

Private Well Water Testing & Protection

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Where are we going?

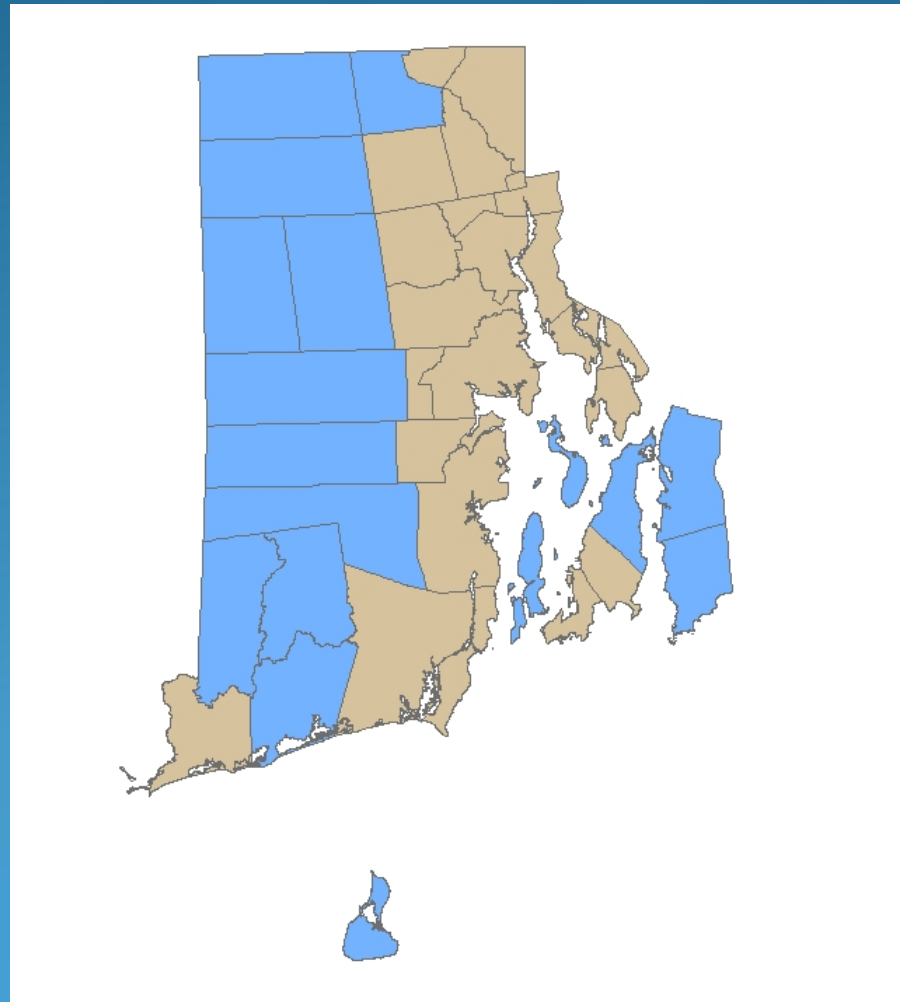
- Introductions
- Setting the Stage
- Characterize the Audience
- Educational Efforts & Their Impacts
- Next Steps



Nationally

- 15% of US population depends on private wells
- Private wells are not protected under the Safe Drinking Water Act
- Some states have regulations on private well siting, construction, and testing (NJ & RI)
- According to U.S. EPA most groundwater is of good quality and safe to drink
- Testing is key to determining safety of drinking water from private wells (USGS, 2008)

Where do RI private well owners live?



What do we know about RI private well owners?

- > 95% Caucasian
- 50% female : 50% male
- Median age: 40
- > 60% Married; ~ 30% Married with children < 18
- ~ 80% Owner-occupied housing
- Per capita income ranges \$22,000 - \$38,000
- 85% + high school diploma; ~30% with college degree
- ~ 70% born in RI

(Data from RI Statewide Planning Program, 2000 census)

What else do we know about RI private well owners?

- Testing is perceived as expensive
- The steps to test are perceived as complex and time consuming – following directions, understanding results, deciding if treatment is necessary
- There's an awareness that “Clean water is important”, but a disconnect between this awareness and testing
- Well owners need more help in solving drinking water quality problems

Educational Efforts

- History – 2002 in partnership with RI HEALTH & RI DEM & local communities and organizations
- Methods
 - Community workshops
 - Written materials
 - Website
 - Direct mail
 - TV
 - Individual assistance

Impacts

What have private well owners done to protect their drinking water?



