

# WATER

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"Spring water has been underground for generations," Vitalis said, "and is untouched and uncontaminated by the last century of man-made pollution."

Springs also build communities of people united, if not by a philosophy, then at least by the issues that concern them, including bottling and, if they gather their own water, they water testing kits. Some such communities are beginning to form, thanks to [www.findaspring.com](http://www.findaspring.com), but others are well established.

## Deep water, deep history

One of the earliest recorded visits to the spring at Kepwel Water Company in Wayside, a section of Ocean Township in Monmouth County, took place centuries ago. The story goes that King Ockanickon, chief of the local Lenape tribe, grew very ill and was carried to the spring where he drank the water for weeks or months.

"He miraculously recovered," said Jason Hutzley, the fourth-generation owner of the spring. "So the place became known as the mystical healing water of the Cold Indian Spring, now known as Kepwel."

Today Kepwel customers buy their water in five-gallon bottles. Unlike the days of the king, the water at Kepwel — like the water at Spring Hill — is tested to ensure it complies with regulations set up by the federal Food and Drug Administration, federal Environmental Protection Agency, state Department of Health and Senior Services, and additional local regulations.

A lot of thought has gone into the bottling. Kepwel offers polycarbonate or PET bottles, depending on customer preference. The latter are free of BPA, or bisphenol-A, a chemical the FDA refused to ban in March.

"Despite the FDA's decision, there are some people uncomfortable with BPA," Hutzley said. "For those people, we have the PET bottles."

Kepwel staffers remove the empty bottles from customers' cars and restock them with new filled bottles or delivers to customers in Monmouth, Ocean, and southern Middlesex counties, for a fee of \$6.95 per five-gallon bottle.

"I'm a fan of water. I'm not a fan of garbage," Hutzley said, stating his preference for using five-gallon renewable, reusable, recyclable polycarbonate bottles. "I really don't like the fact that 70 percent of all the little bottles people use end up in a landfill or dumped somewhere."

A Kepwel five-gallon polycarbonate bottle lasts eight to 10 years before it's ground up and made into other items, including carpets and toys. While those are the subjects of topics people sometimes talk about at



Spring Hill on Canfield Avenue in Mine Hill is a spring on a hay and vegetable farm run by John Paschal, right, with friend Phil Zimmerman, left at the cyclone fenced-in spring. Zimmerman helped with the design.

KAREN MANCINELLI/  
FOR NJ PRESS MEDIA

Customer John Hayes of Ocean, left, and employee Derek Polite load water into Hayes's truck at Kepwel Spring Water in Ocean Township.

DOUG HOOD/  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

a spring, they also just get to know each other.

Philip Zimmerman, the 89-year-old former mayor of Mine Hill, lives about a mile from Spring Hill Artesian Spring. He's been drinking from the water there for as long as he's been friends with Paschal — more than four decades.

"There are no chemicals whatsoever in this water, and it's the only water I drink," said Zimmerman, who consumes four to six quarts a day. "The only thing I use the town water for is washing dishes."

The Spring Hill system is easy: people apply for membership at [www.springhillatcanfield.com](http://www.springhillatcanfield.com), pay a \$20 lifetime processing fee, and get a dongle, or electronic surmounting the pipe from which the water flows.

Paschal, who is 76, asks for a voluntary \$10 per quarter fee to cover the costs of water testing, upkeep, and the occasional damage done to the locking system. But he even allows members who can't afford the membership fee to join.

"I will never close this," he said.

John Hayes, a 45-year-old carpenter, was just hoping his family would drink more water more with a cooler in the house when he started buying Kepwel wa-

ter six years ago. Hooked on the clean taste, the family now even makes its ice cubes, and brews its tea, with the spring water. In fact, they don't drink from the tap unless they run out of spring water.

"I figure it can't be good for you, so we drink as little as possible," he said.

An EPA paper called "Water on Tap: What You Need to Know" identifies alum and chlorine as two typical chemicals used to cleanse and disinfect tap water for public consumption. In recent years, numerous media reports have revealed that traces of pharmaceuticals, hormones, rocket fuel, and even heroin and cocaine are in some drinking water supplies nationwide.

