

# Groton Water Department

# Annual Water Quality Report

Annual Report - 2115000

APRIL 2024

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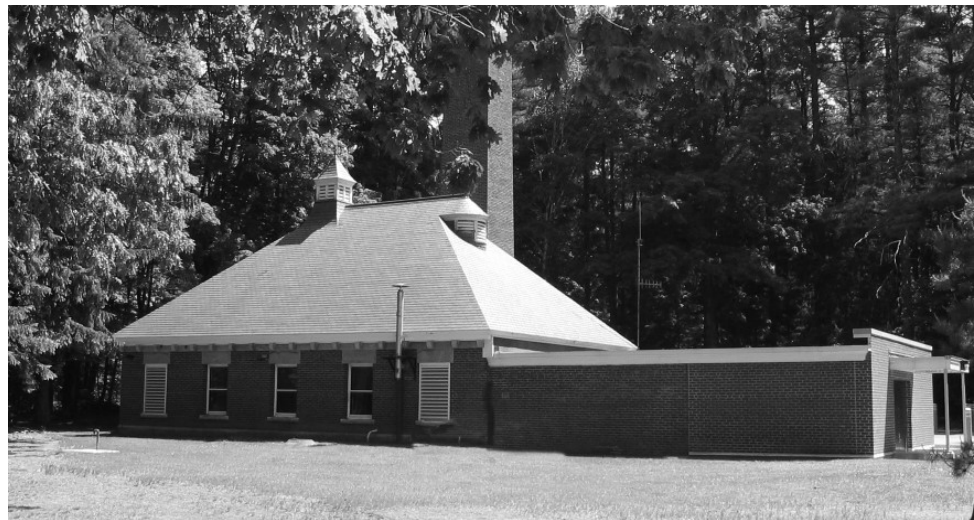
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## Superintendent's Message

*As your Superintendent of the Groton Water Department (GWD), I am very pleased to provide you, our valued customer, with the status of the quality of the drinking water delivered to your household in the calendar year 2023. Our very dedicated staff and elected officials continue to work tirelessly to provide you with the safest and most reliable source of potable drinking water possible. Your Annual Water Quality Report contains information on the sources of your drinking water and how it compares to state (MassDEP) and federal (USEPA) drinking water standards. The GWD continues to meet all of these regulatory requirements. I encourage you to take a few moments to read the report and become familiar with your drinking water quality. Additional information and data can be found on our web site at [www.grotonwater.org](http://www.grotonwater.org) or you may call our offices at 978-448-1122, Monday thru Friday or send us an email anytime and we will respond.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Thomas D. Orcutt*



**Baddacook Pond Treatment Facility**

**Water Quality** - The Groton Water Department, like all municipal drinking water suppliers in Massachusetts, go to great lengths to insure their customers drinking water is safe to consume. The GWD receives a detailed Water Quality Sampling Schedule from the Department of Environmental Protection every three years that requires us to adhere to a specific water testing schedule. In addition, the GWD staff monitors the water quality of the system on a daily basis to be sure we are in compliance. The Department of Environmental Protection reviews all of our test results to be sure we are within the drinking water parameters they have established. This Consumer Confidence Report identifies those test results that the DEP requires specifically and notes any deficiencies and or violations with regards to drinking water standards that they have established. In 2023, the Groton Water Department received **no** drinking water violations.

The Water Department, in October of 2019, received and Administrative Consent Order (ACO) From the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) (cont. on page 2)

## Manganese

for the requirement to treat/remove manganese from entering the drinking water supply system from the Whitney Pond Wells. The ACO has specific dates to complete this expensive treatment process. The construction of this facility was completed in January of 2024 and was approved by MassDEP to be placed into service. This facility treats and removes manganese from the water from all three wells at the Whitney Pond Well site. The Groton Water Department has completed the construction of the Whitney Pond Well #3 and is undergoing additional pump tests. This new source will bring much needed additional water capacity to the water system for the foreseeable future and enable the water department to keep pace with growth within the town and provide some much needed relief during severe periods of drought.

