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DEC CLOSES KING PHILLIP'S SPRING DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS Popular Spring is Located Near Exit 30 of the Northway

King Phillip's Spring, a popular spring near Exit 30 of the Northway (I87), has been closed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), due to potential health risks from drinking its waters.

DEC removed the pipe to the spring after periodic waters samples taken by DEC over the past 6 months indicated high levels of coliform bacteria exceeding Department of Health water quality standards.

"The Department understands that obtaining water from the spring is very popular with visitors and residents," said DEC Regional Director Betsy Lowe. "The decision to close the spring was made after considerable deliberation, however, it reflects our responsibility to ensure the safety of the public."

Coliform bacteria are found in the digestive tracts of animals, including humans, and their wastes. While not necessarily a pathogen themselves, the presence of these bacteria in drinking water, however, generally is a result of a problem with water treatment or the pipes which distribute the water, and indicates that the water may be contaminated with organisms that can cause disease. Disease symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea and possibly jaundice and any associated headaches and fatigue.

DEC weighed a number of factors before making the decision to close the spring, such as NYS Department of Health (DOH) regulation and disinfection.

DOH regulations require that public drinking water supplies be treated or taken from underground wells - the spring is essentially a surface water supply.

Measures to disinfect the pipe and spring are only temporary. Due to the location and accessibility of the spring, it can be easily contaminated by humans or animals at any time - even shortly after the system has been disinfected.

Constructing and maintaining a permanent structure and with equipment to disinfect the water would not comply with the Article XIV of the State Constitution and the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan. It most likely would be costly, ruin the experience of obtaining water from the spring and change the taste of the spring water, as well.

DEC regrets the inconvenience caused by the closure of the spring, but can not ignore its responsibility to protect the public. DEC continues to recommend that users of the Adirondack Forest Preserve treat any water obtained from surface waters, including springs, before drinking or cooking with it. Questions from the public may be directed to the DEC Region 5 Lands & Forests Office at 518-897-1291 or r5info@gw.dec.state.ny.us

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