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WATER WOES

Salons across the country face numerous challenges when it comes to beauty's most precious natural resource—water. Discover how they are overcoming these business-impacting issues.

By Su Clark

When it comes to the operation of a salon, water is the most important natural resource. Depending on where you live though, water can also represent your biggest managerial headache.

As the world prepares to celebrate the 48th annual Earth Day celebration April 22, SALON TODAY is taking a look at some of the water issues plaguing owners across the country, as well as introducing you to three companies looking at water in different ways, trying to help owners overcome their water-related challenges.

From drought in California to lead poisoning in Michigan, it seems the country is experiencing a plague of water woes caused by bad decisions, criminal behavior and the vagaries of climate.

In 2016, it was discovered that in Flint, Michigan, a change to the water source combined with insufficient water treatment during two years had exposed more than 100,000 residents to lead poisoning and other toxins.

►RESTRICTING REGULATIONS

In 1995, long before the Flint crisis, Massachusetts drew up regulations that impacted directly on salons with little reference to businesses in the area. It defined all salon water as industrial waste that could damage the state's water supply. Since then, many salons have been paying to collect their waste water in tanks and ship it out by truck.

"Instead of involving the industry in the development of a thoughtful, long-term solution, they simply forced beauty salons to install a separate holding tank," explains **Frank Zona**, co-owner of **Zona Salon Group**, who has been fighting the ruling ever since. "We must now pay to have it collected by truck."

But Flint and Massachusetts are just two incidences among many facing the industry. During the past year, **Valorie Tate** from **Ecoheads** has been talking to salon owners across the U.S., gathering their stories of water woes. She has uncovered a catalogue of challenges, creating huge discrepancies in what salons pay or the services they receive.

"I assumed low pressure would be the biggest problem facing the beauty industry when it came to water, but as I talked to more and more salons I found a huge variety of water challenges," Tate says. "Salons depend on a good water supply, but for many, guaranteeing that supply simply isn't possible."

When the crisis hit in Flint, access to water was restricted, and in certain areas only bottled water was available. In June 2017, charges were launched against state officials for involuntary manslaughter in connection with a Legionnaires' outbreak that killed 12 people during the crisis.

"It was a terrible time for those salons," says **Randy Withey**, owner of **Pure Bliss Salon and Spa**.

For months, his team, which is based in Munday Township next to Flint and on a different water system, volunteered their Sundays to apply treatments to Flint residents to remove the lead buildup on their hair.

Zona in Massachusetts is still battling locally, and on Capitol Hill, he is furious with the clean-water regulations and with the way they were introduced.

"We were given no opportunity to bring in the manufacturers or to open a dialogue about how products could be altered to meet standards," Zona says. "Suddenly, thousands of salons in Massachusetts were facing a significant new regulation that has not only driven up costs, but also made salons a less attractive tenant group. It has created an uneven playing field within the state and within the industry. Not all salons are affected."

Zona's only solution has been to cut back on water use by installing Ecoheads showerheads, which can cut water usage by 65% while increasing pressure.

►THE MINERAL CHALLENGE

Salon Del Mar in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where water is scarce and hugely expensive, has also benefited from cutting its water usage. After installing its new showerheads, water consumption dropped from 1,200 gallons per stylist per month to 855 gallons.

Water in the area is also heavy with sediment, which makes it harder to rinse shampoo and color out of hair. But owners **Angela Del Mar** and **Kevin Wilson** are not alone in facing that particular challenge. Hard water is a problem besetting nearly 85% of salons in the country.

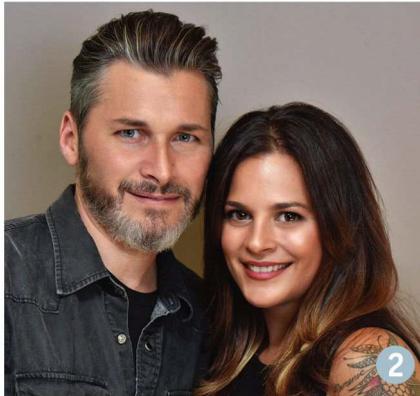
The **B-Hive Organic Salon** in Hillsdale, New Jersey, has water so high in mineral deposits that it plays havoc with the salon's systems and equipment, as well as clients' hair. Even with a digital whole-salon, water-treatment system installed, the hardness of the water can still have an adverse effect on hair, creating a build-up on the scalp that can make it dry and itchy, and causing hair to become unruly.

Owners **James** and **Angela Alba**, past winners of the International Eco Salon of the Year Award, were also concerned about the amount of water needed to rinse hair thoroughly.

►PRESSURE PROBLEMS

Low pressure also drives up costs. **Muse Salon and Spa** in Johns Creek, Georgia,

Continued ►►



1. Allyson King, co-owns Hair + Co BKLYN, in Brooklyn, NY, with husband Shannon. **2.** James and Angela Alba, owners of B-Hive Organic Salon in Hillsdale, NJ. **3.** Daniel Mason-Jones, owner of Muse Salon and Spa in Johns Creek, GA. **4.** Emily Hutcheson-Brown, operations director, V's Barbershops, with locations across Texas, Colorado and Arizona. **5.** Frank Zona, co-owner of the Zona Salon Group. **6.** Kevin Wilson and Angela Del Mar, owners of Salon Del Mar in Santa Fe, NM. **7.** Melissa and Randy Withey, owners of Pure Bliss Salon and Spa in Munday Township, MI.



relocated two miles from their first salon without realizing it meant connecting to a completely different water supply. The water dribbled out of the faucet.

"It took seven to 10 minutes to rinse out color. The majority of our clients have color. So much time was being wasted at the backwash. Neither the team nor the clients were happy," says co-owner **Daniel Mason-Jones**. "With better water pressure, each stylist is now saving as much as 30 minutes a day. Across the team that adds up to more than 10 hours a day, time that is now being used to provide an even better experience for clients."