The Board has an “open” public discussion at the beginning of every Water Commissioner’s meeting for the public to ask questions and/or request updates on the process. The public is encouraged to participate.

The Odd/Even Summer Water Conservation Program runs from May 1st to October 1st. **Outside watering on all Mondays is strictly prohibited.**

## Where Does My Drinking Water Come From?

Source Name	Source Type	Location of Source
Baddacook Pond Well	Groundwater	On the south shore of Baddacook Pond
Whitney Pond Well #1 & #2	Groundwater	On the east shore of Whitney Pond
Whitney Pond Well #3	Groundwater	On the east shore of Whitney Pond

Presently, the water system has over 52.9 miles of water mains, 1,892 water accounts, 397 fire hydrants and four water supply wells: Baddacook Pond Well, Whitney Pond Well #1, Whitney Pond Well #2 and the new Whitney Pond Well #3 that should be on-line very soon. The system’s original well at Baddacook Pond (constructed in 1897), still remains in active service today. Water is pumped from our sources to the Chestnut Hill Water Storage tank. This 1.0 million gallon storage tank, constructed in 2005, is at an elevation of 516 feet above mean sea level and is the highest point in Groton.

## Protecting Our Water Resources

MassDEP has prepared a Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Report for the water supply sources serving this water system. The SWAP Report assesses the susceptibility of public water supplies to contamination due to land uses and activities in our well recharge areas.

### What Is My System's Ranking?

A susceptibility ranking of ***moderate*** was assigned to our water supply system using the information collected during the assessment by the MassDEP. In the report, MassDEP recommends:

*That we constantly monitor and remove all non water-system related activities immediately around our wells; that we maintain a 400-foot radial buffer area around the wells (Zone I) free from pesticide/herbicide use or storage, road salt, or fertilizers.*

*That we educate residents on ways they can help protect drinking water sources.*

*That we work with emergency response teams to ensure that they are aware of the storm water drainage in our well recharge area (Zone II) and that they cooperate when responding to spills or accidents.*

### Where Can I See The SWAP Report?

The complete SWAP Report is available at the Water Department Office and online at [www.grotonwater.org](http://www.grotonwater.org), under the “Helpful Contacts” section or @ <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/drinking/swap/cero/2115000.pdf>. For more information or assistance, please call us at 978-448-1122.

## Substances Found In Drinking Water

Sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals, and in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

**Microbial contaminants** - such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewerage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

**Inorganic contaminants** - such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.

**Pesticides and herbicides** - which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

**Organic chemical contaminants** - including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

**Radioactive contaminants** - which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the MassDEP and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health. All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

## Is My Water Treated?

Our water operators make every effort to provide you with safe and pure drinking water. To improve the quality of the water delivered to you, it is treated with a low dosage of sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) as a preventative disinfectant to guard against microbial contaminants that might enter the distribution system through breaks or leaks. We also treat the water with low levels of potassium hydroxide. Potassium hydroxide raises the pH of the water to a level that is not corrosive to copper pipes or lead solder joints in household plumbing, thus reducing lead and copper concentrations in your homes drinking water (see page 6 for copper and lead information).

The quality of water in our system is constantly monitored by the GWD staff and by MassDEP to determine the effectiveness of existing water treatment systems and to determine if any additional treatment is required. In 2024, over 1,000 water samples were collected and analyzed at various points in our water supply system and wells by our staff and by a Massachusetts Certified Laboratory.

Water pumped from the Baddacook Pond Well has naturally occurring minerals (iron and manganese) removed through a greensand filtration process. Water pumped from the Whitney Pond Wells #1, #2 and #3 is now filtered also using greensand filtration process.

**Fluoride is not added to your drinking water.**

**Groton's Water is considered "moderately hard" at 84 mg/l**

## Important Definitions

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)** - The highest level of a disinfectant (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)** - The level of a drinking water disinfectant (chlorine, chloramines, chlorine dioxide) below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**Action Level (AL)** - The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements that a water system must follow.

