



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

Date of Issuance: March 12, 2021

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Launches Virtual Science  
Program for Springfield Students**

*Offered in partnership with Springfield Public Schools and World is Our Classroom*

In partnership with Springfield Public Schools and World is Our Classroom, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce the launch of the “Virtual Visit to Cobble Mountain” program for Springfield seventh graders. For the past ten years the Commission has hosted Springfield seventh graders in Blandford, Granville, and Westfield for an in-depth tour of Cobble Mountain Reservoir and West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant. Now, despite the pandemic, that learning opportunity will continue this school year.

Like the in-person visit, the virtual program introduces students to their drinking water system and all the work that goes into producing clean, safe drinking water.

The program features six lessons, each with an accompanying video and hands-on activity. With a few clicks on their laptop, students will visit Cobble Mountain Reservoir, located in Blandford and Granville, and explore the ecology of the pristine Little River Watershed. Students will also see the water filtration process at West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant located in Westfield and view the Commission’s certified laboratory where chemists and technicians perform daily water quality tests. Students will also learn more about the gravity-fed distribution system and how the treated water makes its way to their home and school. And finally, the videos and activities highlight the many different jobs and responsibilities of the 250 employees at the Commission, and the variety of career opportunities in the water sector.

Although remote learning has many challenges, it has also introduced many new and exciting learning opportunities, including this virtual program. The Virtual Visit to Cobble Mountain enables the Commission to engage with even more students, teachers, and families, without the restraints of scheduling, weather, and facility size, which limited the total number of seventh grade science classes that could visit in-person each school year. The video tours also give students the chance to experience areas of Cobble Mountain Reservoir and West Parish Filters previously inaccessible by school groups. The videos also allow for students to hear from a wider variety of Commission employees about their job responsibilities, and career path – perhaps inspiring future water professionals who want to work in the environmental field and serve their community.



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The science and engineering concepts covered in the virtual program are part of the seventh-grade science curriculum and align with the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework. The program will be utilized by seventh grade science teachers in Springfield Public Schools, the Springfield Empowerment Zone, and St. Michael's Academy.

Teachers will be able to include the virtual lessons in their science classes throughout the remainder of the school year. Looking forward to school year 2021-2022 and beyond, the Commission plans to continue using technology to enhance drinking water and wastewater educational opportunities, with the intention that virtual lessons can be used in conjunction with in-person, experiential learning. The Commission looks forward to once again hosting students and teachers, in-person at Cobble Mountain Reservoir, as soon as it is safe to do so.

The Commission's contracted wastewater operator, SUEZ, in partnership with World is Our Classroom, is also providing a similar virtual learning opportunity to Springfield fifth graders who would typically be able to tour the wastewater treatment plant located on Bondi's Island in Agawam. This is the twentieth year of the wastewater education program.

For more information on drinking water and wastewater education please visit the Commission's website <https://waterandsewer.org/education/educational-programs/>.

**About the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is an independent, regional public utility that provides drinking water and wastewater service to approximately 250,000 people in the lower Pioneer Valley.

**About World Is Our Classroom**

World Is Our Classroom, Inc. (WIOC), a Springfield-based 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, is founded on the principle that students learn best when they see classroom lessons reinforced in the real world. For the past twenty years, WIOC and its partners have developed and implemented some of the region's most innovative non-traditional classroom programs involving active, hands-on learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, math, and manufacturing (STEMM). The programs follow a curriculum from fifth grade through high school.

**END**