

# TOWN OF SHARON

# WATER QUALITY REPORT

## FOR 2014

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

#### To Our Customers

I am pleased to present you with this year's Annual Water Quality Report, providing you with information on where your water comes from, what we are doing to modernize our system, what is found in the water, what we do to ensure high-quality water for now and in the future, and tips on efficient use of water. In recognition of what we do, EPA gave national recognition to the Sharon Water Department for the Department's efforts to educate and inform citizens about practical ways to conserve water and thus save money.

Providing high-quality drinking water for public health is the single most important aspect of our work. The Sharon Water Department (Public Water Supply No. 4266000) recognizes that our operations are integrally connected to broader water resource management interests. As a result, a significant component of this effort is protection of the natural resources that contribute to your water supply. Most Town residents remain unaware that the Water Department remains the sixth largest individual landowner in the Town behind only, in order of total land ownership, the Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Town of Sharon (which includes School Department property), and Trustees of Reservations. The Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, combined, own about a quarter of the land in Sharon. With assistance and input from the Neponset River Watershed Association, the Town continued its program to educate local citizens on the benefits of water efficiency. The program has shown results: using concentrated education and outreach tactics, water efficiency is fully rooted in the Town.

Sharon's water system was originally established in the 1890s. The system includes six production wells capable of providing a peak of 3.12 million gallons per day and approximately 120 miles of water main. The system currently serves 17,500 customers or approximately 98% of the Town.

As many of you know, the Water Department has continued our aggressive program of replacing century old cast iron and break-prone asbestos-cement water mains. We understand the frustration resulting from traffic delays and rough pavement that many have experienced, and thank you for your continued patience. Last summer, the Water Department replaced water mains under Billings Street. New pavement and sidewalks will complete this project, this coming summer.

The present mandatory summertime outdoor water use restrictions in place to comply with State residential water use restrictions, aggressive leak detection and repair, and the appliance rebate program have together reduced yearly consumption over 20% from a peak of 617 million gallons to 467 million gallons last year. For those of you making wise water choices a priority, we thank you for your efforts, and for those of you not yet practicing water conservation, now is a great time to start.

The Town of Sharon Water Department has long been an advocate of wise water use and continues to provide outreach and incentives through coordination with the Neponset River Watershed Association in order to further our education outreach with Sharon schools and other public groups. Our leadership has long been recognized by State regulatory agencies. I hope you take the opportunity to read through the information on the following pages. As always, we appreciate your feedback and input, so please contact us if you have any questions or comments regarding this Report of our water system.

Respectfully,

Eric R. Hooper, P.E.  
Superintendent of Public Works  
Town of Sharon

## 2014 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Replacement of the asbestos-cement water main under Billings Street continued with the section between the parking area at Mann's Pond Dam and the intersection with East Street. This continued our efforts to improve the distribution links between Well #4, our main production well near the railroad station and the eastern portion of Town. Several significant leaks were repaired during the course of 2014, including house service leaks measured to be on the order of 50 gallons per minute, and also broken water main leaks.

## PROPOSED 2015 PROJECTS

The Water Department is currently proposing to replace a section of 100+ year-old cast iron water main under Brook Road from North Main Street to about midway down Brook Road to connect with newer pipe, and a section of asbestos-cement water main under East Foxboro Street from South Main Street to Beach Street.

We understand the frustration resulting from traffic delays and rough pavement that many have experienced, and thank you for your continued patience.

**SHARON'S WATER SYSTEM** Our water system includes six groundwater supply wells and pumping stations, four water storage tanks, and approximately 120 miles of water main. Our groundwater sources are of good quality and require minimal treatment. Our water is disinfected and treated for corrosion control to reduce the amounts of lead and copper in our water. Fluoride is added to our water to promote strong teeth and prevent tooth decay/cavities.

**POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION** Sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

**Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

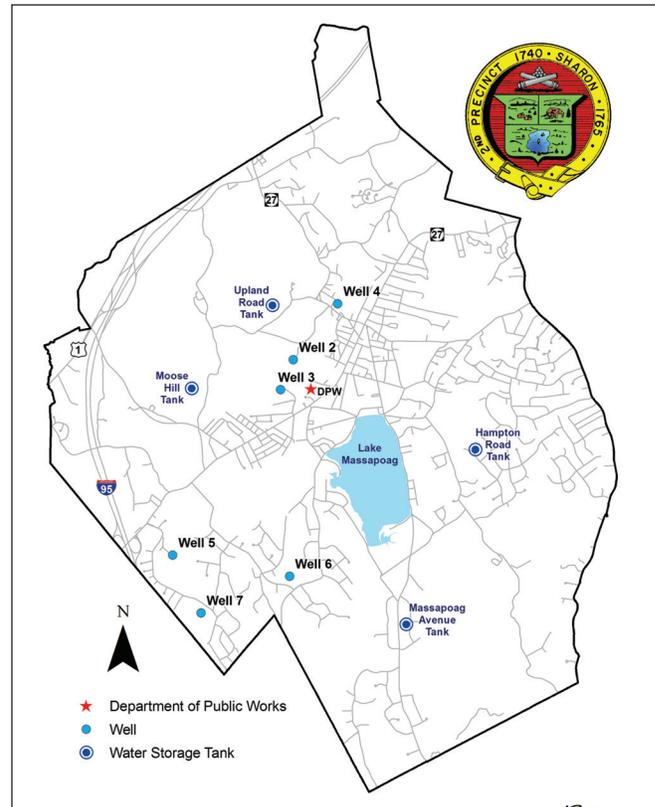
**Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and farming.

**Pesticides and herbicides** may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm water runoff, and residential uses.

**Organic chemical contaminants** include synthetic and volatile organic chemicals that are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban storm water runoff, and septic systems.

**Radioactive contaminants** can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production, and mining activities.

**QUALITY CONTROL** To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Department and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contamination. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791.)



## HELP TO PROTECT OUR WATER SUPPLY!



The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for our water supply sources. The SWAP report assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies. A copy of the SWAP report is available at the Department of Public Works office. Our SWAP report has indicated that our groundwater is highly susceptible to contamination from residential activities adjacent to the wells; residential land uses; accidental spills from local roadways, Route 95 and the railroad; hazardous materials storage; existing contamination sites; and agricultural activities.

As a consumer, you have an impact on the quality of our water supply sources, and therefore, the quality of the water you drink. The land around our groundwater wells is mainly forested and residential with lesser amounts zoned as commercial. When rain falls or snow melts, the seemingly small amounts of chemicals and other pollutants around your property may be transferred by groundwater or overland flows to the wells.

## DRINKING WATER AND PEOPLE WITH WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly people, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

## CROSS CONNECTIONS

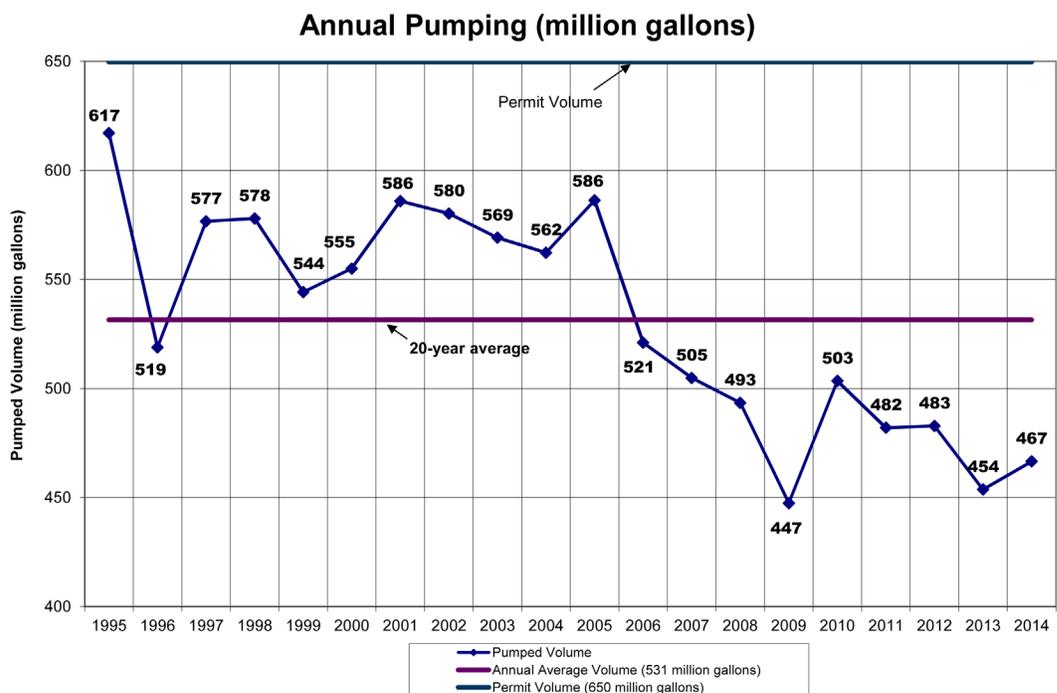
A cross connection is a connection between a drinking water pipe and a polluted source. The pollution can come from your own home. For instance, you're going to spray fertilizer on your lawn. You hook up your hose to the sprayer that contains the fertilizer. If the water pressure drops (say because of fire hydrant use in the town) when the hose is connected to the fertilizer, the fertilizer may be sucked back into the drinking water pipes through the hose. Using an attachment on your hose called a backflow prevention device can prevent this problem. The Sharon Water Department

