



THE NEWSLETTER

Dubuque County Conservation Society
"Organized in 1933 for Protection of Soil, Forests, Waters and Wildlife"
P.O. Box 645
Dubuque, IA 52004-0645



HOW SAFE IS BOTTLED WATER

This appears in the October 07, 2019 issue of TIME By [Seth M. Siegel](#)

Bottled water has gone from a convenience to an alternative drinking-water system, with about a third of Americans choosing it over tap water most or all of the time. Why? More than 90% of those buying bottled water cite “safety” and “quality” as the reasons, but while it’s true that it can indeed be safe, this isn’t always the case.

Much has been written about the trash problem created by the billions of disposable plastic drinking-water bottles sold each year in the U.S. Far less is understood about the contents of those bottles. According to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from 2009, the most recent data available, about 70% of the bottled water sold in the U.S. was not subject to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation. That’s because if water is bottled and sold in the same state, as is the case for some smaller labels, it’s considered intrastate commerce and is therefore regulated by the state. This isn’t necessarily a problem—some states’ regulations are stricter than the FDA’s—but the GAO report also said these rules can be less comprehensive than those for tap water, which must comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Bottled water under the FDA’s purview may not get the scrutiny you expect either. This is not a reflection of the Trump Administration’s antiregulation bias. Bottled water was an \$18.5 billion (wholesale) industry in the U.S. in 2017, but under Presidents of both parties, FDA oversight has been lightly staffed. Furthermore, the agency allows bottlers to fill bottles with tap water. While the water is usually treated, this is not a guarantee.

This isn’t to say you should worry that every bottle of water you drink is contaminated. Rather, a better understanding of how the industry works is important for public health. Major bottled-water suppliers like Nestlé, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, as well as prestige brands like Fiji and Perrier, have an incentive to do all they can to sell safe drinking water. At a minimum, they want to make sure that their brands are not injured by a loss of reputation. But there are hundreds of bottled-water brands, and some lesser-known bottlers—working on tiny profit margins—may not share the concern of the most recognizable ones. Because they don’t have to worry about public confidence in their brand name, they can stop using one label and start selling under another without changing the source.

A scientifically rigorous study from 1999 by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which tested three samples of more than 100 bottled-water brands, revealed that about a third of the bottles examined had levels of bacteria or chemical contaminants above state or industry standards or guidelines. Erik D. Olson, senior director for health and food at NRDC, believes a similar test today would yield similar results, but says he can’t say for sure without additional monitoring. As an example of ongoing problems, he cites a recent investigation by Consumer Reports that found several brands of bottled water contained potentially unsafe levels of arsenic.

The bottles themselves can also present a health concern, as only a small percentage of all bottled water sold in the U.S. is bottled and shipped in a stable material like glass. Even if the water that fills a plastic bottle is pure, if it sits long enough—and especially if it’s stored in a hot place—there’s a risk of phthalates and other chemical agents in the plastic leaching into the water. Phthalates are endocrine-disrupting agents that pose special threats to pregnant women and young kids.

When contaminated water is found in Flint, Mich.; Newark, N.J.; or Puerto Rico, among other places, millions of bottles are shipped and distributed as a temporary solution. Many people also buy bottled water to consume in their homes, presumably only a few steps from vastly cheaper tap water.

Given the potential risks of bottled water and the pervasive fears about tap, consumers may feel they have nowhere to turn. The answer lies in improving the nation’s drinking-water infrastructure through advanced filtration systems—and publicizing that effort—so tap water becomes a more appealing option. No one likes paying over 300 times more than they have to, so by fixing tap water, a virtuous circle would be created: less trash, a better environment, cheaper water, better national health—and the peace of mind that will come from knowing that drinking water is safe.

Iowa water quality

Submitted by Pat Hayes from the Des Moines Register

According to the Des Moines Register, Iowa will report water impairments on 622 river, lake and wetland segments to the Environmental Protection Agency as part of its biennial summary of water quality.

That's a 2% increase over the 608 reported in the 2016 report.

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to compile a report every two years.

The 622 water body segments on this year's list had 831 impairments up from 818 in the previous report, DNR officials said.

The most common river impairments in Iowa include the presence of bacteria and fish kills, for which the most common cause is animal waste.

The most severe problem for lakes is algae growth, often the result of nutrients such as phosphorous from fertilizer washing from corn fields. Iowa also leads the nation in corn production

My personal feelings are that this voluntary program is a dismal failure, our water quality gets worse and worse every year.

One of the steps I feel we should take immediately is to mandate a 50 foot riparian buffer along any stream or river. I have yet to travel on waterways where corn or soybean fields are actually not falling into the water.

