

Proposal for Town of Shelter Island
“KNOW YOUR WATER” Weekend

Residents who are better informed about the quality their well water will make better decisions about their own drinking water and will contribute to more informed discussions about water matters affecting all of Shelter Island. An integral part of that education is encouraging homeowners to have their well water tested for contaminants. We hope that increased testing will help us better understand the degree and variability of contaminants across the island. We also hope that increased education will create a greater awareness of behaviors that contribute to contamination.

Prior efforts to encourage testing of private wells have had limited uptake. To encourage more testing, we propose launching a KNOW YOUR WATER WEEKEND initiative to urge residents (1) to get their wells tested by a qualified laboratory and (2) to share the results with the Town via the existing portal on the WAC website.

This will be accomplished by:

1. Public outreach and media coverage prior to the scheduled event
2. During the event, volunteers will engage with the public and distribute water testing applications.

This effort will put boots on the ground across commercially trafficked areas for both verbal engagement and written handouts. The effort will be supported by significant marketing through printed and electronic signage, email communication and news coverage.

Suggested operational components:

Possible timing: A weekend in Mid-August.(Saturday & Sunday, 8:30am to 2pm).

Documentation and any handouts requirements:

1. One page summary of reasons for initiative - (careful to avoid alarmist tone)
2. Suffolk County well water testing application
3. Nitrogen testing strip and instructions?

Advertising requirements:

1. 20 printed posters with some posted in advance and some used day of.
2. Use of both electronic signage from Police Department
3. Announcements through Notify-Me.
4. Article in Reporter (not paid advertising)

Physical presence requirements:

Team members positioned with posters and handouts at following locations:

1. Post Offices (1 person at each)
2. Both Stars Locations (1 person at each)
3. IGA (2 people)
4. Marie Eiffel area (2 people)
5. Sylvester Manor?
6. Historical Society?
7. Ferries?
8. Dump?

Note: prior authorization would be obtained. Ideally we would find a sufficient number of volunteers to have 2 or 3 shifts. We would ask Town Board, CAC and we might pursue high school volunteers if possible with supervision.

Budget: \$2000?

Shelter Island Well Water Testing Weekend/Know Your Water Weekend/Community Awareness & Health Initiative

The quality and availability of drinking water on Shelter Island varies greatly from home to home. The Shelter Island Town recommends that all residents with private wells regularly have their water tested professionally.

The Water Advisory Committee focuses on the health of water island wide. In the center, the density of homes increases the risk of groundwater contamination. Tests over the past decade have revealed concerning levels of nitrates and other septic contaminants in some wells. Meanwhile, in low lying near-shore areas, there is risk of salt-water intrusion due to drought, sea level rise and excessive well usage, in addition to septic contaminants.

The Town's goal is to increase your awareness and sensitivity to the health of your drinking water. What we put on our land (fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides) and down our drains and toilets make their way to our aquifer and ultimately into our drinking water. Some of the contaminants already being found in our groundwater are Nitrates from human waste, PFAS, pesticides and pharmaceuticals.

Unfortunately, some products we use every day include "forever chemicals" such as PFAS compounds that do not break down organically. These carcinogens may show up in your water tests. If they do, you will want to check with a professional to make sure that you have the correct water filter to handle this contaminant.

Professional testing checks hundreds of compounds at your faucet and compares their level to current health standards. Testing from private contractors can be expensive, but Suffolk County currently offers professional water testing for \$100. We have attached an application form to this letter. It may take 2-3 months for Suffolk County water testers to visit your property. You will need to include your tax map number in addition to your address. You do not need the installation date or the depth of your well if you do not know it. More information on this process can be found at: <https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Health-Services/Environmental-Quality/Water-Resources/Private-Well-Water-Testing-Program>.

Lastly, we encourage you to share your test results with the Town:

<https://www.shelterislandtown.gov/310/Water-Test-Results-Submission>

This will help the Town achieve a better understanding of water quality across Shelter Island. Please feel free to reach out to the Water Advisory Committee to discuss any concerns or questions that you may have. KNOW YOUR WATER!

DRAFT Project Plan

Shelter Island Well Water Testing Weekend/Know Your Water Weekend Community Awareness & Health Initiative

- I. Develop messaging. **COMPLETED**
- II. Select projected timing – calendar date and number of hours and shifts
- III. Select Target Locations and determine target number of volunteers
- IV. Initial Volunteer outreach
- V. Initial outreach to location for permission
- VI. Develop and order signage/posters and easels
- VII. Reserve electric signs from Police/HWY Dept
- VIII. Volunteer tutorial/meeting
- IX. Reconfirm with locations for permission
- X. Volunteer sign up and commitments and team captains/obtain contact cell #s
- XI. Distribute and confirm volunteer schedule and instructions