



Toilets can Run but they can't hide!

Let AMR "High Read" help you find leaks and \$ave Money!

Automated Meter Reading (AMR) Program

"High Read" Notification

The Cambridge Water Department has begun a "High Read" notification program, which allows the Water Department to contact property owners soon after an incident of high usage is detected. Speedy notification will allow property owners to repair any leaks that may cause the high read, thus minimizing the impact on the Water and Sewer Bill.

The program will need customers to update contact information so the Water Department is able to contact property owners as soon as a "High Read" is detected. Please call Brian McCoy at 617 349-4771 or email him at HighReads@cambridgema.gov with your account number, phone number, mailing address and email address.



# City of Cambridge Water Department 2006 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

250 Fresh Pond Parkway  
Cambridge, MA 02138

DEP PWS ID#3049000

June 2007



**24 Hour Emergency/Customer Service  
Phone Number 1-617-349-4770**

"This report is a snapshot of drinking water quality that we provided in 2006. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to state and federal drinking water standards. We are pleased to be providing this report and encourage you to use the contact information if you have questions or need further information about your water system." Sam Corda, Managing Director, Cambridge Water Department (CWD)

## This Year's Annual Drinking Water Quality Report Includes:

- **2006/2007 Fresh Pond Reservation Restoration Projects**
- **Our Contact Information**
- **Opportunities for Public Involvement**
- **An Introduction to Cross-Connections**
- **Cambridge Water System Description**
- **2006 Water Quality Data**
- **DEP and US EPA Water Quality Information**
- **Water Conservation: the Cost of Leaks**



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[WWW.CAMBRIDGEMA.GOV/CWD/](http://WWW.CAMBRIDGEMA.GOV/CWD/)

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Cambridge Water Department  
250 Fresh Pond Parkway  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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ECRWSS

Postal Customer  
Cambridge, MA

This report contains very important information about your drinking water.

Please translate it, or speak with someone who understands it.

Este relatório contém informação muito importante sobre seu que bebendo água. Por favor traduza-o, ou fala com alguém quem entende-o.

Questa relazione contiene delle informazioni molto importanti del suo che la bendo acqua. Per favore tradurlo, o parlare con qualcuno che capisce esso.

Ce rapport contient des informations importantes à propos de votre eau potable. Demander à quelqu'un de traduire ces informations pour vous ou discuter avec une personne qui comprend ces informations.

Este informe contiene información importante acerca de su agua potable. Haga que alguien lo traduzca para usted, o hable con alguien que lo entienda.

이 보고서에: 귀하의 식수에 대한 중요한 내용이 실려있습니다. 그러므로 이 보고서를 이해할 수 있는 사람에게 번역해 달거나 부탁하시기 바랍니다.

此报告包含有您饮用水的重要信息。请人帮您翻译出来, 或请看懂此报告的人将内容说给您听。

## 2006/2007 Fresh Pond Reservation Restoration Projects

Currently, there are two landscape restoration projects occurring at the Reservation at Fresh Pond: the Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Restoration and Drainage Improvement Project, and the Northeast Sector Project. These projects are nearing completion. Both of these projects are pieces of the implementation of a larger strategy laid out for the Reservation in the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan.

Northeast Sector Project 2007:

The Northeast Sector Project is a landscape restoration project encompassing a 30-acre area of Fresh Pond Reservation that includes Lusitania Meadow and the slopes and open spaces surrounding Neville Place and Center. The intent of the Northeast Sector restoration project is to mend areas that have been degraded from use and to re-establish a native ecosystem. The citizens of Cambridge will benefit from both the beauty and natural functions the newly restored environment will provide.

The area of Lusitania Meadow closer to the Reservoir was once a wet meadow, but was filled in over the years from construction projects in the area of Fresh Pond. Wet meadows - wetlands made up of shallow pools that are dry for part of the year - increase water quality by slowing the flow of water and filtering out contaminants. Restoring Lusitania's wet meadow will assist the Cambridge Water Department in attaining goals of water quality by filtering the surface water moving in the direction of the Reservoir.

The low areas of the meadow will collect surface water, slowing it and allowing sediments to settle out, while native wetland vegetation planted during the project will retain nutrients and pollutants that would otherwise be free in the environment. Changes in land contours will reduce erosion throughout the

meadow. All these changes will make for healthier water and lower cleaning costs for the citizens of Cambridge!

The walking paths through Lusitania Meadow will allow Fresh Pond Reservation users to explore the variety of new habitats and wildlife there. Visitors might see waterfowl, frogs, or turtles in the wet meadow, while songbirds, butterflies and other insects will be found in the hilly dry areas. Benches and a small seating area located along the pathway will give visitors a chance to sit and relax while enjoying the scenery. The pathways themselves will be made of stabilized aggregate, a softer, easier surface than traditional asphalt. Runners and walkers might prefer to pass through here rather than using the paved surfaces of the Perimeter Road.