Another step that should be taken immediately is to forbid manure from being placed on frozen ground. This law was changed several years ago. It should be the company's responsibility to have enough storage to hold the manure until the ground is no longer frozen.

Dubuque's WaterSmart Tool Now Available to All Water Customers

From: DubuqueToday Tidbits November 26, 2019

WaterSmart, the City of Dubuque's free, water management tool and online payment portal, is now available to all Dubuque water customers: single-family homes, businesses, commercial/industrial, multi-family residential properties, and other types of properties.

Previously, the tool was only available to single-family home customers. Beginning on Monday, Nov. 25, when potential leaks are detected by water meters, automatic email notifications will be generated and sent to customers who have provided an email address to the City. Those emails will include a link to access WaterSmart at www.cityofdubuque.org/watersmart.

The WaterSmart platform interfaces with water metering system and enables City water customers to monitor their daily water usage and costs, make online payments through an easy-to-use web and mobile portal, compare their usage to similar households and properties, and view tips on how to save water and money. Customers can also choose to receive notifications if there is unusual water consumption at their property while they are away – a popular option with “snowbirds.” Additionally, customers with multiple accounts are able to access them all at once with WaterSmart. There is no additional equipment needed and no cost to customers to use the tool.

Interested customers are encouraged to visit www.cityofdubuque.org/watersmart to become familiar with the tool and create a user profile. For additional information, please call the City of Dubuque Utility Billing Office at 563-589-4144 or email utilityb@cityofdubuque.org.

REAP Program

Submitted by Pay Hayes

On Tuesday November 19th I attended the region 8 REAP assembly. Region 8 includes the following counties: Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson.

Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) assemblies give all Iowans an opportunity to share and discuss their visions for Iowa's outdoor recreation, soil and water enhancement, historical resources and land management and more.

It was well attended and I believe that there were 5 state legislators in attendance. Each county selects a representative to send it to Des Moines to the REAP congress.

The REAP program is going to expire in 2020. I made a motion that was voted on and passed unanimously that REAP be extended indefinitely and fully funded in the future. (It has never been fully funded).

Another motion that was made and passed was that the program continue to acquire property for public access. This part of the program is, and has been, strongly contested by Iowa Farm Bureau.

I found out that money from REAP has been used to fund programs that should have come from the general funds. REAP was created to enhance environmental programs not subsidize them.

All sportsman and environmentalists need to contact their state legislators and state senators and demand they support the continuation of REAP and fund it properly.

Scholarship award 2019

Submitted by Paul Kaufman



The Dubuque County Conservation Society is pleased to announce that Isabella Metcalf has been awarded its \$1500.00 annual scholarship. Isabella majors in Environmental Science and Biology at the University of Dubuque and is active in an environmental awareness group on campus. She recently presented her research on the ecology of native bee species and their relationships to natural and managed habitat in Dubuque County to the Entomological Society of America at its National Conference. Isabella is also doing research on native bat species in Dubuque County. She plans to continue her education in ecological research after her graduation. The Society congratulates Isabella on her well-deserved award.

Pictured are Isabella Metcalf and Paul Kaufman

Fall and Winter Energy-Saving Tips

The strategies below will help you save energy, save money, and stay comfortable during the cool fall and cold winter months. Some of the tips below are free and can be used on a daily basis to increase your savings; others are simple and inexpensive actions you can take to ensure maximum savings through the winter.

If you haven't already, conduct an [energy audit](#) to find out where you can save the most, and consider making a larger investment for long-term energy savings.

Also check out no-cost and low-cost tips to save energy during the [spring and summer](#).

Take Advantage of Heat from the Sun

- Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

Cover Drafty Windows

- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.
- Find out about other [window treatments](#) and coverings that can improve energy efficiency.

Adjust the Temperature

- When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A smart or programmable [thermostat](#) can make it easy to set back your temperature.
- If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.

Find and Seal Leaks

- Seal the air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes ("plumbing penetrations"), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

- Find out how to [detect air leaks](#).
- Learn more about air sealing [new](#) and [existing homes](#).
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.
- Find out how to select and apply the appropriate [caulk](#) and [weatherstripping](#).

Maintain Your Heating Systems

- Schedule service for your [heating system](#).
- Furnaces and heat pumps: Replace your filter once a month or as needed. Find out more about maintaining [furnaces or boilers](#) and [heat pumps](#).
- Wood- and Pellet-Burning Heaters: Clean the flue vent regularly and clean the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that your home is heated efficiently. Find other maintenance recommendations for [wood- and pellet-burning appliances](#).

Reduce Heat Loss from the Fireplace

- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- When you use the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly--approximately 1 inch--and close doors leading into the room. Lower the thermostat setting to between 50° and 55°F.
- If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.
- Purchase grates made of C-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room.
- Add caulking around the fireplace hearth. Find out more techniques to improve your [fireplace or wood-burning appliance's](#) efficiency. Learn tips for safe and efficient fireplace [installation and wood burning](#).

Lower Your Water Heating Costs

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands.
Find other strategies for [energy-efficient water heating](#).

Lower Your Holiday Lighting Costs

- Use light-emitting diode -- or "LED" -- holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating your home for the winter holidays.
Learn about the advantages and potential cost savings of [LED holiday light strings](#).
Find manufacturers and brands of [ENERGY STAR® certified](#) decorative light strings.

Projects draw attention to plastics in the Mississippi

From: <https://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/Our-Mississippi/>

In a laboratory just downstream from the Melvin Price Locks and Dams in Alton, Ill., Dr. Anthony Dell peers down the microscope at countless tiny, colorful pieces of plastic, so little as to potentially go unnoticed, while nearby, plastics of a more familiar form float.

Instead of the fish and invertebrates scientists generally study here at the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, he and colleagues have instead floated white plastic bowls like you'd use for a picnic, bright red Solo cups, chips bags and water bottles—all to test how quickly each type of plastic breaks down and what that might mean for the countless critters and humans that ingest what remains.

Dell is a research scientist at NGRREC and is leading development of the new “Mississippi River Plastic Pollution” (MRPP) consortium that includes partners at Lewis and Clark Community College, Saint Louis University, and a forensic science laboratory at the University of Staffordshire in Great Britain that specializes in the breakdown of plastics and microplastics—applying expertise gained in CSI cases to the health of those who depend on the river. Photos of the new projects underway in NGRREC’s mesocosms—controlled outdoor laboratories that mimic natural conditions—aren’t going to capture the imagination in the same way as a dolphin or sea turtle tangled in a plastic grocery bag. But the results have the potential to be every bit as startling.

Microplastics, generally no larger than a Mardi Gras bead, can fill the guts of animals, making it difficult for them to consume normal food. They also are known to attract other pollutants like a magnet. That magnifies the potential poi-

sons for anything that ingests them. And they come from so many sources—from the breakdown of bags and bottles to tiny plastic beads found in things from fleece jackets to toothpaste—that they're ubiquitous in water column and river sediment. Even so, the impacts have rarely been studied or focused on in freshwater systems—until now.

Some 100 Great Lakes mayors recently called upon manufacturers to halt use of microplastics in personal care items. Mississippi River mayors through the Cities and Towns Initiative have launched their own project, one that includes the United Nations as a partner, to both improve plastic recycling capabilities in river towns and to convince plastic-producing companies to pledge to reduce usage by 20 percent.

“We’re talking a basin that drains 31 states, and 40 percent of the Gulf of Mexico’s plastic problem comes right out of the Mississippi River,” says Colin Wellenkamp, the Cities and Towns Initiative’s executive director. “This plastic waste as it makes its way downriver doesn’t remain whole; it gets torn up, broken apart and turned into toxic confetti. The fish eat it, we eat the fish, it gets sucked into water treatment facilities, gets caught into water used for things like the beverage industry. It makes itself known throughout the food chain.”

No one sees the problem as vividly as those participating in river cleanups as their full-time job. One of the most shocking hauls of plastics came in a cleanup near Memphis, says Meghan Elgan, education and projects coordinator for the clean-up organization Living Lands and Waters. Volunteers collect tens of thousands of plastic bottles each year, and that’s by far the majority of the tons of waste collected annually in U.S. rivers.

Researcher Dell said he’d heard plenty about plastics in the marine system, especially about larger pieces affecting sea birds and fish and marine mammals—but not much about plastics in freshwater or terrestrial ecosystems.

“Only for the last five to 10 years have scientists started exploring the plastic cycle in freshwater ecosystems,” he said, “despite that 90 percent of plastic that ends up in marine systems coming from rivers.”

Going forward, the MRPP consortium will concentrate on a few key themes related to understanding the “plastic cycle” in the Mississippi River basin, including where the plastic is found in the environment, which animals interact with the plastic, and what (if any) are the broader ecological effects. As an ecologist, Dell is especially interested in understanding how plastics are affecting river ecosystems and the countless microbes, plant and animals species that comprise them—many of which are central to the human society.

“Ultimately, our group hopes to contribute to an understanding of how much plastic there is in the Mississippi River basin, where is coming from and how does it move around, and what impacts it is having on the ecosystem, including humans” he said. “Is it changing species interaction and affecting structure of the entire food web? Or is it basically everywhere and not doing anything, which is of course possible, but is not what early work in this area is showing.” —K.S.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Pick up trash in your surrounding area.
- Bring your own reusable cups, straws, silverware, napkins and use when getting take-out meals or beverages.
- Avoid any personal care products that list “poly” as an ingredient.
- Use reusable grocery bags, sandwich bags, food covers and paper towels.
- Avoid purchasing fleece and other synthetic clothing and wait until it’s actually dirty to wash the clothing you already own.
- Take the Living Lands and Waters challenge: [facebook.com/groups/livinglandswatersgroup](https://www.facebook.com/groups/livinglandswatersgroup) SOURCE: LIVING LANDS AND WATERS

Events Calendar

Swiss Valley Nature Center/EB Lyons/Audubon Society/Hurstville Calendars

All programs are subject to weather conditions. To check for changes to this schedule, check the websites in the list of organizations below. The programs are open to the public and are designed for people of all ages unless otherwise described. For additional info or preregistration contact one of the following depending on the program’s location:

Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road Peosta, IA 52068, 563-556-6745. www.dubuquecounty.org or you can search for “Swiss Valley Nature Center Facebook”.

EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA at 563-556-0620. www.minesofspain.org

Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63rd Street, Maquoketa, IA at 563- 652-3783. www.jacksonccb.com

Dubuque Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3174, Dubuque, IA 52004-3174, 563-582-215. www.audubondubuque.org/

Audubon Society December Program, Dec. 12, 2019, 7 pm EB Lyons Nature Center
Pelagic Birding

Christmas Bird Count December Program, Dec. 14, 2019, 8 am EB Lyons Nature Center

Meet at 8:00 am at E.B Lyons Nature Center and return at 4:30 pm for a chili supper and tabulate results. participate part or whole time. If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. Dress warmly as we may observe from the car or walk some.

Deck the Halls for Wildlife December 14 1-2:30 pm Swiss Valley Nature Center

While you are decking the halls this Christmas don't forget about wildlife! We will have several projects available to help decorate your trees and yard for our feathered friends! Please RSVP to 563-556-6745.

Kids in Nature: Bird Beak Buffet December 19 9-10am Swiss Valley Nature Center

Everything has got to eat! Most birds have specially designed beaks depending on what they eat. Come and learn about bird beaks! Call 563-556-6745 to RSVP

Board of Supervisors and Conservation Board Joint Meeting December 19 4pm

Swiss Valley Nature Center

Discuss Conservation Board long range plan

Candlelight Night Hike December 21 6-8 pm Swiss Valley Nature Preserve

Come and discover the wonders of the winter nighttime forest on a self led hike through the preserve. The trail will be lit by candles. Pull on all your winter gear and join us!

Winter Plunge Camp December 27 8am-4pm Swiss Valley Nature Center

Plunge into winter break by exploring the great outdoors. Kids will learn about outdoor survival skills, snowshoeing, and more! Bring your snow pants, snow boots and warm clothes. Bring sack lunch and water bottle. \$20 Register [here](#)

Exploring Owl Puke! January 5, 2020 1-2pm Swiss Valley Nature Center

Owls have a unique digestive system. Find out how it works and what they eat. You will also get a chance to dissect your very own owl pellet! Call 563-556-6745 to RSVP.

Audubon Society December Program, Jan.9, 2020, 7 pm EB Lyons Nature Center

TBA

Stars & S'mores January 10, 2020 7-8pm Swiss Valley Nature Center

Discover the night sky! If it a clear night we will have the scopes out to look at objects in the night sky and point out constellations to look for this time of year. We will also have a campfire and s'mores available. Program will only happen if it's a clear night. Call 563-556-6745 to RSVP.

Kids in Nature: Snow Fun January 16, 2020 9-10 am Swiss Valley Nature Center

Bundle the Kids up in their winter gear and be prepared to go out and have some fun in the snow! We will play and look for signs of animals in the winter wonderland of the preserve. Call 563-556-6745 to RSVP.

Bald Eagle Watch January 18, 2020 @ 9am-4pm Grand River Center

This FREE family event celebrates the American Bald Eagle with live bird programs and children's activities. Vendors will have wildlife art, books, nature items available for purchase. Shuttles will be running down to the Lock and Dam for Bald Eagle viewing. Free program. Get more info at www.audubondubuque.org

Snow Painting January 19, 2020 1-3pm Swiss Valley Nature Center

Make your own winter creation by painting in the snow! Make your mark by enjoying some creative outdoor time this winter. Call 563-556-6745 to RSVP.