**90<sup>th</sup> Percentile** - Out of every 10 homes sampled, 9 were at or below this level.

**ppm** = parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)

**ppb** = parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)

**ppt** = parts per trillion, or nanograms per liter (ug/l)

**pCi/l** = picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)

**ND** = not detected

**Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL)** – These standards are developed to protect the aesthetic qualities of drinking water and are not health based.

**Massachusetts Office of Research and Standards Guideline (ORSG)** – This is the concentration of a chemical in drinking water, at or below which, adverse health effects are unlikely to occur after chronic (lifetime) exposure. If exceeded, it serves as an indicator of the potential need for further action.

## Water Quality Testing Results

### Does My Drinking Water Meet Current Health Standards?

We are pleased to report that in 2023, your drinking water met all applicable health standards regulated by the MassDEP and the USEPA. We did have water samples from the Whitney Wells test higher than DEP'S guidelines for Manganese (a secondary contaminant). MassDEP and USEPA have established public health advisory levels for manganese to protect against concerns of potential neurological effects. Manganese is a naturally occurring mineral found in rocks, soils and groundwater and surface water. Manganese is necessary for proper nutrition and is part of a healthy diet, but can have undesirable effects on certain sensitive populations at elevated concentrations. The GWD is currently constructing a new Greensand Water Filtration System to remove Manganese from all the drinking water sources at the Whitney Pond location.

The water quality information presented in the tables is from the most recent round of testing done in accordance with the regulations. All results shown are from the samples collected during the last calendar year unless otherwise noted in the tables. MassDEP has reduced the monitoring requirements for synthetic organic contaminants, inorganic contaminants and perchlorate at the Whitney Pond Wells and at the Baddacook Pond Well perchlorate received reduced monitoring. Reduced monitoring by MassDEP indicates that these sources are not at risk of contamination. The last samples were collected for these contaminants were in 2020 and were found to meet all applicable US EPA and MassDEP standards.

### Special Health Information

Some people may be particularly vulnerable to impurities in drinking water. Immuno-compromised persons, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders and some elderly people and infants can be particularly at risk for infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

## Bacteria Sampling Results

Routine monthly sampling conducted at ten different sampling locations in the water distribution system and drinking water wells during 2023 have **not** detected the presence of coliform bacteria in any of the test results.

*The water quality information presented in the following tables is from the most recent round of testing completed in accordance with MassDEP and US EPA regulations.*

## Regulated Contaminants Detected

Regulated Contaminant	Date(s) Collected	Highest Detect	Range Detected	MCL	MCLG	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
<b>Inorganic Contaminants</b>							
<b>PFAS 6 (ppt)</b>							
Baddacook Raw Water	07/20/23	2.00	0/0 - 2.0				Discharges and emissions from industrial and manufacturing sources associated with the production or use of these PFAS, including the production or use of these PFAS, including the production or use of production moisture and oil-resistance coatings on fabrics and other materials. Additional sources include the use and disposal of products containing these PFAS's such as fire-fighting foams.
Whitney #1 Raw Water	12/28/23	4.17	0.0 - 4.17	20.0	-	N	
Whitney #2 Raw Water	12/28/23	ND					
Whitney Finished Water	07/20/23	2.28					
Whitney #3 Raw Water Note: Whitney #3 is not currently in use	12/28/23	12.4	0.0 - 12.4				
<b>Barium (ppm)</b>	6/8/21	0.0	0	2	2	N	Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Nitrate (ppm)</b>	4/5/23	0.50	0.16 - 0.94	10	10	N	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks; Sewage; Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Perchlorate (ppb)</b>	8/02/23	<1.00	0 - <1.0	2	-	N	Rocket propellants, munitions
<b>Radioactive Contaminants</b>							
<b>Radium 226 (pci/L)</b>	6/17/21	0.7	0.0 - 0.7	5	0	N	Erosion of Natural Deposits
<b>Radium 228 (pci/L)</b>	6/23/21	0.6	0.0 - 0.6	5	0	N	Erosion of Natural Deposits

## Unregulated and Secondary Contaminants Detected

Unregulated contaminants are those for which there are no established drinking water standards. Monitoring of unregulated contaminants assists regulatory agencies in determining the occurrence of the contaminants in drinking water and helps to determine the need for future regulation.

