New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Remediation, Region 8
6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon, New York 14414-9519
Phone: (716) 226-5353 • **FAX:** (716) 226-8696
Website: www.dec.state.ny.us

John P. Cahill
Commissioner

January 31, 2000

Re: Modock Road Springs Contamination

Dear Resident:

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH), in cooperation with the Town of Victor, have been investigating groundwater contamination in the vicinity of Modock and Dryer Roads. This letter provides a summary of the contamination problem. Additionally, we request that, if you have an active or abandoned well which has not been previously sampled, you please contact James Craft of this office (226-5352) or David Napier of the New York State Department of Health in Rochester (423-8071). While most area residents use public water supplied by the Town of Victor/Monroe County Water Authority, a few residents use groundwater for household supplies or for lawn/garden watering and other purposes. If you use a well or have an abandoned well that has not been sampled, your response will help to confirm that all wells at risk have been identified. If you are not using well water, the groundwater contamination problem described below will not impact you.

Summary of Overall Problem

- Groundwater contamination extends northward from an area south of Dryer Road to a discharge point (a wetland) at the Modock Road Springs with the axis of the problem centered roughly on Hunter's Run (see attached map). The southern extent and source of the problem is unknown; further investigation is planned.

- The contaminants are:
  Trichloroethene (TCE) - concentrations up to 320 parts per billion (ppb);
  1,1,1-Trichloroethane (TCA) - concentrations up to 180 ppb; and
  1,1-Dichloroethene (DCE) - concentrations up to 17 ppb.
  The NYS water quality standard for these contaminants is 5 ppb.

- Impacts include a former Village of Victor water supply (Modock Road Springs), four residential wells, and a spring-fed wetland/stream.

- Most area residents are connected to public water, but a few residents still use wells for their household water supply. As noted above, if you have an active or abandoned well that has not been sampled, please call; sampling your well may help to better define the problem.

Summary of Investigations - In 1990, State-mandated sampling of community water supplies revealed the presence of trichloroethene (TCE), 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA) and 1,1-dichloroethene (DCE) in the eastern springs on Modock Road. The Village of Victor stopped using the springs as a source of drinking water after contamination was discovered. Since that time, DEC and DOH have provided technical assistance to the Town and Village of Victor in the form of periodic testing of the springs and residential wells in the area. DEC also installed several groundwater monitoring wells south of the springs to better define the extent of contamination. However, the exact source of the contamination remains unknown.

In 1999, DEC received a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to further investigate the extent of contamination. The State installed and sampled four groundwater monitoring wells along Dryer Road and Surrey Lane and sampled several area residential wells. While the groundwater near the Town of Victor gravel pit on Dryer Road was determined to be uncontaminated, contaminants were found in two additional residential wells in the vicinity of Hunter's Run. Previously, two contaminated residential wells were known between Modock and Dryer Roads. All of the homeowners have been made aware of the contamination.

Type of Contamination - The contaminants, TCE, TCA, and DCE, have been detected in laboratory analyses of groundwater samples at concentrations totaling over 500 micrograms per liter, or parts per billion (ppb). The New York State groundwater quality standard for these compounds is 5 ppb. The contaminants are part of a general group of organic (carbon-containing) chemicals known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). TCE and TCA are commonly used as degreasing solvents and, when spilled or released into the environment, can form very persistent groundwater contamination problems. The third chemical, DCE, is a likely breakdown product of TCA (i.e, it forms when TCA degrades).

Extent of Contamination - Groundwater contamination extends over one mile from an area south of Dryer Road to the Modock Road Springs. The axis of the problem appears to be centered roughly on Hunter's Run and extends northward in the direction of groundwater flow to a discharge point (a wetland) at the Modock Road Springs (see attached map). The southern extent and source of the problem is currently unknown. The depth to groundwater varies from 40 to 70 feet below ground surface and only shallow wells (less than 100 feet deep) have shown contamination. Analytical data show that bedrock wells (150-220 feet deep) have not been impacted. Information obtained during well drilling indicates the presence of a clay layer at a depth of roughly 80 feet which appears to protect deeper groundwater from the contamination.

At Modock Road Springs, the contaminated groundwater discharges into a wetland. As the contaminated groundwater emerges from the ground and contacts the atmosphere, the contaminant levels drop to double-digit ppb levels. A small northward-flowing stream drains the wetland at Modock Road; the stream shows diminishing contaminant levels with distance from the wetland (below NYS surface water quality standards of 5 ppb at the intersection of Raccoon Run and Rabbit Ear Pass and below detection limits at NY Route 251).

What Happens Next - Further investigation will focus on areas south of Dryer Road in an effort to locate the source of contamination. The State intends to pursue this investigation in spring 2000. The scope of the investigation will be contingent on funding sources.

If you have any questions or, as noted above, if you have a well not previously sampled, please contact me at 226-5352 or David Napier of the New York State Department of Health at 423-8071.

Sincerely,

James H. Craft
Engineering Geologist