When it comes to drinking water, the basic split in opinion concerns how clean is clean enough. While tap water pleases some people, others are happy only when they filter it.

"I look at filtering as taking something that's inferior and trying to make it better," Hutzley said.

Still other people prefer bottled water, trusting its quality is high.

"If you buy water that's got a pretty picture on it, do you think it comes from a mountain or a snowcap?" Hutzley asked. "I don't know where it came from. I

know where my water comes from."

Similarly, Paschal is skeptical about the shelf life bottled water — two years. "That's a lot of chlorine in it," he said. "The water from my spring has no chlorine."

Yet there is another group so purist that it objects to buying water at all, not even from reputable springs. Some in this camp believe any water directly harvested from a natural water source will be pure.

According to the state health department, a variety of rules apply to the testing of springs, depending on who owns the land on which they are located and the use of that land.

Whether the average resident or hiker can trust a given water source found free in nature is dubious, according to John Craven, 28, of Wharton, assistant camping manager at Ramsey Outdoor in Succasunna and an experienced day hiker and backpacker.

"I only know of a couple of spots around here where I would trust the ground," he said. "One is at Spring Hill in Mine Hill. The other is at Stokes State Forest in Sandyston Township near the Route 206 entrance. It's an established spring."

When all is said and done, a healthy glass of wa-

ter is a matter of balance.

In Hutzley's view, the balance in spring water is a precise one struck by the earth itself. Vitalis agrees, explaining that natural spring water is more than H<sub>2</sub>O molecules. He calls it an "aquatic matrix" embedded with naturally occurring trace minerals and micro-algae that affect human health in ways still being investigated.

"The water we are drinking today, as a civilization," he said, "is as refined and processed as the white sugar that has been stripped out of sugar cane."

Even Hutzley's two dogs enjoy the spring water. "They won't drink tap water," he said. "One time somebody filled up their bowls with tap water, put them on the ground, and my dogs wouldn't drink it. They went over to the water cooler and just looked at it."

Many Kepwel customers buy the water for their animals, he said, sometimes to resolve chlorine-induced skin problems and always for their general well-being.

"This spring is our little slice," Hutzley said of his family business. "It's nice. It's pure. It's fun."

That's the kind of local reality the find-a-spring movement is trying to promote the world over.

## On filtering and purifying

Surface water in a stream or lake should never be consumed because there's no way to know what's upstream, according to John Craven, assistant camping manager at Ramsey Outdoor in Succasunna. If a person is forced to drink it, filtering and/or purifying are necessary. His advice in his own words:

### When to filter

» "For any water from a mountain stream, I have no problem just using a simple filter with a paper or ceramic cartridge. Most have a charcoal core. The paper or ceramic has a certain pore size. The water will get through but the pores will hold back any bacteria or protozoas like Giardia and Cryptosporidium, which are single-cell microscopic waterborne things you don't want. The charcoal core in the middle makes the water taste better."

### When to purify

» "Filtering doesn't take care of viruses, though. They're too small. To require filtering the water source would have to be contaminated with waste from a human with some sort of virus. The likelihood of viral contamination is low in a backcountry stream. But if you're pumping out of the Delaware River or Lake Hopatcong, or somewhere highly trafficked by humans and with the potential for runoff from septic systems or roads, you want to worry about purifying."

» "With purifying you're using some sort of chemical treatment or UV light. A common way to purify water is with diiodide or chlorine dioxides tablets. As to the light, SteriPEN makes a UV light pen that you put into a bottle of water; the light makes the water glow and kills everything. Camelbak just came out with All Clear, a water bottle with a UV light under the cap. The one downside to UV light is that you need clear water to begin with. So you need to filter the water before sterilizing it with UV light."

# BEER

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## What's the next step in creating sustainable, regional food systems?

Changing laws, lowering fees, making it easier for brewers to make the transition from home brewer to professional nano-brewer. Like the brewing renaissance that's happening on the West Coast, we can make New Jersey known for fostering small brewers producing fantastic products, instead of just having high property taxes.