>NOT SO HOT

But it's not always the water supply from the utility that's the problem. For **Allyson and Shannon King**, owners of **Hair & Co BKLYN** in New York, using less water became their number-one concern, when they discovered their hot water was running cool by 3 p.m.

"After all our meticulous planning before opening, we found the one flaw, our expensive electric water heater—the only option open to us in our building—was unable to keep up with demand on the busiest days," Allyson King says.

>MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Salon groups with locations spread across the country and therefore facing variations in mineral levels, water pressure and waste in each salon, struggle with consistency of service when it comes to water.

18|8 needed to ensure consistent water pressure at each outlet for its True Solution treatment for hair loss and the only way to do that was to fit Ecoheads at each of its 90+ locations.

Chains also can see the variations in costs. **V's Barbershop** witnessed how some of their locations faced higher costs than those in other regions. It was this that prompted V's operations director, **Emily Hutcheson-Brown**, to add Ecoheads to V's fit-out list for all new stores.

"We needed to make sure it was the same experience whether it was happening in Texas, Colorado or Arizona, and that costs were similar," she says. **si**

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3 Solutions to H₂O Issues

Whether it's mineral deposits that wreck havoc on color, low pressure, or dealing with color disposal issues, owners face several issues surrounding water. Here are three companies that are offering some interesting solutions:



Malibu C

Malibu C has built an entire niche business on helping hairdressers tackle issues that result because of minerals in their water.

According to Founder/CEO **Tom Porter**, there are six minerals commonly found in water that can adversely impact hair—calcium, magnesium, copper, iron, silica and lead—and can cause issues from discoloration, dryness, flaking and even hair loss.

"Minerals like magnesium and calcium are good for drinking water, but they have an impact on hair and coloring services," he says. "Mineral issues vary by geography. For example, much of the iron you find in water is the result of glaciers turning over the earth, so you'll find higher concentrations near the Great Lakes. Silica is found in the water of desert communities like Las Vegas and Phoenix. And, Dallas has some of the highest concentrations of chlorine in the water compared to other cities."

Malibu C offers customized Wellness Haircare Remedies that feature a crystallized vitamin complex of nature-inspired ascorbic acid (vitamin C) in the purest, most potent form that helps remove unwanted minerals.

"As a stylist or a corrective-color expert, you need to become a water expert, understanding what is in the water in the communities where your clients reside," Porter says. "When you do, you can help clients with their hair issues, as well as prep the hair canvas before a coloring service, so you can guarantee your color results and prevent the need for color correction."

Discovering what is in the water can be easier than you think. According to Porter, by law every water-treatment facility, either private or municipal, must publish water quality reports public, many of which can be found online. You can also purchase water test strips from a pool supply store or order them from Malibu C and do your own testing on your client's water samples.

"If I was opening a new salon, I would make a water test part of the new client consultation, asking each one to bring in a sample of their water to their first appointment," Porter says. "Immediately you've elevated your consultation, by finding out that client's water situation and letting her know how you can help with certain tools.

Visit malibuc.com/pro for more information on Wellness Haircare Remedies.

Ecoheads

A revolutionary tool for the professional salon, Ecoheads showerheads deliver a high-pressure flow while saving up to 65% of the water used with a conventional showerhead. The water savings not only help the planet, but reward the salon owner with lower utility bills, while delivering a premium guest experience with better water pressure. The showerheads retail for \$125 each and may install directly onto your existing hose or require a new hose. They can be purchased individually, or can come as an option on sinks from **Kaemark**.



Visit ecoheads.com for more details.

Green Circle Salons

When it comes to the quality of water that leaves the salon, that's where Green Circle has the most impact. They've launched a Chemical Capture Program that encourages member salons to collect excess color in a waste bin, and Green Circle collects it and disposes of it safely so it doesn't go into landfills or down the drain, ending up in aquifers and waterways.

Green Circle also measures each salon's color waste, letting them know if they are on average with salons across the country or if they are wasting more.

"By the end of 2016, we had diverted 215,000 pounds of color from our 2,000 member salons, and we ended up saving salons 26% on average on their hair color bills," says **Jennifer Henry**, director of global brand strategy for Green Circle Salons. "Imagine what impact we could make if all salons were on board?"

Municipalities often have source control programs. While in some communities anything can be dropped down the drain, others either mandate or suggest that businesses don't put oils, solvents, paint, cleaning products and chemically based product down the drain.

So what happens to the collected hair-color waste? "It's actually being used as fuel to power a waste-to-energy incineration process," Henry says. "That process creates electricity to power homes and businesses."

While Green Circle is proud of the work they're doing to collect waste color, they know the color in the hair is still being rinsed down the drain, and are on the constant lookout for water filtration systems that can address this issue.

For more information, visit greencirclesalons.ca.



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PRE-SUMMIT SALES
 Total Salon Sales: \$478,600
 Total Service Sales: \$419,000

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When **BESPOKE BEAUTY BAR** owners Christian and Alicia attended **The Summit** they felt awakened and inspired. Here they began to see a long-term vision and their one-on-one meeting with a Summit Salon Consultant was all they needed to walk away feeling truly confident that they would be able to succeed.

THE RESULT: Christian and Alicia now focus much more on leading as mentors and coaches, not as bosses. They are much more attuned to the new talent within the salon. “The professional beauty industry is constantly changing and, let’s be honest, it is about youth. Valuing the ideas of the newer stylists, as opposed to keeping the—‘we always did it this way’ mindset—keeps us constantly growing creatively. We also focus on paying it forward. You are only as good as your newest team member, or the person you are educating and there is always more to learn.”

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