

# The Private Well Program to Protect Public Health

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- Western RCAP**  
Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
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- Midwestern RCAP**  
Midwest Assistance Program  
www.map-inc.org

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- Southern RCAP**  
Communities Unlimited  
www.communitiesu.org

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- Great Lakes RCAP**  
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership  
www.glcap.org

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- Southeastern RCAP**  
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project  
www.sercap.org

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- Northeastern RCAP**  
RCAP Solutions  
www.rcapsolutions.org

“Improving Rural Quality of Life”

# Background-State

- Local Boards of Health (BOH) Enforce Many Statewide Public Health Codes
- Massachusetts has no statewide Private Well Regulations
- MASS DEP puts out a Model Regulation

# Background-Program

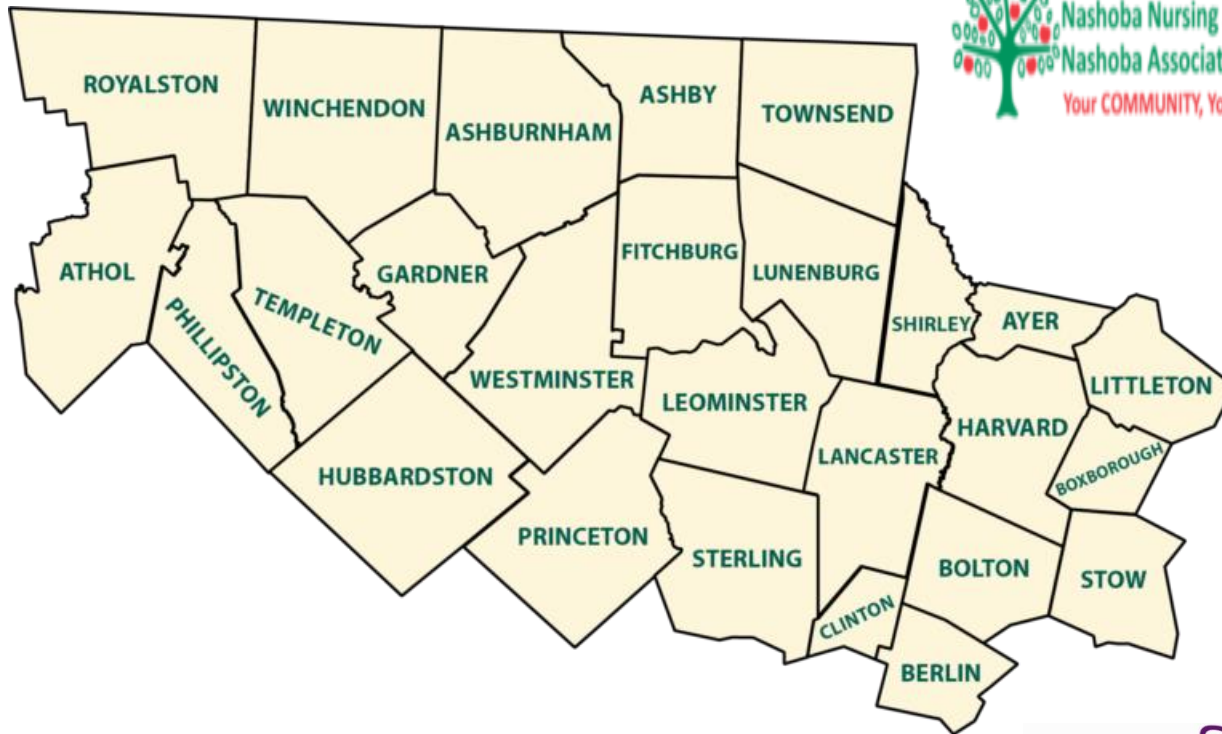
- Looking for a way to add sampling to our U.S. EPA Private Well Program
- Previous grants from The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts
- 2 applications to the Activation Fund
- Funded Application under Synergy Initiative

# North Central Massachusetts Private Well Program

- 5-year grant
- Goals
  - Educate Private Well owners on wells & testing
  - BOH local regulation implementation/update
  - Technical Assistance & Sampling for well owners
  - **Ultimate Goal**-Statewide Minimum Private Well Standards

# Target Region

MONTACHUSETT  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
NETWORK



Nashoba Nursing Service & Hospice  
Nashoba Associated Boards of Health  
Your COMMUNITY, Your CHOICE Since 1931

**RCAP** *Solutions*  
Resources for *Communities And People*

# Target Region

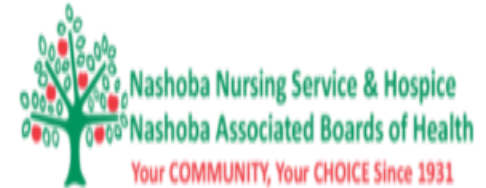
- Why there?
  - Known area of high Arsenic, Uranium & Radon
  - Area where PFAS chemicals in ground water are becoming a big problem
    - MA MCL 20 PPT of 6 PFAS chemicals

# Initial Partners

MONTACHUSETT  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
NETWORK



THE  
HEALTH FOUNDATION  
OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS





# Planning Year-2020

- Planning
- Pandemic Delay
- Grant announcement in Summer 2020
- Formed Leadership & Advisory Teams
- Field Work

# Planning

- Test for PFAS?
- Logic Model
- Outreach Plan
- Needs Assessment
- Collaboration Survey

# Grant Announcement & Homeowner Recruitment

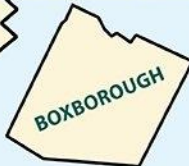
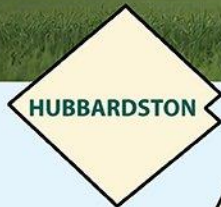
- Press Release
- Email blasts
- Direct mailing to towns and elected representatives
- Local papers
- Local TV
- Social Media
  - #WhatsInYourWellWater
- Webpage

# #WhatsInYourWellWater



**Are you a homeowner  
with a private well?**

**Ensure your drinking  
water is safe.**



The North Central Massachusetts Private Well Program is coming to Hubbardston and Boxborough!

Visit: [www.rcapsolutions.org/ma-private-wells](http://www.rcapsolutions.org/ma-private-wells)



# Website

#WhatsInYourWellWater | 3 Easy Steps to Drill Down Some Answers

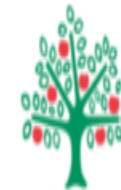
- 1) What to test your water for...
- 2) Where to go to get your water tested...
- 3) What your water test results mean...

# Leadership Team

MONTACHUSETT  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
NETWORK



THE PRIVATE WELL  
**CLASS**



Nashoba Nursing Service & Hospice  
Nashoba Associated Boards of Health  
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HEALTH FOUNDATION  
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SafeWell



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# Advisory Team



# 2020 Field Work

21 Well Assessments w/ sampling (MA. recommended contaminants)

- Full reports sent to participants w/
  - Completed well assessment form
  - Testing Results
  - Well & Septic Records
  - Remediation info
  - Testing info moving forward



# Field Work

- Samples Taken: 21
- Samples Flagged by lab: 12 (57%)
- Samples not Flagged by lab: 9 (43%)

Including: E Coli, TC+, Arsenic & Lead

# Field Work

- 100+ requests in 2020 we were unable to accommodate
  - Top of the list for 2021
  - Helped choose the 6 target communities for Pilot Year

# Pilot Year-2021

- 6 of the target communities to focus on
  - Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Hubbardston, Princeton & Sterling
  - 2 Towns at a time
- Based on:
  - Interest from 2020
  - Community primarily uses PW's
  - 3 from each Health District

# Pilot Year

- 40 well assessments & sampling for homeowners in each community
- Engage BOH's and promote the adoption of model regulations

# Pilot Year

- Outreach
  - Official Letters to Town Managers & BOH
  - Meet w/ each BOH & Select board
    - BOH before and after testing
  - Announcement in local media
  - Website update

