

Well water testing available to West Amwell residents

West Amwell Township, NJ – What’s in your water? If your drinking water comes from a private well, you won’t know if it’s free from contaminants until it’s tested.

This spring, in an effort to protect community health, the West Amwell Environmental Commission will partner with nonprofit clean water advocate Raritan Headwaters to offer well water testing to citizens at below-market cost.

Residents can purchase water sample collection kits on **Saturday, May 20th from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm** at the **West Amwell Municipal Building**, 150 Rocktown-Lambertville Road. Water samples must be dropped off at the Municipal Building **on Monday, May 22nd from 8:00 am – 10:00 am**. Test results will be available about two weeks later.

“We’re pleased to partner with West Amwell, and we strongly encourage everyone with a private well to have their water tested,” said Cindy Ehrenclou, executive director of the Bedminster-based Raritan Headwaters. “It’s better to know what’s in your drinking water than not know. If a contaminant is detected, measures can be taken to remove it.”

Raritan Headwaters is the “watershed watchdog” for a 470-square-mile area in Hunterdon, Somerset and Morris counties, comprising the drainage area for the North and South Branches of the Raritan River. Eighty percent of the residents of this region – about 320,000 people - obtain their drinking water through wells.

Well water pollutants found in the region are coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, lead, iron, radon and volatile organic compounds. Sources of contamination include failing septic systems; chemicals like fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; and naturally-occurring contaminants.

Raritan Headwaters offers a “basic kit” for coliform bacteria and nitrate for \$60. Residents can also test for other potential contaminants at an additional cost. Staff members at RHA are available to advise citizens who are uncertain about which tests to order.

Raritan Headwaters recently completed a 30-year analysis of well water tests in the region, which showed an increase in arsenic levels in several towns. Concentrations of nitrate also increased, and the percentage of wells that failed for coliform bacteria showed a slight increase.

Residents who aren’t able to take advantage of West Amwell’s community well test program can contact Mara Tippet, Raritan Headwaters’ well test manager, anytime throughout the year to arrange to pick up a test kit in Bedminster or Flemington. She can be contacted at 908-234-1852, ext. 401 or welltesting@raritanheadwaters.org.

For more information about Raritan Headwaters and its programs and preserves, go to www.raritanheadwaters.org.