recommends the installation of backflow prevention devices, such as a low-cost hose-bib vacuum breaker, for all inside and outside hose connections. You can purchase this at a hardware store or plumbing supply store. This is a great way for you to help protect the water in your home as well as the drinking water system in your town. For additional information on cross connections and on the status of your water system's cross connection program, please contact Eric Hooper at the Sharon Department of Public Works at 781-784-1525.

## WATER USAGE

The annual pumping graph shows the total volume of water pumped from the Town's six groundwater supply wells for each year from 1995 through 2014. The six wells are used to supply drinking water to meet the demands of the Town's water customers. The Town is permitted by the State to pump no more than 650 million gallons of water each year. During the 20-year period, the annual average volume of water pumped was 531 million gallons, approximately 120 million gallons below the permitted volume. From 1995 through 2005, the pumped volume was mostly above the 20-year average. However, since 2006, due in part to incrementally more restrictive outdoor water use regulations and diligent efforts by the Water Department to prevent or locate and repair leaks, the pumped volume has been below the 20-year average.

Efficient water use helps to conserve our water supplies. Find out about your own water usage. Divide the number of gallons you consumed on your water bill by the number of days since your prior bill. Then divide by the number of people living in your home. Your gallons per capita daily (gpcd) water use should not exceed 65 gpcd. Lower use means lower water bills.



**WATER QUALITY SUMMARY** Listed below are 15 contaminants detected in Sharon's drinking water in 2014. Not listed are over 100 other contaminants for which we tested but did not detect. The complete list of contaminants that we test for is available at the Department of Public Works office and at the Sharon Public Library.

**SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM OUR WATER SUPPLY**

Substance (Contaminant)	Units	Highest Level Detected	Range of Detection	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA's MCLGs)	Sources of Contaminant
<b>PRIMARY CHEMICALS</b>						
Alpha Emitters <sup>1</sup>	pCi/L	1.0	ND - 1	15	0	Erosion of natural deposits
Combined Radium <sup>1</sup>	pCi/L	1.86	0.13 - 1.86	5	0	Erosion of natural deposits
Bromodichloromethane	ppb	0.6	ND - 0.6	NR	NR	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Chloroform	ppb	1.3	ND - 1.3	NR	NR	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Fluoride <sup>2</sup>	ppm	1.10	0.85 - 1.10	4	4	Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrate	ppm	0.98	0.98 - 4.29	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks
Perchlorate <sup>3</sup>	ppb	0.31	0.06 - 0.31	2.0	N/A	Oxygen additive in solid fuel propellant for rockets, missiles, and fireworks
<b>SECONDARY CHEMICALS</b>						
Manganese <sup>4</sup>	ppb	79(Avg)	9 - 233	NR	NR	Erosion of natural deposits
Sulfate <sup>1,5</sup>	ppm	15.4	8.12 - 15.4	NR	NR	Naturally present in the environment
<b>UNREGULATED CHEMICALS</b>						
Sodium <sup>6,7</sup>	ppm	85.1	20.9 - 85.1	NR	NR	Naturally present in the environment
Turbidity <sup>1,6,8</sup>	NTU	5.7	ND - 5.7	NR	NR	Soil runoff; suspended material in water

**SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM YOUR FAUCETS**

Substance (Contaminant)	Units	Highest Running Annual Average	Range of Detection	Highest Level Allowed (EPA's MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA's MCLGs)	Sources of Contaminant
<b>PRIMARY CHEMICALS</b>						
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	10.9 (SITE 4)	3.5 - 21	80	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Haloacetic Acids	ppb	2.7 (SITE 4)	0 - 2.4	60	N/A	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Chlorine	ppm	0.63	0.02 - 1.38	4 (MRDL)	4 (MRDLG)	Water additive used to control microbes
<b>UNREGULATED CHEMICALS</b>						
	Units	90th Percentile	Range of Detection	Action Level (EPA's MCLs)	Ideal Goals (EPA's MCLGs)	
Copper <sup>1,9</sup> (0 samples exceeded the action level)	ppm	0.28	0 - 0.36	1.3	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Lead <sup>1,9</sup> (1 sample exceeded the action level)	ppb	4.0	0 - 20	15	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems

## DEFINITIONS

**Maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG)** – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Maximum contaminant level (MCL)** – The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Residual Disinfection Level (MRDL)** – The highest level of disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of disinfectants is necessary for control of microbial contaminants (ex. chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide).

**Maximum Residual Disinfection Level Goal (MRDLG)** – The level of drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**Action Level** – The concentration of a contaminant, which, if exceeded, triggers a treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow. The action level for lead and copper is the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of all samples taken at one time.

**ND** – Substance not detected in the sample.

**NR** – Not regulated.

**NTU** – Nephelometric turbidity units.

**pCi/L** – Picocuries per liter; unit is a measure of the radioactivity in water.

**ppm** – One part per million; one part per million is equivalent to \$1 in \$1,000,000.

**ppb** – One part per billion; one part per billion is equivalent to \$1 in \$1,000,000,000.

**ppt** – One part per trillion; one part per trillion is equivalent to \$1 in \$1,000,000,000.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The state allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Some of our data, though representative, are more than one year old. Samples taken for alpha emitters, combined radium, copper and lead were taken in 2012. Samples taken for sulfate and turbidity were taken in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Fluoride occurs naturally in all water supplies in trace amounts. Fluoride is added to the Sharon water supply to adjust the fluoride level to about one ppm so that it is optimal for better oral health. At this level, it is safe, odorless, colorless, and tasteless.

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts has set a maximum contaminant level of 2.0 ppb for perchlorate.

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts has set a secondary maximum contaminant level of 50 ppb for manganese, and a health advisory level of 300 ppb for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effects.

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts has set a secondary maximum contaminant level of 250 ppm for sulfate. This level was established to protect the aesthetic quality of drinking water and is not health based.

<sup>6</sup> Unregulated contaminants are those for which the EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminant monitoring is to assist EPA in determining their occurrence in drinking water and whether future regulations are warranted.

<sup>7</sup> The Massachusetts Office of Research and Standards has set a guideline concentration of 20 ppm for sodium.

<sup>8</sup> Turbidity is a measure of cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of water quality.

<sup>9</sup> Lead and copper compliance is based on the 90th percentile value, which is the highest level found in 9 out of every 10 homes sampled. This number is compared to the action level for each contaminant. The 90th percentile for lead and copper did not exceed the action level.

**LEAD** If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The Sharon Department of Public Works is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

## SHARON WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

**T**he Sharon Water Conservation Program is a collaboration between the Sharon Water Department and the Neponset River Watershed Association.

Rebates and community outreach continues to inspire residential water efficiency, which saves money and energy, helps to improve our ecosystem, and maintains our water independence.