## **North Central Massachusetts Private Well Program**

### *Sampling Results*

#### **Combined**

240 Tests back from Lab

#### ***Primary Standards (Health Based)***

43 Have levels of contaminants exceeding MassDEP public drinking water health-based limit -18%

197 Have no levels of contaminants exceeding MassDEP public drinking water health-based limit -82%

#### **Primary Standards exceeded:**

- Arsenic-24
- Radon-12
- Manganese (above .3)-6
- Uranium-5
- E Coli-2

#### ***Secondary Standards***

123 Have levels of contaminants exceeding Primary and/or Secondary Standards-51%

117 Have no levels of contaminants exceeding Primary and/or Secondary Standards 49%

#### **Secondary Standards Exceeded:**

- PH-45
- Total Coliform Bacteria-34
- Manganese-24
- Chloride-11
- Iron-8
- Color-3
- Odor-2
- Copper-1
- Flouride-1

# P.W.S. vs. Private Wells

- 2021 Comparison
  - 18% exceedance rate for Health Based Standards in Private Well Sampling
    - With TC+ exceedance is 27%
  - MASS DEP reported an average of 4.5% exceedance of Health Based Standards in Community PWS's

# 2021 Highlights





# 2021 Highlights



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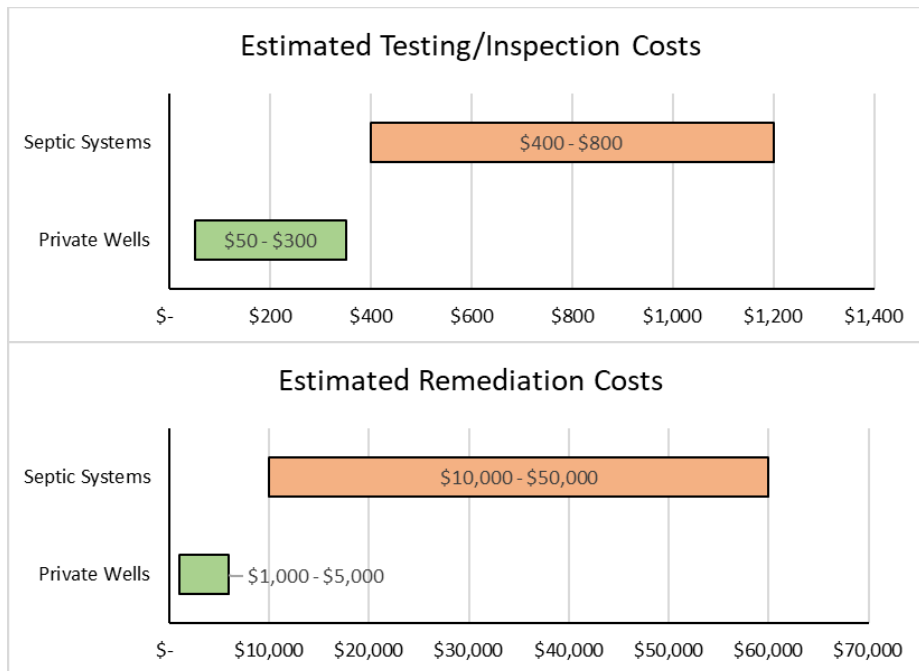
# Private Well Legislation

- Private Well Legislation filed late 2021  
([SD.2903](#) / [HD.4693](#))
- Gives MASS DEP Authority to write a state-wide private well code
- Enforcement by MASS DEP & Local BOH



# Financial Considerations

- Costs would generally be lower than for septic systems:



# Financial Assistance

- Loans/grants could assist low-income homeowners
  - E.g., Mass Housing Septic System Repair Loan program, USDA Rural Development
- Additional funding, resources, and training may be needed for MASS DEP and local BOHs

# 2022-Implementation Year

- Lobbying & Advocating for bills to be passed
- Sampling in 6 towns state-wide, 40 samples per community (TBD towns)
- Expansion of Leadership & Advisory Teams

# More Information & Questions

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