Unregulated and Secondary Contaminants	Date(s) Collected	Range Detected	Average Detected	SMCL	ORSG	Possible Source(s)
<b>Manganese* (ppb)</b>	Quarterly 2023	0 - 810	402	50	300	Erosion of natural deposits
<b>Chloroform (ppb)</b>	8/15/23	0.0 - 23.0	23.0	No MCL	No MCLG	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
<b>Bromodichloromethane (ppb)</b>	8/15/23	0.0 - 2.90	2.29	No MCL	No MCLG	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
<b>Sodium (ppm)</b>	6/8/21	20.6 - 24.1	18.9	--	20	Natural sources; Runoff from use of salt on roadways
<b>Iron (ppb)</b>	Quarterly 2023	0 - 65	20	300	--	Natural and industrial sources aging infrastructure

<i>Disinfection Byproducts and Chlorine</i>	Highest Running Annual Average	Range Detected	MCL Or MRDL	MRDL Or MRDLG	Violation (Y/N)	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb) (8/15/23)	8.30	0.0-8.30	80	--	N	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination
Total Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb) (8/15/23)	33	0.0– 33	60	--	N	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Chlorine (ppm) (2023 monthly)	0.08	0.05 - 1.10	4	4	N	Water additive used to control microbes

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and MassDEP have set an aesthetics based Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) for manganese of 50 ug/L (micrograms per liter), or 50 parts per billion. In addition, MassDEP's Office of Research and Standards (ORS) has set a drinking water guideline for manganese (ORSG), which closely follows the EPA public health advisory for manganese.

**Drinking water may naturally have manganese and, when concentrations are greater than 50 µg/L, the water may be discolored and taste bad. Over a lifetime, the EPA recommends that people drink water with manganese levels less than 300 µg/L and over the short term, EPA recommends that people limit their consumption of water with levels over 1000 ug/L, primarily due to concerns about possible neurological effects. Children up to 1 year of age should not be given water with manganese concentrations over 300 ug/L, nor should formula for infants be made with that water for longer than 10 days.**

The ORSG differs from the EPA's health advisory because it expands the age group to which a lower manganese concentration applies from children less than 6 months of age to children up to 1 year of age to address concerns about children's susceptibility to manganese toxicity. See: EPA Drinking Water Health Advisory for Manganese

## Lead and Copper Sampling Results

The purpose of lead and copper sampling is to protect public health by minimizing lead and copper in your drinking water. Lead and copper are primarily introduced to drinking water through the corrosion of plumbing materials that contain lead and copper. By closely monitoring the pH of the drinking water we deliver to your home, we minimize this corrosion, thus lowering these levels. The staff of the Water Department monitors the pH of the water continuously through our SCADA system and adjusts the pH treatment levels accordingly.

The GWD has demonstrated optimal corrosion control in its drinking water system in the past and remains on a reduced three year Compliance Schedule with the Department of Environmental Protection.

The table below summarizes results from the comprehensive 2023 lead and copper sampling round.

	Date Collected	90 <sup>TH</sup> Percentile	Action Level	MCLG	# of Sites Sampled	# of Sites Above Action Level	Possible Source(s) of Contamination
Lead (ppb)	10/17/23	3	15	0	43	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper (ppm)	10/17/23	1.129	1.3	1.3	43	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

## Do I Need To Be Concerned About These Contaminants Detected In My Water?

**Lead:** If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The GWD is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. **When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.** If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791) or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

**Copper:** Copper is an essential nutrient, but some people who drink water containing copper in excess of the action level over a relatively short amount of time could experience gastrointestinal distress. People with Wilson's Disease should consult their personal doctor. **Flush your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using tap water.** Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791.

## Water Meters

The batteries in the radio devices on all household meters have a useful life of approximately ten years and replacement is inevitable. Your water bill will have warning on it if it is time to replace your meter or battery. There is no charge to you for this service, but GWD staff will need access to your basement in order for us to replace the radio device on your water meter in your home.