### REBATE PROGRAMS

#### Toilets

Residents are eligible for a rebate for half the cost of a toilet, **up to \$200**. The toilet being installed must be a **WaterSense labeled model of 1.28 gpf or less**. *Toilets must be installed by a licensed plumber and inspected by the Sharon plumbing inspector. Rebates for existing homes only, not new construction.*



#### Clothes Washers

Get **\$200** for installation of a clothes washer with an Energy Star water factor of **4.0 or less**. Look for efficient clothes washers at: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

**Rebate terms & conditions apply.** Please call the Water Dept. at **781-784-1525 x2315**, prior to purchase, to confirm eligibility. More information can be found at: [www.sharonwater.com](http://www.sharonwater.com)

### FREE WATER EFFICIENT SHOWERHEADS & FAUCET AERATORS

Visit the Water Department during regular business hours to pick up WaterSense labeled Earth Massage **1.5gpm (gallon per minute) showerheads**, and **1.0gpm or 1.5gpm faucet aerators**.  
(Hours: M-W 8am-5pm, Th. 8am-8pm, Fri. 8am-12:30pm)



### GRASS SEED PROGRAM

The Water Department offers **drought tolerant fescue grass seed** to Sharon residents at \$25 per 20lb bag. Two bag limit per household.

Fescue grasses are insect resistant and will survive in sunny or shady areas. They **require less water and fertilizer** than other grass types, and are slow growing, which means less mowing.



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

#### School Programs

Third graders at Cottage, East, and Heights Elementary Schools were visited by Water Conservation Coordinator, Nancy Fyler, and were taught about the town's water resources, infrastructure, conservation, and stormwater pollution.

At Sharon High School, students in Ms. Gardner's Graphic Design Class produced posters promoting **outdoor water conservation**. Students were presented with information about outdoor water use and polluted stormwater runoff. They then researched water conservation issues, developed headlines, and designed posters and original artwork in the Art Nouveau style, using Adobe Illustrator.

#### Events

In May, High Street was shut down for a town wide Green Day festival, featuring a variety of environmental exhibitors, including the Sharon Water Conservation Program, which presented information about **drought tolerant lawns and rain gardens**.

#### Publications

A water conservation newsletter is produced quarterly for residential water bills, and a town specific water conservation website, [www.sharonwater.com](http://www.sharonwater.com), is updated as needed.



### WATER RESTRICTIONS: May 1—Oct. 1

Water use, much like electricity, has peak hours that stress the system. Sharon's water use restrictions allow our water tanks to refill after peak demand, **ensuring fire fighting capability, and lessening the environmental impact of well-pumping.**



Lawn sprinklers, either underground or hose fed, must adhere to the following odd/even schedule:

- Odd Numbered Homes—Mon. & Thurs.—**6pm to 8pm only**
- Even Numbered Homes—Tues. & Fri.—**6pm to 8pm only**
- Residents may use one hand held hose, **fitted with a spray nozzle**, without restriction.

*For the most efficient use of water, residents should avoid irrigating mid-day or when it's windy.*

## PREVENTING STORMWATER POLLUTION

### CONTAMINANTS IN STORMWATER RUNOFF ARE A MAJOR CAUSE OF WATER POLLUTION IN SHARON.

**Stormwater runoff** is generated when precipitation from rain and snowmelt flows over land or impervious surfaces (paved streets, parking lots, and rooftops), and does not percolate into the ground.

Runoff causes **bacteria, chemicals, metals, nutrients, pet waste, and other contaminants** to flow into a storm drain system, which then get discharged, **untreated**, into our local waterways.

Polluted runoff not only makes our streams and ponds unsightly, but creates an unhealthy situation for kids, pets, fishing, boating and wildlife—and *can impact our drinking water quality!*

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- **Never dump anything down the storm drain.** Avoid spilling chemicals or paint onto paved areas.
- Keep storm drains clear of **debris and yard waste.**
- Use **organic fertilizers and pesticides**, and never use more than what is recommended on the package. Sweep up any spills.
- **Redirect downspouts** away from pavement and onto grassy areas, where runoff from your roof can soak into the ground.
- Use **pervious materials** such as bricks, pavers and stones in landscape designs, which allows water to flow into the ground.
- Plant **rain gardens** to help filter and soak up water.
- Make sure that **sprinklers and irrigation heads** are watering lawns and gardens—not sidewalks, driveways, or the street.
- **Wash your car near the lawn.** Let soap run off into the grass, rather than down the street and into a storm drain.
- Store hazardous materials properly and dispose of through the local **Household Hazardous Waste Program.**

### PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG.

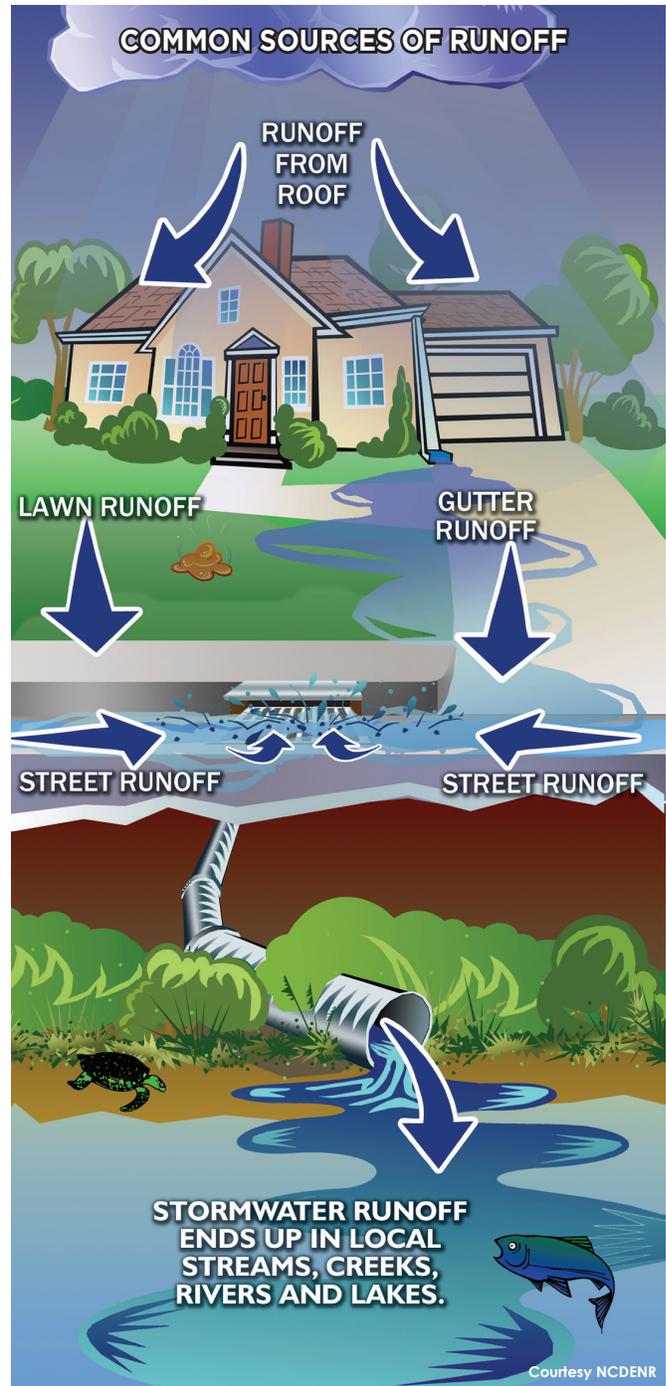
*It's not just gross looking, it really makes us sick!*

Unlike other water contaminants, such as fertilizer and motor oil, dog waste carries parasites and bacteria— **heartworm, hookworm, roundworm, tapeworm, parvovirus, giardia, salmonella, and E. coli**—which can be transmitted to humans and make them sick.

When dog waste decomposes, it releases nutrients which causes excessive growth of algae and weeds—and **is a major contributor to local water pollution.**



Your actions have an impact in our community. **Please be a responsible pet owner and neighbor.** *Always carry a plastic bag when you walk your dog and dispose of pet waste in a trash can.*



THE SHARON BOARD OF HEALTH PROHIBITS DOGS, HORSES AND OTHER PETS AT VETERAN'S MEMORIAL BEACH AND THE COMMUNITY CENTER BEACH FROM **APRIL 15 THROUGH OCTOBER 15.**



Town of Sharon  
Department of Public Works  
OFFICIAL NOTICE

PRESORTED STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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SHARON, MA  
PERMIT NO. 13

POSTAL PATRON  
SHARON, MA 02067

A photograph of a water fountain with water spraying upwards, set against a dark background. The fountain's metal rim is covered in water droplets.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER