



Contribution from Kilingi Nõmme



Water through ages

After the last ice age there was very much water in Estonia -mannyy deep and largc lakcs, big rivers and wetland. Nowadays the rivers and lakes are smaller but still we have much water. In our folksongs and tales nobody dies of first, but often the people die of drowning or they drown themselves for the unhappy love. Flood has been the problem for our farmers always. They ditched, drained the bogs, lowered the level of lakes, but still didn't have enough suitable land for agriculturc. And rains! It was normal that it was raining during spring and autumn. but sometimes it was raining the whole summer.

In soviet time they started to fight against water too actively -to drain the bogs and marshes. to straighten the rivers, cultivated too large fields, destroying so the balance of nature.

Today the situation is better, but the changed climate bas brought the new problems. Hot and dry summers have caused lakes and rivers going down. some local wells are empty, but still we have extensive water resources. Groundwater is the main source of drinkjng water in Estonia, except in Tallinn and Narva where surface water is used. The majority of drinking water in Estonia meets EU standards, with some cxceptions. Surface water quality has improved since 1990.

Water abstraction from inland water bodies and groundwater has decreased as a result of decreased industrial use, also of water saving measures introduced in both industries and households. Taxes for water use and emission of pollutants into water bodies are efficient tools for reducing pollution and pressure on watcr resource.

The response to water quality improvement has been an increase in investments in water management, which are coming from different sources: state and local governments budgets, business activities of companies and foreign aid and loans.

The basis for activities in water resources protection are Estonian National Environmental Strategy and National Environmental Action Plan.

Groundwater is an important source of drinking water. Since World War II groundwater resources have been used on an extensive basis by industry, agriculture and population. The reorganisation of the economic system in the 90's has brought a substantial decrease in ground water consumption. The reason for this is primarily a decrease in water consumption due to the closing down of industries and decrease of production. Water is also used in a more sustainable manner since the introduction of water saving measures and the reduction of the leakage from the supply system.

As a result of the decline in groundwater abstraction, an increase in the water level of the deepest aquifer -Cambrian Vendian has been recordcd in the areas of most intensive water abstraction: Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve. Watcr levels of other aquifers have also risen.

The base of Kilingi Nõmme consists of the old red sandstone, there is enough groundwater here. According the analyses our water appropriates to the standards. The central waterworks has three borings (70-140m deep), which supply the centre and some parts of the town. The problem is the scantiness of fluor, but we cannot add it, because it is too expensive for us. We do not clean our water, because there is no necessity for it. The more serious problem is the quality of water in many small living houscs, they have their own opened wells with a curb, quality of water is variable and depends on the construction, location and local sanitary treatment.

As in soviet time the price of water was very cheap, the users gave no attention to save water, much water was used for wetting the gardens in dry time. Now, when the price of centrally supplied water increased, many people bought the gauges. started check the leakings, so the use of water has decreased. Nowadays there is no industrial use of water too.

The cleaning of waste water we managed to solve some years ago, when we built the modern biological cleaning system. There is the basin with aeration, the mud bacteria clean water, the superfluous mud is mixed with peat, sawdust and leaves and used as compost for green area. Again there is the problem with waste water of small living houses which have their own wells. For cleaning they have the small septic tanks or grounds. They are out of control, and often do not adequate to demands. It is the danger to our waters, but at the moment we look through eyes because there is no simple and cheap solution.

The main task for our town is to continue the building of new pumps and pipes for water and waste water. As the living houses are rather far from each other it is very expensive, our town's budget is for running costs mainly. We need money from state and from abroad. We must start to test and make the professional projects for future to avoid the mistakes. Very important is to start thinking about small and modern bores and septic tanks for the groups of houses because it is unthinkable to connect all the houses to the central system. We need to explain more the people about our nature and its protection. We have many good new laws on state and local level, but we have problems to guarantee to observe them. the awareness of the people is rather low.

A month ago we accepted the new waterworks plan for our town. According to this plan we need about 4.5 millions euro. As the annual budget of our town is about 1.3 millions euro, then you understand, that we are not able to follow this plan using our own money. Now we search, where to get money. Nowadays money for this purpose comes from EU, we hope to get it from EU too.

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