

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Our provincial lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, wetlands, and coastal water have provided and continue to provide economic, recreational and environmental benefits to all Nova Scotians.

All Nova Scotians have a role to play in managing our water resources for future generations.

Watershed management looks at all stakeholders, including government, landowners, and water users that collectively manage water resources on a geographic basis. It recognises that water flowing downstream creates linkages between land based activities and water resource impacts.

## WHY DO WE NEED TO PROTECT OUR WATER SUPPLIES?

Protection of water resources is necessary to ensure current and future water uses are met. Access to clean drinking water is essential to good health. We need clean drinking water!



All Nova Scotians have a role to play in protecting our water resources. Simple actions like conserving water, using it wisely, participating on water stewardship boards, and properly disposing of household hazardous wastes help protect water supplies.

Most Nova Scotians not on municipal water supplies have their own private well. If you have your own well, follow these steps to look after it:

- Minimize the likelihood of contamination, by ensuring your well is properly located, constructed and maintained.
- Locate your well uphill from any potential source of pollution.
- For drilled wells, use an approved watertight, vermin-proof cap and check the cap regularly to ensure that it is securely in place and undamaged.
- For dug wells, ensure that all joints and connections in the well casing are not leaking and that vents are shielded and screened.
- Direct surface water away from the well so that it does not collect or pond near the well.
- If you find any defects, or notice any change in quality, have the problem investigated by a certified person.

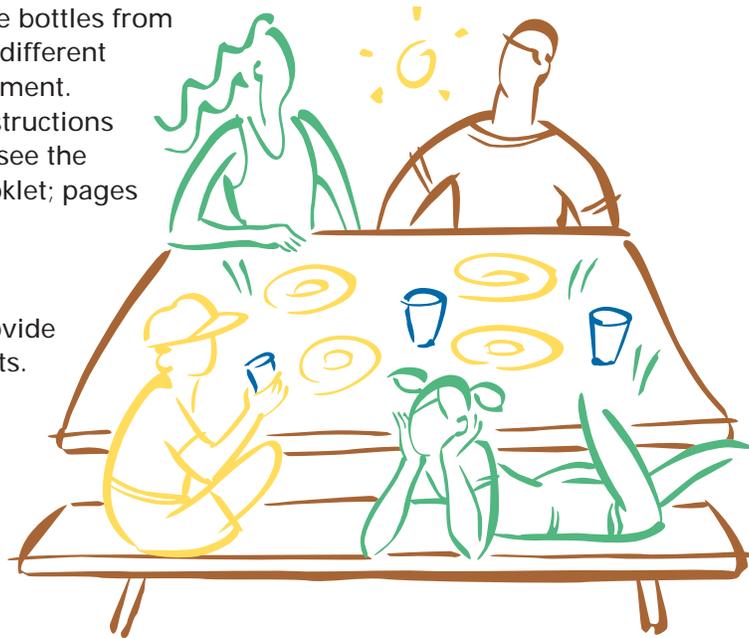
# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TESTING WATER SUPPLIES?

Public drinking water supply owners are required by law to regularly test the water they are supplying to their customers.

Private drinking water supplies do not have mandatory testing. Nova Scotia drinking water is safer today than ever, but the only way to know for sure is to have it tested regularly! Homeowners are responsible for protecting and testing their water supply.

To have your water tested:

- Determine what type of test you want done: a test for chemical quality, bacterial quality, or both?
- Choose a lab or contact your local Department of Environment and Labour for a list of certified water test labs.
- Ask the lab what they charge for the tests and what packages are available.
- Obtain appropriate water sample bottles from the laboratory (bottles differ for different tests); some labs require prepayment.
- Collect the water sample (for instructions on how to take a water sample, see the *Before You Construct a Well* booklet; pages 21-22).
- Keep the water sample cool and transport it to the lab as soon as possible. The laboratory will provide you with a copy of the test results.



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information or assistance, please visit your local Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour office or browse our website <[www.gov.ns.ca/enla/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/)>.



Additional information can be found at these websites:

- *Before You Construct a Water Well* <[www.gov.ns.ca/enla/rmep/h2o.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/rmep/h2o.htm)>
- *Before You Construct an On-site Sewage Disposal System* <[www.gov.ns.ca/enla/emc/qpersons](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/emc/qpersons)>
- *Regulations and Acts* <[www.gov/ns.ca/enla/pubs/legislat.htm](http://www.gov/ns.ca/enla/pubs/legislat.htm)>