**Finish this sentence:** I believe... I can make a difference by being passionate, by talking, by making friends, by sharing what I do.

Joe Fisher will be part of an interactive homebrewing demonstration at the third edition of the Morris County Sunday Supper Series June 23 at Flocktown Farm in Washington Township.

## The Grassroots Calendar

### ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL AT SCHIFF

Schiff Natural Lands Trust will team with Base Camp Adventure Outfitters in Bernardsville for the fourth year to co-host the World & Scenic Environmental Film Festival at 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Schiff Nature Preserve, 339 Pleasant Valley Road in Mendham. Tickets are \$15 each and can be purchased at [www.schiffnaturepreserve.org/filmfest](http://www.schiffnaturepreserve.org/filmfest), by calling the Nature Center at 973-543-6004 or in person at Base Camp Adventure Outfitters, 30 Olcott Square, Bernardsville. Tickets are limited to 100 per night.

From urban agriculture to adventurers to creative recycling, the award-winning, independent movies cover a variety of environmental topics and range in length from 5 to 25 minutes. For a complete list and description of the

films, visit [www.schiffnaturepreserve.org/filmfest](http://www.schiffnaturepreserve.org/filmfest).

### BIKE AND HIKE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The 13th annual Historic Morris Bike & Hike to benefit Morris Habitat for Humanity will be held on Saturday at Central Park of Morris County, 91 Central Ave., Morris Plains, and there will be five events starting between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Cost is \$30 team member, \$40 individual or \$65 family by May 22; add \$5 for later registrations. Call 973-891-1934 or visit [www.morris-habitat.org/event/bh](http://www.morris-habitat.org/event/bh) details.

### PEDAL TO PRESERVE N.J.'S OPEN SPACE

Get your heart pumping and feet pedaling for a great cause on Sunday as The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, located in Boonton, hosts its first

Pedal for Preservation Bike Event. Participants will ride on the Columbia Trail, a Rail to Trail route. Riders will start and finish at West Morris Central High School, 259 Bartley Rd, Chester.

Information: [www.TLC-NJ.org](http://www.TLC-NJ.org).

### FDU PANEL EXPLORES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Fairleigh Dickinson University's next Institute for Sustainable Enterprise, titled "Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: An historic opportunity to shape the future we want," will be held from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. June 15 at Hartman Lounge in Hennessy Hall, 285 Madison Ave., Florham Park. Panelists include Matthias Strausberg, head of public affairs and media relations for the United Nations Global Compact, Amanda Nesheiwat, U.N. youth repre-

sentative for the Foundation for Post Conflict Development, and Ira Feldman, president and senior counsel for Greentrack Strategies. The talk will span an introduction to the Rio+20 process to prospects for better operationalizing sustainability. Register by June 11. Information: [www.fdu.edu/formations/chrms/register.html](http://www.fdu.edu/formations/chrms/register.html).

### MORRIS COUNTY SUNDAY SUPPER: THE SATURDAY EDITION

Get your picnic blanket ready and join the Highlands Dinner Club and Grassroots for a down-home, farm-fresh dining experience to savor summer's early bounty. The third edition of the Morris County Sunday Supper Series — the Saturday installment, from 1:30 to 10 p.m. on June 23 — brings together local farmers, educators, musicians and chefs to celebrate and

feast on Flocktown Farm in Long Valley.

Live music will be performed by The Band of Changes featuring Chris Harford, Mickey Melchiondo, Dave Dreiwitz, Scott Metzger, and Joe Russo; The Eric Hayes Band; Top Soil; and Her Sweet Remains. The Work Family Connection — a non-profit organization dedicated to responding to the emerging needs of children, families and communities — and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey will sponsor a children's tent with educational games and activities focusing on sustainable food systems and agriculture.

Information and tickets: [www.sundaysupper3.eventbrite.com](http://www.sundaysupper3.eventbrite.com).

Have an eco-event? Email details to [mvandyk@njpressmedia.com](mailto:mvandyk@njpressmedia.com)