

## Roadside Springs

### What is a roadside spring?

Roadside springs are places where during construction of a road or modification of nearby land, groundwater springs were intersected and further developed by the property owner to enable access by the public. They are often made to be visible by passers-by.

### **DO NOT DRINK WATER FROM ROADSIDE SPRINGS!**

Because water from roadside springs is groundwater that has come in contact with the surface of the ground, it is not known what contaminants are in the spring water. According to a study performed by the Pennsylvania State University (PSU) Extension<sup>1</sup>, over 90% of roadside springs that were sampled contained some level of total coliform bacteria. About 1/3 of those same springs tested positive for *E. coli* bacteria. As the spring water reaches the surface and flows over exposed ground, it becomes susceptible to contamination such as total coliform bacteria and *E. coli*. These springs are often not tested by the landowner for contaminants that may be present. They are also not treated for removal of those contaminants like a regulated water system is. Therefore, roadside springs should not be used as a potable water source.

Waterborne pathogens (*Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, and *E. coli*) can cause symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Roadside spring water could also contain chemicals that can cause long-term health effects, such as kidney and liver damage, nervous system disorders, and birth defects.

As an alternative to using these unregulated and untreated roadside springs, it is recommended that potable water is obtained from either a regulated public water system that is required to protect its source water, treat and monitor its water on a regular basis, or from a properly installed and maintained home drinking water well. Bottled water is another safe alternative to using roadside springs.

For more information, visit [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov).



<sup>1</sup> <https://extension.psu.edu/roadside-springs>