Native vegetation is being planted in Lusitania Meadow in place of the large number of invasive species and the barren areas that once filled this space. Invasive plant species, while successful at pushing out natives, alter the balance of a native ecosystem by changing both habitats and food sources. By removing the invasive plant species and planting native ones, we hope to facilitate the return of a functioning healthy ecosystem in Lusitania Meadow, and so see an increase in biodiversity.

Join us for Fresh Pond Reservation Project Walkabouts on periodic Monday evenings (at 6pm) through the summer of 2007. Chip Norton, Watershed Manager, will meet participants at the Walter J. Sullivan Water Treatment Facility, 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, Cambridge for a walk to and around the project sites. See you there! Watch for this summer's dates for the Walkabouts and Plant Tours on Reservation bulletin boards and on the Department web page ([www.cambridgema.gov/cwd](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cwd)).



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**Opportunities for Public Participation and Further Information**

•The Cambridge Water Board meets monthly, usually on the first Monday of the month, from 5:00 pm to 6:30 at Walter J. Sullivan Water Purification Facility at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02138.  
•For more information about the dates of upcoming meetings and to review minutes from previous meetings, refer to the Cambridge Water Department Website ([www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/)).  
•If you have additional questions about your water supply, please contact Timothy W.D. MacDonald, Manager of Water Operations, at 617-349-4773.

**Contamination from Cross-Connections**

Cross-connections that could contaminate drinking water distribution lines are a major concern. A cross-connection is formed at any point where a drinking water line connects to equipment (boilers), systems containing chemicals (air conditioning systems, fire sprinkler systems, irrigation systems) or water sources of questionable quality. Cross-connection contamination can occur when the pressure in the equipment or system is greater than the pressure inside the drinking water line (backpressure). Contamination can also occur when the pressure in the drinking water line drops due to fairly routine occurrences (main breaks, heavy water demand) causing contaminants to be siphoned out from the equipment and into the drinking water line (backsiphonage).

Outside water taps and garden hoses tend to be the most common sources of cross-connection contamination at home. The garden hose creates a hazard when submerged in a swimming pool or when attached to a chemical sprayer for weed killing. Garden hoses that are left lying on the ground may be contaminated by fertilizers or garden chemicals. Protection can be provided through the installation of an inexpensive device called a hose connection vacuum breaker. Also at home, improperly installed valves in your toilet can also be a source of cross-connection contamination.

Community water supplies are continuously jeopardized by cross-connections unless appropriate valves, known as backflow prevention devices, are installed and maintained. We have surveyed industrial commercial, and institutional facilities in the City to make sure that potential cross-connections are identified and eliminated or protected by a backflow preventer. We also inspect and test each backflow preventer to make sure that it is providing maximum protection.

For more information, call us at 617-349-4770 or visit the Web site of the American Backflow Prevention Association ([www.abpa.org](http://www.abpa.org))

**Facts About the Cambridge Water System and Water Quality Data from 2006**

**The Cambridge Water Supply:** The Cambridge water supply comes from three surface water reservoirs located in Cambridge, Lexington, Waltham, Lincoln and Weston. The Hobbs Brook (3049000-01S-4S) and Stony Brook (3049000-03S) reservoirs are the primary sources of water for our system. The total capacity of the two up-country reservoirs is 3095 million gallons. The water is transferred to the terminal reservoir, Fresh Pond (3049000-02S), via the Stony Brook Conduit. The Fresh Pond Reservoir has an additional 1308 million gallons of water storage. Our supply is also backed up by interconnections to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water system.

Our water system is routinely inspected by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for its technical, financial and managerial capacity to provide safe drinking water to you. To ensure that we provide the highest quality water the system is operated by Massachusetts certified treatment and distribution operators. Descriptions and details of ongoing improvements in watershed, distribution, and treatment systems and our customer service efforts in engineering, billing and metering are available on the City and Department Web sites [www.cambridgema.gov](http://www.cambridgema.gov) and [www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/)

**Watershed Protection:** As part of the CWD's ongoing commitment to protecting the resource water we participated with the DEP in the preparation of a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for the Cambridge water supply system during 2003. The SWAP Report assesses the susceptibility of our public water supply and notes the key land use and protection issues, which includes: Zone A Land Uses, Residential Land Uses, Transportation Corridors, Hazardous Material Storage and Use, and Presence of Oil or Hazardous Materials Contamination Sites.

The report commends the Cambridge Water Department for taking an active role in promoting source protection measures and recommends that we continue these efforts to further protect the supply. These practices include:

- Working cooperatively with watershed towns on emergency response and storm water management.
- Placing spill kits at strategic points within the watershed.
- Actively monitoring source water quality throughout the watersheds and using the data to target source protection.
- Working cooperatively with businesses in the watersheds to encourage source protection.
- Adopting the Fresh Pond Master Plan, which includes long-term source protection measures for the Fresh Pond Reservation.

