

# The Reservoir Covering Project – A Conversation

The Passaic Valley Water Commission

# Where does your water come from?

- Most of our water comes from the Passaic River
  - Untreated water will make you sick
  - Before it comes to your faucet, it is treated in our state of the art Water Treatment Plant
- Some of our water is treated and stored for later use

# Reservoirs?

- Extra water is stored in a man made lake called a reservoir. The lake is open to the air and anything can get in there:
  - Birds fly in and swim there, and use the water as their bathroom
  - Untreated water that runs off during rain and snow melt gets in there too all the while picking up whatever it runs over (including animal droppings)
- These reservoirs are called “Finished Water Reservoirs”

# If it's that bad, why don't we have an epidemic on our hands?

- Chlorine is added to the water that leaves the finished water reservoirs before it gets to your faucet.

# Oh, so there's no danger, right? So why do this?

- Actually, we didn't say there is no danger. The system works but it isn't perfect. It is possible that it can fail.
  - At the plant, the water is cleaned using four different methods.
  - Leaving the finished water reservoir, only one method is used.

OK, now you're just trying to scare me. I drink it all the time with no problems.

- We pride ourselves on working very hard to provide high quality, safe, drinking water.
- We monitor everything very carefully.
- Still, the danger exists that something can happen that can hurt the system and cause a problem.

# Really? When has that ever happened?

- It has happened in the past.
- Worst case was 1993 in Gordon, Missouri.
  - A Salmonella outbreak was traced to bird droppings in the finished water.
  - 7 people died.

# Can bad water really make me sick?

- You bet. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention says that as many as 900,000 people a year get sick and 900 die from bad things in their water.
- That's why we are working so hard to keep your drinking water (which we drink too) safe



# But you said your water was safe!

- It is.
- We have to plan for all situations, though.

# Why? If it is safe, why do this?

- There are three reasons why this has to be done:
  - Reason 1 – It just makes sense. You would not drink water that comes from your faucet if you first ran it through a fish tank, would you?
  - Reason 2 – The Federal Government is requiring that we do this.
  - Reason 3 – The State Department of Environmental Protection is requiring that we do this.

# If the Government says you have to do this? Why are New York and Portland exempt?

- They're not
- Portland just lost their lawsuit on this issue and they are now proceeding with a similar project.
- New York has one reservoir that was temporarily exempted but:
  - The water in that reservoir does not hang around (it is constantly used) so there is not too much time for it to become contaminated, and
  - They have to do some additional things (that aren't cheap) to protect the water.
  - They are NOT getting off scott free

# Isn't the Federal Government going to review this rule?

- Sure. They regularly review stuff like this.
- The requirement is not going away.
- How do we know this?
  - The State DEP has told us
  - The Federal EPA has told us

# So, What's this project about?

- Drinking water will no longer be stored in a lake at the Levine Reservoir.
- Two tanks will be put there to hold the drinking water

# Won't that look ugly?

- There is a lot we can do with landscaping and other things to make it look good.

# When can I see it?

- We are planning public meetings and you will be able to see, review and comment on the plans. Keep an eye on our website [www.pvwc.com](http://www.pvwc.com) and our “Drinking Water Reservoir” page at [http://www.pvwc.com/project\\_summary.htm](http://www.pvwc.com/project_summary.htm).

# How much will this cost?

- The estimated cost for Phase I of the project is \$35 million and includes:
  - A new water tank in Verona,
  - Better electrical backup capabilities at our plant to better handle emergencies (like Hurricane Sandy), and
  - The tanks at Levine reservoir



# Won't my rates skyrocket?

- No
- The Water Commission has known that this project was coming for a long time
- We have been planning for it
- The paying off of other Commission projects will help minimize the rate increases

# When will all this happen?

- Phase I is currently in design. Construction should begin in 2015.

# Where can I go to get more information?

- [www.pvwc.com/project\\_summary.htm](http://www.pvwc.com/project_summary.htm)