

What is Groundwater?

Groundwater is the water that fills the small spaces between rock particles (sand, gravel, etc.) or cracks in solid rock. Rain, melting snow, or surface water becomes groundwater by seeping into the ground and filling these spaces. The top of the water-saturated zone is called the water table.

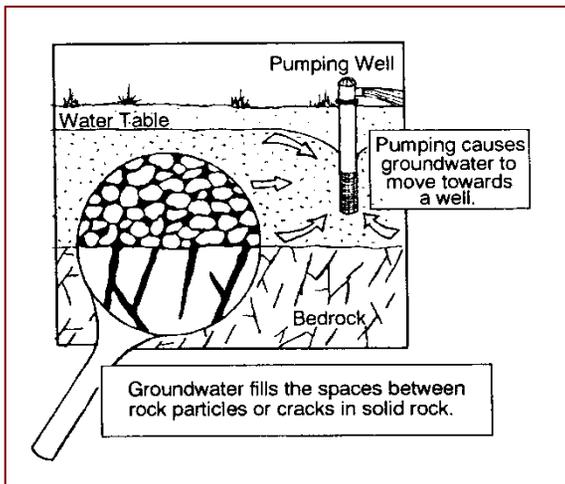
When water seeps in from the surface and reaches the water table, it begins moving towards points where it can escape, such as wells, springs, rivers, or lakes.

A spring occurs when the water table meets the land surface, allowing groundwater to naturally flow out of the ground.

An aquifer is any type of geologic material, such as sand or sandstone that can supply water to wells or springs.

The groundwater, which supplies wells, often comes from within a short distance (a few miles) of the well. How fast groundwater moves depends on how much the well is pumped and what type of rock particles or bedrock it is moving through.

In areas with limestone (sometimes called karst), groundwater can move rapidly through dissolved channels in the rock. This rapid water movement makes limestone areas very sensitive to pollution.



Ways to Help

What can you do?

- Dispose of motor oil at a garage that will recycle it. Never pour oil on the ground or in a storm drain or sewer on the street.
- Pump out your septic system every two or three years. Look under "Septic Tanks" in the Yellow Pages to find a contractor.
- Bring household hazardous waste – such as paint, varnishes, and other chemicals – to a county waste collection site. Call ahead or check the county website for dates.
- Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides on your lawn and garden.
- If you drill a new well, make sure the old one is properly closed and abandoned.
- Do not dump swimming pool water into a creek or storm drain at the end of the season. If possible, direct the water into the sanitary sewer. Otherwise, wait until the chlorine diminishes and then direct pool water onto grass, forest, or other natural area.
- Remember: anything you throw or store on the ground can find its way into the water supply. Store and handle chemicals properly.
- Call the Department of Environmental Protection at 570-327-3636 immediately if you observe a chemical spill.

For more information

Pennsylvania DEP www.dep.state.pa.us
Watershed Protection www.epa.gov/owow/
Center for Watershed Protection www.cwp.org
Drinking Water www.protectdrinkingwater.org
American Waterworks Association: www.awwa.org
Water Resources Education Network (WREN)
wren.palwv.org/resource.html
Maintaining Your Septic System
www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/homeowner_guide_long_customize.pdf

HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Protecting Your Drinking Water



Irvona Municipal Authority
Source Water Protection Program

This program is funded by the PA Department
of Environmental Protection

For more information
Irvona Municipal Authority
230 Hemlock St, PO Box 247
Irvona, PA 16656
(814) 672-3959

A Message from the Irvona Municipal Authority

We work around the clock to provide top quality water to every tap. It is a task that we are proud of and take very seriously. We work hard to protect our water resources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life and our children's future. To maintain a clean, dependable water supply, we need your help.

This brochure was developed to make our community aware of the importance of protecting our water supply. Once a well or river becomes contaminated, the cleanup can take many years and can be very expensive. It is in our community's best interest to take the proper precautions to prevent contaminants from entering our water supply.

If you have any questions about our Source Water Protection Plan, please contact the municipality office..

For more information:

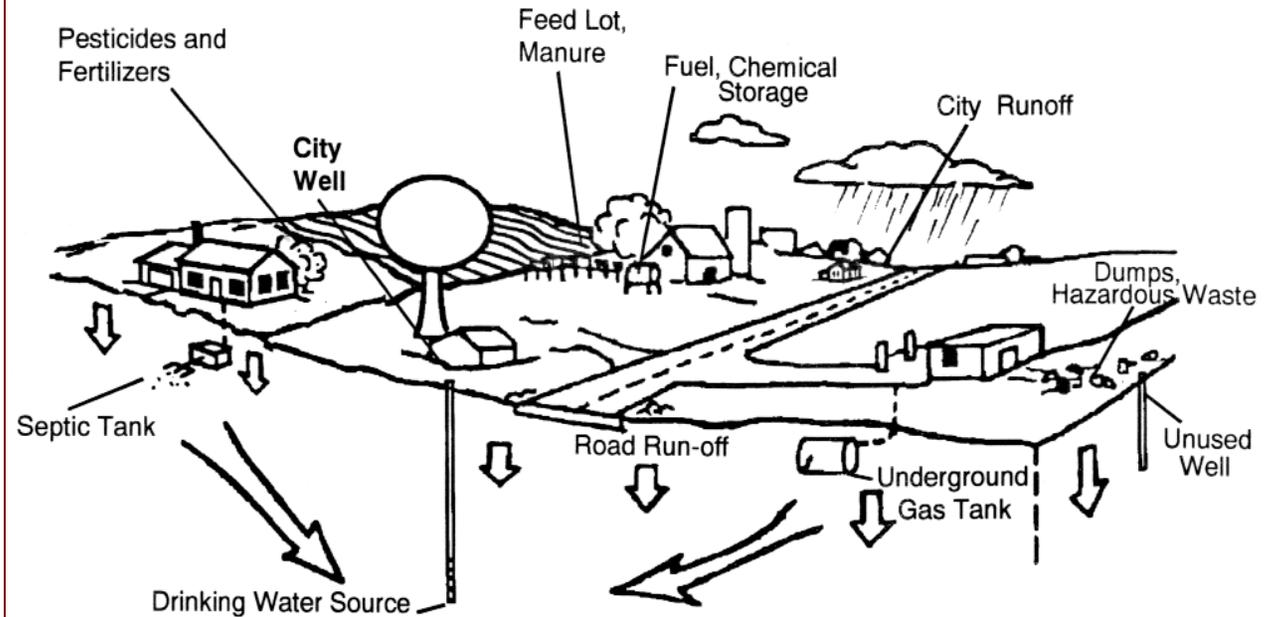
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Engineering and Environmental Services
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Examples of Source Water Contamination



Irvona Municipal Authority obtains its drinking water from a combination of streams and groundwater wells. Source water protection can help prevent drinking water from becoming polluted by managing possible sources of contamination in the watershed. Everyone has an important part to play in protecting drinking water – today and for the future. Source water protection is a community effort – we hope you will read this and other information forwarded to you, and help protect our water supply.

Why do streams, wells, and springs sometimes become polluted? These water sources can become polluted when substances that are harmful to human health enter the groundwater. Common pollutants include gasoline or oil from leaking tanks, nitrate and pesticides from agriculture and lawns, pathogens from livestock and pet waste, salt from winter road maintenance, chemicals from industrial facilities., soil erosion and fuel spills from logging activities. Once groundwater or surface water is contaminated, it must be treated or abandoned as a drinking water source. The expense of treating polluted water or finding a new source of drinking water can be avoided through source water protection.