## Important Information About Cross-Connections

### What is a Cross-Connection?

A cross-connection occurs whenever the drinking water supply is (or could) be in contact with a potential source of contamination. For example: plumbing or equipment allowing drinking water to come in contact with gases, solids, chemicals, stagnant water, or any non-potable liquid.

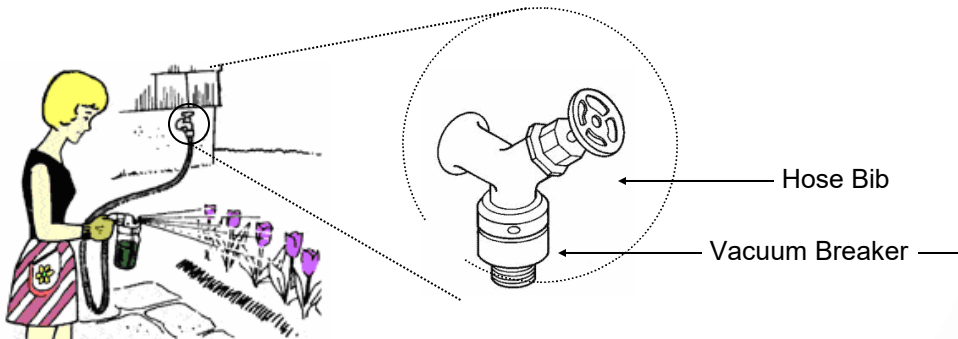
### What is a Backflow?

Backflow is the undesired reverse of water flow in the drinking water distribution lines. This backward flow of water can occur when the pressure created by a boiler/furnace is higher than the water distribution system pressure (backpressure). It also can occur when the water pressure in the distribution system drops due to water main breaks or heavy demand during fires, causing water to flow backward into the water distribution system (backsiphon).

### What can I do to prevent a Cross-Connection?

Without the proper protection, something as simple as a garden hose has the potential to contaminate the drinking water in your house. In fact, over half of cross-connection incidents involve unprotected garden hoses. Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent such hazards:

- Never submerge a hose in soapy water buckets, pools, tubs, sinks, drains, or chemicals.
- Never attach a hose to a garden sprayer without the proper backflow preventer (vacuum breaker).
- Purchase and install a hose bib vacuum breaker in all threaded water fixtures. These inexpensive devices are available at your local hardware stores.



- Identify and be aware of potential cross-connections in your home.
- Purchase appliances and equipment with a backflow preventer.

For further information, please contact the Groton Water Department at (978) 448-1122.

\* \* \* \* \* **NEW** \* \* \* \* \*

## Direct Debit Payment Service Available

When you sign up for Auto-Payments on your water and sewer bills, you will save money on your quarterly bill.

With your signed authorization form, the Water Department can directly debit your checking or savings account for the exact amount of your water/sewer bill each billing cycle. Automatic payments will reduce your bill by \$5.00 per quarter.

Please contact the business office at 978-448-1122 to sign-up for Direct Debit, or download the sign-up form online at [www.grotonwater.org](http://www.grotonwater.org).

**Groton Water Department  
Town Hall  
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Consumer Confidence Report  
Public Water Supply # 2115000**



## **Water Conservation Kits**

Water conservation plays an important role in our day to day lives (see related story on page 2 of this report). Reducing what you use every day helps a great deal in meeting our permitted water withdrawals. More importantly, fixing or replacing older toilets, shower heads and your kitchen sink aerator is also important in reducing your daily water use.

Water Conservation Kits and Water EcoKits can be purchased directly from Niagara Conservation. Simply go to [www.niagaraconservation.com](http://www.niagaraconservation.com) and place your order.

Groton Water Technicians can also help you determine if you have a leak, just call the office between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. to set up an appointment.

## **Direct Debit Payment Service Available**

Save time and postage.  
(Details on page 7.)

If you have questions or concerns about any information presented in this report, please contact us.  
The Board of Water Commissioners meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month.  
Visit our web site at [www.grotonwater.org](http://www.grotonwater.org) for additional information.