

Little Compton Conservation Commission Study “Do We Have Enough Water in Little Compton?”

Background

Little Compton’s Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2018, highlights the importance of protecting our freshwater resources. Such protection is critical, given our town’s reliance on private wells and individual septic systems, and the prohibitive cost of installing public systems.

Further, surveys conducted among residents over the years have consistently ranked water protection and availability as the most important Town considerations, yet there has been no systematic effort to try to understand the quantity of freshwater available in our wells for domestic and agricultural needs.

2019 Conservation Commission Study

The Conservation Commission is launching a multi-year research project to better understand our freshwater resources. To best determine how to proceed, the Commission has been working closely with URI hydrogeologists, Dr. Anne Veeger and Dr. Thomas Boving. These professors have previously overseen similar efforts in Jamestown and Charlestown, so we are benefitting from their experiences in nearby coastal communities. And, like Jamestown, Little Compton sits almost entirely atop fractured bedrock, complicating efforts to predict the quantity of water available to Town residents.

What Will Be Done?

Given our fractured bedrock setting, we cannot directly measure the quantity of water available to our residents and farms. However, changes in water quality would serve as an indication of whether we have enough water for current use and future plans. Thus, the first chapter of the Conservation Commission’s study seeks to give us a Town-wide scan and baseline of overall water quality by sampling water from 150 wells throughout Town. We will measure those well water samples for their electrical conductance, a simple and inexpensive way to determine the amount of dissolved solids in the water. We will also measure pH to show acidity and alkalinity. This initial work is free to residents and will allow us to determine the additional research we may wish to conduct in ensuing years.

From June through August, 2019, a URI Coastal and Environmental Fellow working under the direction of Conservation Commission members and URI hydrogeology professors, will be visiting homes to collect and measure a water sample and conduct a short homeowner survey. Since we would like to sample water in its naturally-occurring form, we will collect it from a location at your home before it passes through a softening system. **Individual well data will not be disclosed or shared.** Instead, all well data will be aggregated and shown in summary form. **There is no charge for participating.**

How Can You Participate?

If you are willing to help us with this important study, please go to the following website: <https://littlecomptonwaterstudy.com/> and leave your name and contact information, or call one of the following Conservation Commission members: Carol Trocki (401-952-2937), Rich Castenson (401-635-8586), or Don McNaughton (401-230-7221).