Other Events Calendar

Winter Farmer's Market Starting Nov 2, then Saturday, 9am-noon Roshek Building 8th and Locust

Company Sponsors

Please support our local sponsors

<i>All Seasons Heating</i> 798 Cedar Cross Rd	<i>DuTrac Credit Union</i> 3465 Asbury	<i>Mines of Spain Rec. Area</i> 8991 Bellevue Heights	<i>Skip Breithbach Feed</i> Balltown, IA
<i>MidWest One</i> 895 Town Clock Plaza	<i>Environmental Management Services</i> 5170 Wolff Rd	<i>Nature's Way Lawn Care</i> 440 Burch St.	<i>Spahn & Rose Lumber Co.</i> 1101 Jackson St.
<i>Artistic Cleaners</i> 107 Locust St.	<i>Sherry Horsfield Farm Bureau Insurance</i> 20214 E Pleasant Grove Rd	<i>Oky Doky Food Mart</i> P.O. Box 300	<i>Stecklein Tree Service</i> Epworth, IA
<i>Brennan Baumhover Ins.</i> 2615 Dodge St.	<i>Floorshow Corporation</i> 1475 Associates Dr.	<i>O'Meara Custom Products</i> 8915 N. Badger Rd.	<i>Steve's Ace Home and Garden</i> 3350 JFK 200 South Locust
<i>Dennis Baumhover Ins.</i> 2615 Dodge St.	<i>The Friedman Group</i> 880 Locust St. P. O. Box 1780	<i>Organic Valley Dickeyville WI</i>	<i>TFM Co.</i> 2040 Kerper Blvd.
<i>Behr's Funeral Home</i> 1491 Main St.	<i>FreuhLeo Consulting and Forester</i> 2230 Chippewa Dr.	<i>Pfohl's Blinds, Drapes Inc.</i> 335 West 1st Street	<i>Therapeutic Massage</i> 2255 JFK Road
<i>Breitbach's Country Dining</i> 563 Balltown Rd.	<i>Hendricks Feed Co.</i> 880 Central	<i>Pheasants Forever Holy Cross, IA</i>	<i>U.S. Bank</i> 270 West 7th
<i>Cedar Cross Overhead Door</i> 1040 Cedar Cross Rd	<i>Herbst Upholstery & Auto</i> 76 Main St	<i>Pregler Electric</i> 216th Ave LaMotte IA	<i>Wahlert High School</i> 2005 Kane Street
<i>Citizens State Bank</i> P.O. Box 50 New Vienna	<i>IIW Engineers & Surveyors P.C.</i> 4155 Pennsylvania	<i>Premier Bank</i> 1975 JFK Rd.	<i>Weber Paper Co.</i> 4300 Chevenelle Dr.
<i>Copper Kettle</i> 2987 JACKSON ST	<i>Kaufmann Painting</i> 17368 S John Deere Rd.	<i>Schuster Heating & Pump</i> 15674 Key City Lane	<i>White Front Feed & Seed</i> 4290 Dodge St.
<i>Dubuque Soil & Water Cons. Dist</i> Epworth, IA	<i>Klauer Optical</i> 1705 Delhi St.	<i>Schuster Tree Service</i> 7273 Schueller Heights Rd	<i>White Water Native Seeds</i> Epworth, IA
<i>Dupaco Credit Union</i> P.O. Box 179	<i>Miller Flooring</i> Box 125 New Vienna	<i>Schwartz Plumbing</i> 4904 Asbury	<i>Zuccaro Dental</i> 895 Main St suite 900
		<i>Sisters of Saint Francis</i> 3390 Windsor Ave.	

Board Members 2019

Name	Title	563 except as noted	Name	563 except as noted
Mark Kaufman	Vice President	879-3452	Gerda Preston Hartman	588-0649
Pat Hayes	President	542-2960	Whitey Kemp	582-7752
Connie Kintzle	Treasurer	583-3907	Punkie Birkel	
Bob Walton	Secretary		Dan Simon	583-0514
Tom Klinge	Newsletter	815-747-7786	Paul Kaufman	583-5030
			Bev Rettenmeier	

Dubuque Co. Conservation Society
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Reminders:

The next open meetings will be held **Tuesday January 14, 2020** and **February 11, 2020**, on the second floor of the Oky-Doky at 250 West 1st street. All Members are invited and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Check the event calendars for some exciting things to do.

Support your local Farmer’s Markets. Support our local Sponsors.

This months insert - None

This month’s focus - Water issues

Change your furnace filter.

Recycle whenever possible.

Visit our web page at www.dbqccs.org

- OR -

Visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dubuque-County-Conservation-Society/421655257997596>

or you can search for “Dubuque County Conservation Society Facebook”.