

***Protect Your Community’s Water***

DATE

Dear Homeowner:

Antiquated water treatment systems and modern contaminants have left drinking waters suspect. In rural Southeast Florida there were cases of pediatric brain cancer that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP) stated was caused by “The elevated contaminant levels in water collected post-treatment […] attributed to naturally occurring metals or chemical byproducts from the water disinfection process” (Newton & Amber, 2010, pg.11). Although other authorities have not confirmed this report, FLDEP contends that these cases are isolated to places where water disinfectant by products are mixed with organic materials creating trihalomethanes.

The last four years students from SCHOOL X have performed drinking water studies on rural private well waters in Jupiter Farms and Loxahatchee areas. News reports of compromised public systems in Michigan, Washington DC, Arizona, Nevada, Vermont, Connecticut, Chicago, Pennsylvania, and New York have increased the awareness that ***all*** homes should periodically test their waters. In Palm Beach County, Florida primary sources of public water impurities may result from: an antiquated open-air municipal system, chlorinated disinfectant by-products, a lack of a tertiary filtration, and the potential for in-home construction/pipe concerns.

Your residence has been selected to participate in a school science project: ***GET WET!*** (Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation & Testing). This project was designed by the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environment and Watershed Research at the University of Maine and works in cooperation with local universities, schools, and your community to offer students a hands-on learning experience for testing drinking water quality. This amazing opportunity allows students to understand scientific procedures while providing citizens and policy-makers with unbiased and credible information that can enhance efforts to achieve healthy ecosystems, strong communities, and robust economies. The data collected will be used to examine the groundwater chemistry in your community. This is the 10th year that we have been conducting this study. For more information regarding the program visit the ***GET WET!*** website at: [http://getwetproject.org](http://getweth2oed.org)

We encourage parental participation, especially if you have a specific expertise relating to drinking water wells and systems, laboratory procedures, or GIS capabilities! Participants will be provided with a bottle and a questionnaire about your water knowledge. By returning the provided bottle full, and completing the paperwork, you are permitting participation in this exciting event. Students involved will learn the standard safety procedures used by scientists to avoid contamination of samples and each student will be provided with safety goggles and gloves to ensure their safety.

Later in the year you will be notified of a presentation participating students will give of their **GET WET!** drinking water results to the community. All are welcome and invited to this event. To make this information available to other classrooms and the community at large, both photos and testing information will be available on the **GET WET!** website and in professional publications. All photos will be generic pictures of children participating in ***GET WET!*** activities. No names, addresses or other information, which would make your child individually identifiable, will be included. At no time will names, addresses, or specific locations be divulged. An information database in GIS form will be used without a photo image and mapped at a distance far enough away that it would be impossible to determine the exact location of any sample. Any specific information provided will be kept strictly confidential. This agreement may be terminated at any time through written request.

Thank you very much for your support! If you have questions about ***GET WET!****,*please do not hesitate to contact us at: teresa.thornton@getwetproject.org, or (207) 266-3682.

Let’s make a difference together,

Teresa E. Thornton, M.S., Ph.D.

***GET WET!*** President & CEO