•Dedicating staff resources to inspections, public education, and coordinating of source protection efforts.

While a susceptibility ranking of High was assigned to the Cambridge water supply system using the land use and potential sources of contamination information collected during the assessment by DEP, the actual risks may be lower based on the implementation of best management practices (BMP's) throughout the Cambridge watershed and by the ongoing watershed protection programs.

For a copy of the SWAP Report and details of CWD's plans and schedules for implementing recommendations, please visit our web site at [www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cwd/)

**How We Treat Your Water:** The Walter J. Sullivan Water Purification Facility at Fresh Pond Reservation changes the incoming source waters of the Cambridge reservoir system into the drinking water that is delivered to your home or business. The raw water is treated to exceed State and Federal drinking water standards. The processes include:

**Pretreatment:** This includes the pre-oxidation with the application of ozone, rapid mix, coagulation and dissolved air flotation (DAF). These processes and a coagulant chemical, alum, remove: manganese, natural color, particles, algae, protozoa, viruses and bacteria from the water.

**Primary Ozone Disinfection:** Fine bubbles of ozone are dissolved into the water and disinfect the water by killing bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. The ozone is generated in the plant and introduced into the water in a series of chambers that allow contact and mixing of the ozone with the water.

**Filtration using Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Media:** This step follows the ozone application to help remove any organic compounds by biological action in the filters and further polish the water by removing additional particles, color and protozoa from the water.

**Chlorination/Chloramination:** Kills bacteria that may develop during the normal operation of the filters. This second disinfection step provides a level of redundancy in the overall process and provides a constant disinfection level in the distribution system.

**Post Treatment Chemical Addition:** This includes the adjustment of pH for corrosion control and the addition of fluoride for dental health.

The water quality of our system is constantly monitored by us in our State certified laboratory and the DEP to determine the effectiveness of existing water treatment and to determine if any additional treatment is required.

Cambridge Water Department - Consumer Confidence Report 2006 Data							
Lead and Copper	Units	90% Value	Range	Action Level(AL) (90%)	MCLG	Violation	Sites exceeding the AL
Copper (2005)	ppm	0.035	0.001-1.09	1.3	0	NO	0 of 60
Lead (2005)	ppb	7	0 - 157	15	0	NO	2 of 60
<b>Regulated - Inorganic Contaminants</b>							
Barium	ppm	0.044	0.033 - 0.044	2	2	NO	Erosion of natural deposits.
Fluoride	ppm	1.19	0.98 - 1.19	4	4	NO	Water additive to promote strong teeth.
Nitrate as Nitrogen	ppm	0.74	0.52 - 0.74	10	10	NO	Runoff from fertilizer use.
Nitrite as Nitrogen	ppm	0.0218	<0.001-0.0218	1	1	NO	Runoff from fertilizer use.
<b>Unregulated - Inorganic Contaminants</b>							
Sulfate	ppm	28.6	25.1 - 28.6	n/a	n/a	NO	Erosion of natural deposits.
Sodium	ppm	76.8	64.4 - 76.8	n/a	n/a	NO	road salt.
<b>Unregulated - Organic Contaminants</b>							
Bromodichloromethane	ppb	1.5	0.62-3.36				By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Bromoform	ppb	2.6	1.5-4.5				By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Chloroform	ppb	3.4	2.22-5.3				By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Dibromodichloromethane	ppb	1.4	0.86-2.6				By-product of drinking water chlorination.
<b>Regulated - Volatile Organic Contaminants</b>							
Total Trihalomethanes(TTHM)	ppb	14	5.0 - 14	80	0	NO	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Haloacetic Acids(HAA5)	ppb	9	4.0 - 9.0	60	0	NO	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
<b>Regulated - Radioactive Contaminants</b>							
Gross Beta Activity(2000)	pCi/L	13		50	0	NO	Decay of naturally occurring deposits.
<b>Turbidity</b>							
Daily Compliance(NTU)	1			0.25		NO	Suspended matter from soil runoff.
Monthly Compliance	At least 95% (<0.3)	100				NO	Suspended matter from soil runoff.
<b>Bacteria</b>							
Total Coliform	Highest % Positive in a Month	1.0% (July,September)		Total # Positive	MCL	Violation	MCLG
				1,1	>5%	NO	0

**What the EPA and DEP say about Drinking Water - Substances Found In Tap 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 sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.  
**Inorganic contaminants** -such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, and 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.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 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 EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. 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, some

elderly, and some infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on lowering the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

**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 expected risk to health. MRDLG's do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.  
**Treatment Technique (TT)** – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.  
**Action Level (AL)** – The concentration of a contaminant which, 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.  
**Variations and Exemptions** – State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.  
**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  
**pCi/l** = picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)  
**NTU**= Nephelometric Turbidity Units  
**N/A**= Not Applicable  
**ND**= Not Detected  
**mrem/year** = millirem per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)