the following precautions and restrictions. Please do not enter the office just to drop off a payment or make a simple inquiry.

We are here to help our customers in every way we can so we absolutely encourage phone calls, emails and faxes. If you have concerns about your water bill or water service, please adhere to the following protocols until further notice.

- Masks are Mandatory. They must cover your mouth and nose at all times when in the District office.
- Only one customer is allowed in the office at a time. This applies even if you are from the same household.
- Cash payments are accepted but no change will be provided. The entire payment will be credited.
- We do not stamp bills or statements as "Paid". Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

**CALL: 508-398-3351**

**EMAIL: [customerservice@denniswater.org](mailto:customerservice@denniswater.org)**

**FAX: 508-398-6799**

**Thank You For Your Cooperation!**

*Look for our new Drop Box outside the main office at 80 Old Bass River Road. Please feel free to drop off your payments, applications for service, or other documents in our new secure drop box.*



### "Rainfall and Groundwater" Continued...

help carry us over if it turns out to be another warm and very dry summer. As was stated previously, the current conditions are monitored regularly. We asked that you please remember that, if the District needs to implement restrictive measures, such as odd-even outdoor watering days, it should be taken seriously and every effort should be made to comply. Declaring that watering restrictions need to be in place is not something the Water Commissioners take lightly and it is hoped that such a request, whether it was for voluntary or mandatory watering restrictions, would be taken equally serious by the residents, visitors and businesses of Dennis. *Thank you.*

## ***MY WATER BILL HAS NEVER BEEN THIS HIGH!!!***

For most customers the February Water Bill represents your water usage from July through December of the previous year. When the temperature here on Cape Cod is barely breaking 32 degrees, it is tough to remember what a hot and dry summer it was. Many owners ran their lawn sprinklers earlier and later in the season than usual.

This was also a year in which many owners welcomed friends and relatives into their homes as a refuge from the pandemic. Also, parents and students, from kindergarten all the way through college, were learning and working remotely from home for most of the day. This meant more cooking, cleaning and restroom breaks were done at home which naturally means more usage. *Reminder: Water rates also increased effective 1/1/2020*

## **DISTRICT NITRATE RESULTS**

Please visit the Home page of the District's website to read the Water Commissioners' report entitled "*District Nitrate Reports as It Relates to Wastewater.*"

Nitrate testing first began in 1993 and annual results have consistently been well below the maximum contaminant level of 10 parts per million. A table with the most recent 10 years of sampling data can be found by following the links from the Home Page.

## **Lead & Copper Sampling**

The Environmental Protection Agency first implemented the Lead & Copper Rule in 1991. Minor revisions have been made over the years with more significant changes being put into effect following the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan. These modifications have had little effect on how Dennis operates its Lead & Copper treatment program. The District still tests on a three-year (3) schedule with 2020 being the most recent year completed. Many thanks to those customers who participated in the program last year by collecting the samples in their homes. The District can report that its pH treatment is effective as testing shows that the drinking water continues to be in compliance with Lead & Copper Regulations.

The groundwater in Dennis, and typical for Cape Cod, has a naturally low pH of about 5.5 which means the water is considered acidic. If left untreated, water with such a low pH can leach copper out of pipes and lead from old soldered joints. Before pH adjustment, many customers experienced blue-green staining in sinks and tubs and pin-hole leaks in their plumbing. In 1993, the District began treatment to raise the pH and prevent the leaching of lead and copper in homes. Routine sample monitoring assures that treatment is effective, complies with regulations, but more importantly that the water is safe for consumption.

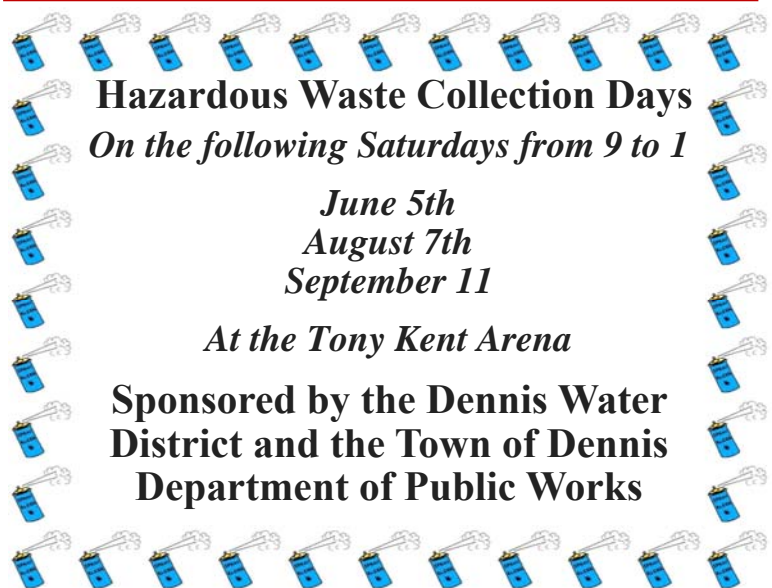
## **ANOTHER WARNING!!! Make Sure You Are On the Right Page**

We are still receiving calls from customers who end up paying through a third party that is not associated with the Dennis Water District. These sites use screen shots of our website that makes you think you are on the correct page for paying your bill. A website that appears as [www.doxo.com](http://www.doxo.com) is a legitimate on-line bill payer, but **BE WARNED!** This site, among others, usually charges significantly higher fees than the **25¢ charged by Unipay when using the "Pay Bill" button link from the District's official website.** Play it safe and visit us directly by typing in: [www.denniswater.org](http://www.denniswater.org).

## **PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES ALSO KNOWN AS PFAS**

PFAS are an emerging contaminant of concern. PFAS are a family of chemicals used since the 1950s in the manufacturing of stain-resistant and non-stick products. PFAS are widely used in consumer products as coatings, on food packaging, outdoor clothing, carpets, leather goods, plumbing products and more. PFAS in drinking water is an important issue nationwide and here in Massachusetts.

In October 2020, new regulations were issued establishing a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFAS found in drinking water. The MCL is now set at twenty (20) parts per trillion (ppt). This is for any combination of six targeted PFAS compounds in finished drinking water. Quarterly testing for the District will begin January 1, 2021. However, this past fall, the District took advantage of a free sampling program sponsored by DEP. The Water Commissioners and the Superintendent are pleased to report that this round of sampling results had no reportable detections at any of the nine entry points that were tested. Testing to establish a baseline will continue and results will be published accordingly.



**Hazardous Waste Collection Days**  
*On the following Saturdays from 9 to 1*

*June 5th  
August 7th  
September 11*

*At the Tony Kent Arena*

**Sponsored by the Dennis Water District and the Town of Dennis Department of Public Works**