HAMPSTEAD WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Fact Sheet: Water Conservation & Groundwater Recharge

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Water Conservation

What is Water Conservation? Water conservation covers a wide range of actions by all water users including capture of rainwater, reducing water usage, and installation of water efficient fixtures both indoors and outdoors. Examples include the following practices that can be implemented by residents and businesses:

- Limit lawn and landscape watering, vehicle washing and other outdoor water uses.
- Reduce water consumption by best practices (reduce running water in sinks, collect water when running a hot shower or bath, using "collected water" from indoors for outside watering).
- Install water efficient fixtures indoors (bath, kitchen, laundry), specifically look for fixtures with the WaterSense logo, and outdoors (lawn irrigation systems and lawn watering practices).
- Harvest water using rain barrels, rain gardens or cisterns or other water collection methods.

Conservation for Maintaining Water Resources: Water conservation is the primary method for helping sustain water resources especially during times of drought as NH has experienced in the past few years. Many perceive water as an unlimited resource when in fact it needs to be carefully monitored and managed to ensure adequate supplies for all users. Local and regional aquifers and water sources are highly susceptible to environmental changes, excessive withdrawals, and increased demand and consumption. Water conservation practices can lower the cost of water (electricity, water pump life, water treatment or water bill).

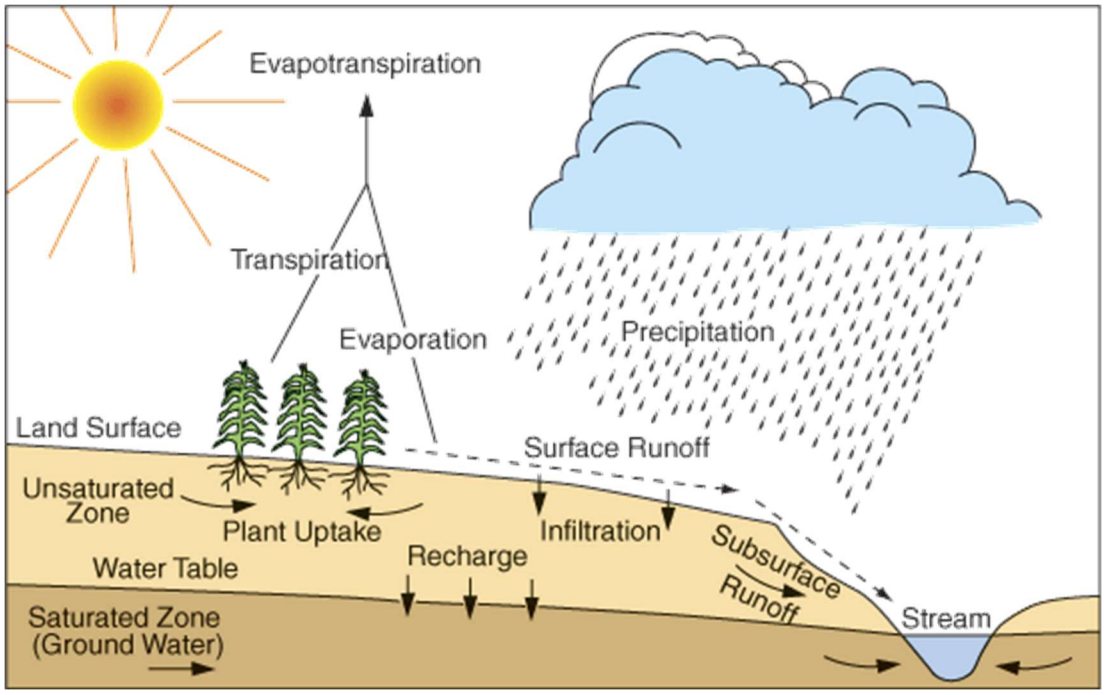
Groundwater Recharge

What is Groundwater Recharge? Groundwater recharge happens when rain or snow falls on the land surface and filters through the land cover and soil eventually reaching the groundwater table or infiltrating deeper underground to fractures in the underlying bedrock. A substantial snowpack in winter ensures availability of water during spring melt when water broadly infiltrates across the land surface.

Recharge happens year-round but mostly during warm weather months when the ground is not frozen, and water can readily travel through ground cover and underlying soil. Water conservation activities are particularly important during these warm weather months to allow for maximum groundwater recharge when water is most readily available and needed for consumption by residents and businesses.

Why is Groundwater Recharge an Important Local Issue? Groundwater recharge is an important local issue as it can impact local aquifers and groundwater resources critical for suppling drinking water to communities and commercial suppliers. However, groundwater recharge is also a regional issue as most aquifers and groundwater resources extend beyond municipal boundaries, encompassing vast areas of land in adjacent municipalities. Every drinking water well that extracts water from the regional aquifer could impact other drinking water wells in the area.

Ways to Achieve Groundwater Recharge: Groundwater recharge occurs when rain or snowmelt infiltrate the land cover and enter the local groundwater table or fractures in the underlying bedrock. Barriers to infiltration include impervious surfaces that prevent vital recharge functions (roads, structures, parking lots); the more they are present, the less recharge can happen. The more natural dispersal of water across the landscape, the more recharge will occur.



Source: New Jersey Geological Survey

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