Water Use on Campus

An important step in reducing bottled water use on campus was hearing student and faculty opinions about water access as well as how different departments are distributing drinking water. Since these bottles of water are sold on campus throughout retail locations and vending machines every year.

- When classes are in session, the Arthur Rollins Treatment Plant distributes 2,000,000 gallons of water a day.
- A majority of students do not like the taste of tap water they are getting on campus and prefer the use of filtration systems.
- Filling stations are being put throughout dorms and campus housing for a cost of about $80 dollars (Figure 4). This machine has a counter on the filling station in order to determine the use of the machine is getting.
- The student union is raising funding to install filtered hydration stations at much higher rates of $2-6 thousand dollars.
- I met with representatives from different departments on campus to provide an informational brochures outlining different filling stations that can be installed on existing water fountains.
- UNH Catering has stopped using bottled water except for events.

Background Research on Campus Tap Water Supply

Before I could educate people on why to choose tap water over bottled water, I had to find out about water quality issues on campus. One way I did this was by meeting with the chief operator of the water treatment plant on campus and touring the facilities.

- The water that is distributed throughout the University of New Hampshire is a combination of Durham town water and water from the Arthur Rollins Treatment Plant which was founded in 1935 (Figure 1).
- UNH is receiving water from the Lamprey Watershed, the Levee, and the Oyster River Watershed.
- The treatment faculty pumps water from a dammed area of the Oyster River Watershed (Figure 2).
- One concern for future water quality is that part of water is always coming in from non-campus areas, causing minimal watershed protection to be implemented (Figure 3).

Water Treatment Process:

- After water is pumped, a positively charged coagulant chemical is applied to the water. This is attracting the iron and manganese out of our town’s water. Then, sodium hydroxide is added to raise the pH of the water to 9, which helps to remove the coagulant.
- Because of the corrosion that is occurring in many pipes throughout campus, sodium hydroxide has also been added to the water to put a micro film on the inside of pipes to prevent lead from leaching into drinking water.

Water Distribution:

- The Arthur Rollins Treatment plant is also responsible for making sure pipes and infrastructure are performing adequately.
- Because of the corrosion that is occurring in many pipes throughout campus, sodium hydroxide has also been added to the water to put a micro film on the inside of pipes to prevent lead from leaching into drinking water.

To get involved with Food & Water Watch or the Take Back the Tap Campaign contact Denise Hart, New England Regional Director, at dhart@fww.org.