

Kennebunk region water district, Poland Spring reach agreement

June 05, 2008

The Trustees of the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District are prepared to sign a spring water agreement with Poland Spring that will provide a significant new source of revenue for the district.

The spring water is located on and near the Wells Blueberry Barrens property along Branch Brook, purchased by the Water District in 2007.

The purchased property includes the site of a former water collection and loading operation along the Wire Road in Wells. The source of the proposed new spring water operation will be in the Town of Wells, but the loading station will be in Sanford, eliminating such trucks from Wire Road.

"We see this as a great opportunity for the water district and its customers," said Water District Superintendent Norm Labbe in a written statement.

The proposed spring water sale is a key component in the district's long-term goal to best manage and protect the Branch Brook watershed while also augmenting its surface water supply with groundwater sources. The Water District has recently developed an additional 3 million gallons per day of high quality groundwater to help meet peak seasonal demands, supplementing Branch Brook during the Brook's low flow summer season.

"We can use the revenue to help stabilize rates for our customers, invest in additional water supplies, or address other priorities as they arise," Labbe said. Revenues are expected to be between \$250,000 and \$500,000 per year.

"These new revenues are particularly important," he added, "in a time of sharply rising energy and material costs.

The potential to sell spring water was previously covered in the local press last year and in the district's newsletter this past January."

Water District Trustees recently reached an agreement on terms with Poland Spring, which gives the district control of water withdrawals including the ability to curtail or terminate them in the event of drought conditions affecting local wells or Branch Brook and for other emergencies.

"We are extremely pleased that Poland Spring has agreed to these terms, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship," said Robert Emmons, president of the Water District Board of Trustees.

A vote is expected at a June 25 trustee meeting. The public is welcome to attend and comment.

Prior to the meeting, questions or suggestions may be directed to Norm Labbe at 985-3385.