

**Drought** – Now here is a word we don't often hear in New England, but it is here and all of us need to consider it and how we can improve our situation during these dry times. The most vulnerable to the current drought are folks who live in the country, or do not have public water supplies to rely on. The reality is that even public water supplies are at risk as they are seeing dangerously low levels also. For residents of New Boston, there is no public water, we all have private wells. Most often wells are installed for each household, but shared wells can be found around too.

The two most common wells are dug or shallow wells, and artesian wells. Dug wells are not as common as artesian anymore, but you will often find these with older homes. These wells are typically 20 to 35 feet deep and because of the "shallowness" of the well, they are usually the first to be effected by droughts.

Artesian wells or deep wells can be as deep as it takes to find a good pocket of water. They range from 100 feet to hundreds of feet deep. These deep wells are more resistant to short term water shortages, but in the end, a long-term drought has the potential to effect any type of well. That is where we are now in parts of New Hampshire. Unlike municipal water supplies which usually have a large water reserves such as Lake Massabesic in Manchester, our residential wells have a limited water reserve. It is held in the shallow well as a pool of water or in an artesian well, in the casing (the pipe that goes down into the ground), and this again can be a small amount of water. As the water tables drop, so does the well's reserve. This means the use of water must be spread out over time. Try not to take a shower while running the washer or dishwasher and try spacing out showers rather than taking multiple showers back to back for those with larger households.

CHOICES to be MADE - So what can we do as residents? Impose our own water use restrictions. Home owners should consider the major impact to their daily lives when a well goes dry. That is certainly a good motivation for making the tough choices on what and how we should be using our wells for these days. Every time a person turns on the water they should consider is this worth running out of water? Watering the lawns, washing cars, running half loads of dishes or clothes can be examples of bad choices. Spread out the use of water over time, maybe run the dishwasher at night, or move some of the daily showers to every other day (Europeans don't understand why Americans shower every day!), or have some people take showers at night and some in the morning. Shut off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving.

Just be proactive; better to avoid finding out just how good your well is during a drought.

What are signs you may be headed for trouble, I am not claiming to be a water expert, but some typical telltale signs you may be low on water are:

1. Reduced water flow
2. Air bursts in the water stream
3. Discolored water
4. And of course no water.

When any of these conditions occur you should stop the use of water, and allow the well to replenish its reserve. If you actually run out of water you should shut off the well pump at the electrical breaker box to prevent damage to your water pump and again allow the reserve to replenish if it can. Call a plumber if in doubt.

A message from [the New Boston Emergency Management Office](#)