February 20, 2020

Dear Water Study Participant,

On behalf of the Little Compton Conservation Commission and the Town of Little Compton, I'd like to thank you for participating in the first year of the Conservation Commission's well water study. Last summer, you and 111 other homeowners in Little Compton allowed us to sample your water, providing us for the first time a snapshot of water quality across town. Because of your interest and commitment, we are now in position to repeat this sampling in future years to see if changes in results indicate any evidence of water quality degradation.

You may remember that we sampled your water last summer and measured for electrical conductivity. This simple and inexpensive test is far from comprehensive, but importantly yields us an estimate for Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in your well water. High levels of dissolved solids in drinking water could indicate the presence of salt water, septic system waste or run-off from fertilizers, all potentially harmful to well water quality.

If the amount of water we consume as a community remains sufficiently less than that which we naturally receive as rainfall, then the potential for issues from seawater, septic system discharge or run-off is greatly reduced. Thus, our well water sampling program uses a measure of water quality (TDS) to indicate whether our consumption of water outpaces the amount we receive through rainfall.

I am pleased to report that, overall, sampling results from 2019 offered a positive picture of well water quality in Little Compton. However, it is important to note that the spring and summer of 2019 were quite wet, which would tend to improve our results; further, our simple test for Total Dissolved Solids gives only limited feedback.

Still, we liked what we saw. First and foremost, there was little evidence of saltwater intrusion across town. This implies that the quantity of freshwater present in the summer of 2019 was enough to hold back seawater from infiltrating the cracks and fissures of the bedrock into which we have drilled our wells. Second, just 3.6% of the 168 well samples exceeded EPA's recommended standard for Total Dissolved Solids of 500 parts per million. These somewhat isolated high readings may or may not be indications of a problem, and we have recommended that these four homeowners consider further laboratory testing of their well water, if they have not already done so.

Finally, and perhaps most important, over 100 residents in Little Compton volunteered to participate in the first year of our study, demonstrating just how significant the topic of freshwater is to Town residents.

For your reference, I have attached a chart of the well sampling results, showing 168 TDS readings from 112 wells across town. (Some of the 112 wells were sampled twice.)

With our baseline results from 2019 in place, we will conduct our sampling program again in 2020 and hopefully beyond. With repeated sampling, we can gauge if changes in the results indicate any evidence of water quality degradation.

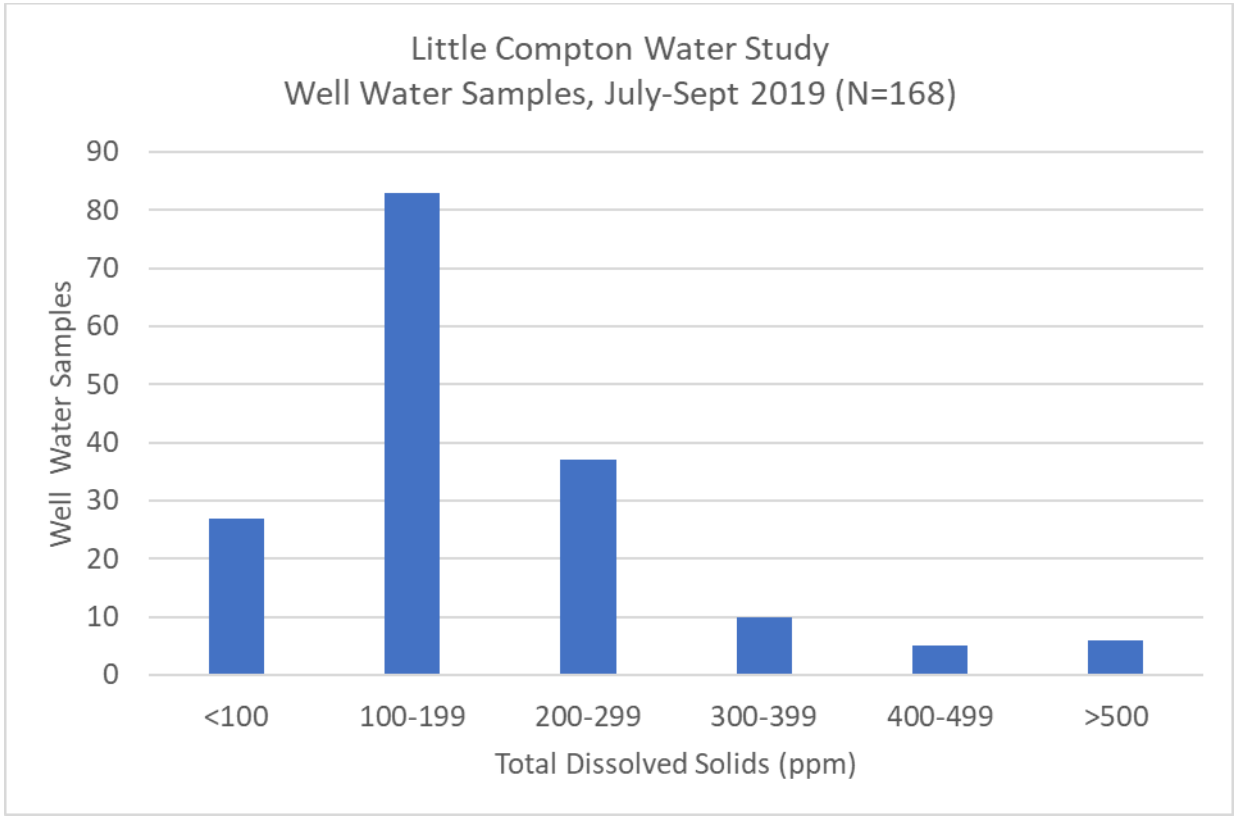
For our upcoming 2020 program, to be conducted over the summer, we welcome both new and repeat participants. Since you participated in 2019, we will contact you to ask your permission to again sample your well. In the meantime, if you have any questions, you may contact one of the following Conservation Commission members: Rich Castenson (401-635-8586), Carol Trocki (401-952-2937), or Don McNaughton (401-635-0209).

We sincerely thank all Little Compton residents that helped make the first year of our program a success, and we look forward to your continued interest in 2020.

Sincerely,

Don McNaughton

Chair, Little Compton Conservation Commission


Little Compton Water Study
Well Water Samples, July-Sept 2019 (N=168)
Well Water Samples
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
<100
100-199
200-299
300-399
400-499
>500
Total Dissolved Solids (ppm)