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Subj: Sodium advisory

BoPW members,

At a DPW meeting in September 2010 when the Wellhead Protection Committee (WPC) presented a preliminary report on the presence of sodium in the drinking water at the Happy Hollow Wells, it was suggested that we obtain more information for the board. We have since reviewed the sample results reported to the MassDEP for Happy Hollow Wells #1 and #2 from February 1994 through August 2009 and compiled the results -attached. We also have included the recent composite sample taken of the same two wells, which Mike Hatch reported to us at our WPC meeting this week.

The MassDEP has established guidelines for sodium in drinking water - attached. The DPW Director reported at a recent meeting that sodium was almost non-detect at Happy Hollow and below the prescribed limit. Since the presence of sodium at Well #1 is almost triple the guideline level of 20 milligrams per liter (mg/l) and at least double at Well #2, we would like to clarify this information for the BoPW if the Director has not already done so.

The MassDEP also has established procedures when the detected concentrations are above the 20 mg/l guideline. Although 20 mg/l may seem like a small amount of sodium in the average American diet, in the interest of public health it is noted that physicians and sodium sensitive individuals should be made aware of the findings in order to prevent any adverse effects. We therefore requested that Mike Hatch convey the information to the Board of Health. We understand that the Department of Public Health also has been notified, as required.

As was pointed out at the September meeting and is further confirmed by the sample results, a pattern of increasing sodium exists in the drinking water at the Happy Hollow Wells. It is our understanding that reducing or eliminating sodium from water by means of treatment would be cost prohibitive.

The WPC has suggested to Mike Hatch that it should not be difficult to take samples at various depths at existing groundwater monitoring wells near the Happy Hollow Wells to try to determine if there is sodium buildup occurring in the aquifer (as opposed to surface sources). Since the Happy Hollow Wells are vital to the Wayland water supply, this issue may require further investigation.

Please contact us with any questions or if you would like to discuss this further.

Thank you.
Sherre Greenbaum, chairperson