

# Water Is Life

**Editor's Note: In this "Values of Our Land" series, we look at different benefits of open space and land preservation and their effects on people, the environment, and the community.**

"When the well is dry, we learn the worth of water," Benjamin Franklin stated.

When was the last time you marveled at the miracle of clean water that streamed from your kitchen faucet? Pure, clean water pumped up from hundreds of feet below your property. Water that cycled through our air, ground, woods, streams, and lakes. Water that slowly filtered through our many acres of preserved open space to eventually flow from your tap to quench your thirst.

All sources of drinking water, such as rivers, lakes and underground aquifers, depend on the quality of land surrounding them. When land is well-preserved and not heavily polluted or developed, it helps maintain the quality of these water sources.

"Ground water recharging of rain can only occur through open spaces and forested areas. Developed areas force rainwater across streets, roads, and parking lots and directly into our rivers and streams. You can't pave paradise and expect good results!", relates Jim Ventres, East Haddam's Land Use Administrator.

Clean land means clean water.

"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one," Jacques Cousteau observed.

Natural landscapes, including our woods, wetlands, and meadows, act as natural filters. They help remove impurities, sediment, and pollutants from rainwater and run-off before it reaches our water supply.

In, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson writes that, "Humans would be lost without water: after a few days our lips vanish and our skin contracts so much we can't blink. ... We are 67% water, while only .4% (or .004) of the earth's water is drinkable."

So, in addition to providing us outdoor places to recreate, to rejuvenate, and to reconnect, our preserved lands provide us with our invaluable, clean drinking water.

Enjoy your lips.