

Support the Mohonk Preserve, a crucial community resource

Thank you Mohonk Preserve for helping ensure we have high quality municipal water in New Paltz:

Significant portions of New Paltz's water distribution system are about 100 years old and have outlived their life expectancy. Many of these water mains are constructed of cast iron and are highly tuberculated. They are prone to breaks and leaks, and all too often create turbid water. In June, the Village of New Paltz submitted a state grant application for a \$5 million project to replace six sections of our water mains. We are seeking 60% of the project's cost via the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC). On August 22, we performed an unscheduled flushing of our water mains after receiving numerous complaints about brown wa-

ter, a direct result of our infrastructure's age.

Our water fund's single largest expense is driven by how much NYC's Bureau of Water Supply (DEP) charges us for water. This adds significantly to the challenge of paying for the expensive infrastructure maintenance and upgrades that this century-old system requires. Untreated water purchased from the DEP has gone up 180% during the last decade at an average increase of 11% annually. We buy approximately 60% of our water from the DEP's Catskill Aqueduct, and the other 40% comes from our reservoirs off Mountain Rest Road.

New Paltz's water system includes the village, Town of New Paltz water districts and SUNY New Paltz. Water customers also include the middle and high schools, plus Duzine Elementary. Lenape Elementary has its own well.

DEP claims that they sell us water below their cost and assert that their rate increases could have been worse. Looking toward future costs, DEP staff has cautioned us that we should anticipate continued double-digit average annual increases for years to come.

Earlier this summer -- in an effort to reduce costs by sourcing more water locally and buy less from the DEP -- the Village Board authorized funding a groundwater drilling investigation on our Mountain Rest property to augment the reservoirs. Yield for the initial test well was promising, and we are working with a hydrogeologist to drill a second well on the property shortly.

New Paltz's Mountain Rest reservoirs are downstream from the Mohonk Preserve. We are lucky our reservoirs' watershed includes protected open space in the Mohonk Preserve. Water that we source adjacent to the Preserve -- which currently represents 40% of all of our municipal water -- is cleaner and less expensive than water we purchase from the DEP.

Mohonk Preserve trails are magical, but we must also recognize the Preserve's contribution to helping provide our community with clean, affordable water. Please consider becoming a Mohonk Preserve member, or make sure your annual membership is up to date to support this crucial community resource in conservation and preservation.

Tim Rogers, Mayor
New Paltz