51% have tested their well water



70% have inspected their well head

Impacts



36% began properly disposing of used motor oil

59% began taking HHW to collection facilities



Impacts

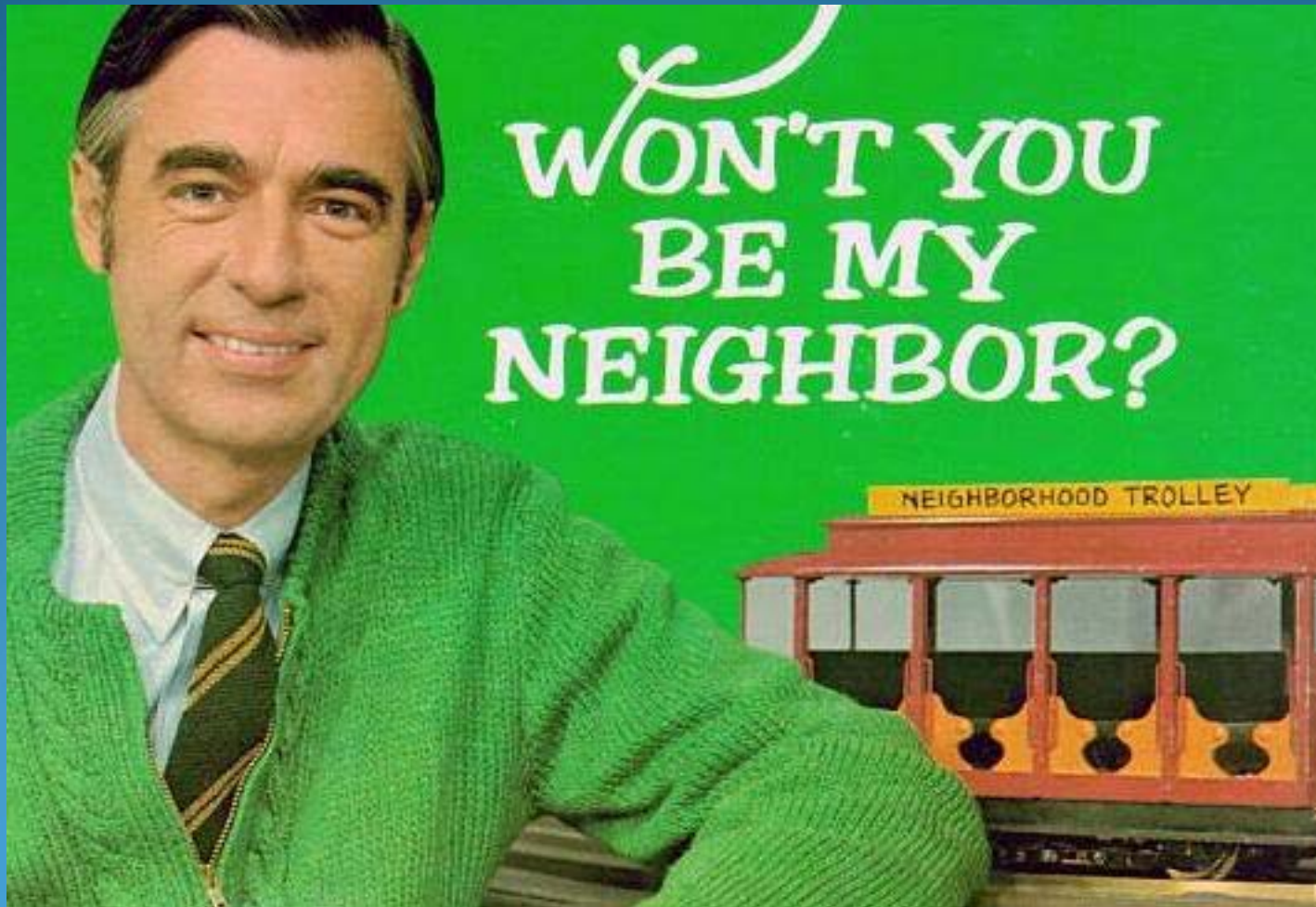
44% began inspecting or pumping their septic system



18% stopped using fertilizers and 14% stopped using pesticides around their well

Impacts

- 65% share the information with others



Next Steps

- Continue workshops
- Developing self mailer – Test Your Well
- Let's Review self mailer

Discussion

- Your thoughts?
- Other ideas to
 - Encourage testing?
 - Increase community involvement?