



ASK JEFF

Lake Ecology
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Water / A Precious Natural Resource

I'm sure we would all agree that water sustains life on this planet. All living things depend on it to live and grow. With that being said, we all expect when we turn on our faucets in our homes that clean, potable (drinkable) water will come out. We also expect that the municipality that supplies that water is doing everything in their power to make sure that the water is the cleanest and safest water we can consume.

And folks, after talking with John Perry, the director of Public Utilities for Jefferson Twp., our town does not let us down. So, I would like to educate you on where our water comes from, how much we use, and what steps are being taken to make sure that it is perfectly safe to drink. This is my focus on this edition of "ASK JEFF"

Our water source comes from 3 wells. One is located in Lake Shawnee, the other two on the other side of Route 15 in the Peaks section of town. Each one of those wells pumps out three and half million gallons of water per month. Also, each one of these wells can pump 350 gallons a minute to its' customers. Our own community of Lake Shawnee consumes 81,000 gallons a month. (That is based on an average of 540 homes). That's a lot of water!

The water source that fills those wells come from aquifers deep in the ground that are recharged by rainwater and snow melt. These aquifers are embedded in limestone and bedrock which allows for natural filtration to make it very clean. The only downside is that it can make our water a bit hard which may leave a slight residue on pots when boiling water during cooking. The water is pumped to tanks during the evening when consumption is at a minimum, then delivered to your home by the use of gravity to give it that great pressure we have here in Lake Shawnee. Water levels in the wells are constantly monitored, especially in July and August when there is a greater chance of a drought, so there is always an adequate level to fill the town's needs.

A small amount of chlorine is added to the water to kill any bacteria that may exist. The water is tested every day, sometimes twice to make sure no bacteria is present, and the chlorine levels are correct. Every two weeks our water goes through an extensive testing process to make sure there are no impurities that can be harmful to its residents. At times, they do add a sodium component to make sure a neutral PH level is maintained.

Mr. Perry did make one suggestion — When you turn on your faucet for a glass of water or to make coffee, let it run 5 or 6 seconds before filling the glass or pot. The pipes that feed water into your house from the street and in your house are iron or copper. The hard water can (over many years) break down those metals and a residue can sit in those pipes. Running your water for those few seconds will allow those pipes to flush and gives us a much cleaner glass of water. This is suggested in the morning since your water has been sitting in those pipes all night.

We are very lucky to live in a community where such efforts are made to provide us with a very clean source of potable water. I thank Mr. Perry for his time and knowledge in overseeing that our water is safe for all to drink. Hopefully, the next time you turn on that faucet to have a refreshing glass of water, you will have a greater appreciation of what is done to bring this precious liquid to your home.

In next month's article, we will focus on ways we can conserve this valuable natural resource that many, including me, take for granted. One area I will just touch on briefly and go into more detail next time is "when watering your lawn, do it early in the morning or in the evening after the sun goes down and only for an hour each time." During the day, you lose much of your water to evaporation. Thank you, more on this next time.

Remember we all have to do our part!