

RANDOM COLLECTIONS

By Jonathon Barnes

There are many ways of collecting drinking water to distribute amongst your communities. Some communities are very limited in which way they may do so. For some it is ground water as wells. For others it is through springs with collector boxes or spring houses. For some it is a big reservoir open to the elements of nature itself. For others it is a lake or river. No matter which way you spin it, they all have influences that affect their treatment and quality. Identifying and treating these elements are pivotal to producing the best quality and cost-effective process for treatment. Let's identify some of these factors.

Wells, reservoirs, and rivers are affected through permeability and through contaminant input in the areas of the watershed for the collections. Quite often we overlook the top of the ground affecting our aquifers, especially after they have been put into use, assuming it will last our work lifetime. In a sense you can say vulnerability which is very true. Unlike most lakes, rivers and reservoirs due to dilution, some wells are vulnerable to private property. Some private property owners within areas of our aquifers have many contaminants on the ground that are then rained on and produce contaminants through the direct infiltration of the rainwater in the area up stream of the aquifers. This often goes under the radar as "can't see it from the road" or its not where the water line runs. However, I have witnessed areas that need to be addressed that have plenty of old vehicles sitting in a field upstream and near watersheds, yard garbage with plastics and metals and inorganics, along with any other materials that may degrade and become an influence on our wells, like 55-gallon oil drums in flood plains that have been there for years, but because of floods, end up downstream with no one to be responsible to clean, to a "dump site" near a creek or stream that has old refrigerators or freezers, to abandoned equipment, computers, televisions, furniture, microwaves, even dumping of many carcasses up stream can infiltrate and cause issues. Quite often these may go unnoticed because venturing outside our lines and following creek beds, is not exactly in our daily routines but, like flushing hydrants twice a year it is not a bad plan to take a tour of your creek beds that flow near, past, or to our wells, reservoirs, and riverbeds for collection.

We really should be addressing these with the homeowners as a surrounding contaminate problem. When flooding occurs in our creeks, and there was no lack of flooding this year, debris of all kinds ends up flowing downstream either near or around our aquifers, for rain to then drive the contaminants into the ground. There are many ways to handle this but identifying first is the key to removal or addressing these or any similar issues.

There are many causes for drinking water collections contamination throughout our great New York State, but what may be affecting your collections may just be a little farther

upstream or on that property that you may have to look at to ensure proper maintenance of the collection area. It is very easy to just assume that because it was approved it will always be fine. I would like to tell you, that is not always the case. Take a stroll throughout your area in a legal fashion and become a little less familiar with our assumptions and little more familiar with facts to ensure the water we all provide for our communities is also being maintained by our communities!



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