

Maintaining Your Home Water Well System

Clean drinking water is important. We know that, but we may not know the best way to protect our drinking water and well water. The earth is 80% water. Only 3% of all the water in the world is fresh water, and of that, only 1% is immediately usable. Clean drinking water and protecting the sources of our drinking water is vital to our community and to our families. It is a resource we often take for granted, yet it is essential to our families' health as well as the growth and prosperity of our communities. This newsletter will help you know the steps you might need to take to maintain or improve its safety.

Groundwater protection is not just an agricultural or industrial challenge. Homes affect groundwater, too. Many families are already trying to be "groundwater smart" and this information offers ideas to help them do the best job possible.

If you haven't thought much about groundwater protection before, start by experimenting with some of the practices listed here. Most homeowners find that groundwater protection is not only the right thing to do – it's easy and economical.

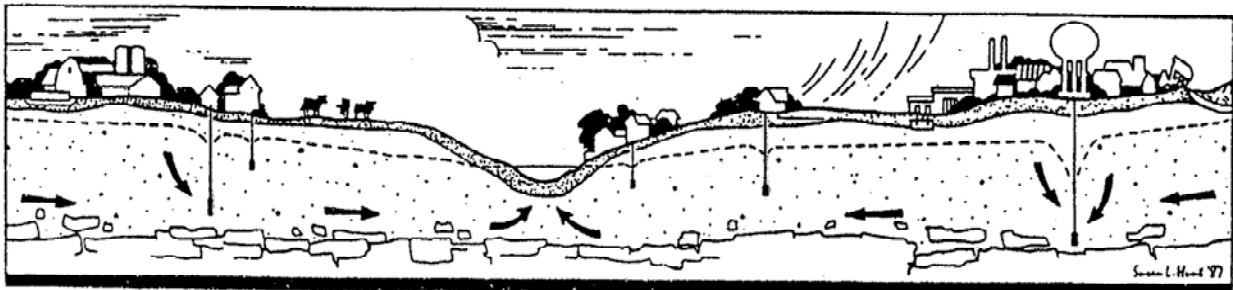
Not Just Groundwater

By using these practices, you will do more than keep groundwater clean and safe:

- **Streams:** you'll prevent toxins from contaminating fish and reduce the excessive growth of weeds.
- **Family Safety:** you'll protect your family from accidental poisoning and exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- **Wildlife:** you'll improve habitat for birds and other wildlife
- **Beautiful homes:** your home will be more attractive, safer and easier to maintain.



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Your Pipeline to a _____ **Safe Water Supply**

Septic and Sewer

Pumping – Pump your septic tank every 2-3 years.

Cleansers – strictly limit the amount of disinfectants, and cleansers that end up in your septic system.

Toxic chemicals – don't put paint thinner, paint, degreasers, pesticides, or oil down the drain.

Chemical septic additives – don't use them is the best advice.

Failing septic systems – if septic liquids are rising to the surface, get help immediately

Subdivisions – an average septic system puts about 10 pounds of nitrate per person per year into groundwater.

Support efforts to extend sewers out to nearby subdivisions.

Plan – ahead to replace your septic system should it become necessary

Wells

Water Tests – If you have your own well, get a homeowner's water test and then test water yearly for nitrate and bacteria. If it tests unsafe, get help right away.

Basement and pit wells – these should be replaced with safe, modern wells which meet state and local codes.

Unused Wells – properly abandon as soon as possible

- ✓ **Properly** abandon unused wells by filling them from the bottom to top with grouting clay or cement. Call a pump installer or well driller for advice or assistance.

Anti-backflow devices – these keep contaminants from siphoning back down your well. They're available in most local hardware stores and should be placed on outdoor faucets, sprinkler systems and laundry tubs.

Conservation – use water-saving showerheads, faucets and toilets.

Copper pipes – if you have copper pipes with lead based solder, test your water for lead.

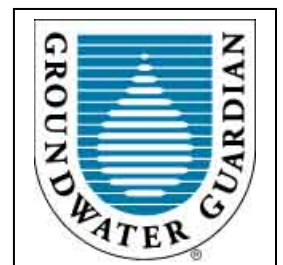
Water treatment – before buying any treatment device for a health related contaminant (like bacteria, nitrate or pesticides), find out if the device is appropriate for the contaminant in question and is state approved.

Well Safety – check your well and pump for safety hazards

- ✓ **Grade** your lot so surface water runs away from the well.
- ✓ **Check** to make certain that the well cap or seal is in place and tightly secured. Ensure that insects and other vermin cannot enter. A vermin-proof well cap is one solution.
- ✓ **Avoid** using gasoline and lawn, household or agricultural chemicals near the well.
- ✓ **Protect** basement wells from flooding and sewers which may back up. In most cases, basement wells are now prohibited.
- ✓ **Protect** wells in pits from surface water flooding. Pits subject to flooding should be modified or abandoned.
- ✓ **Avoid** improper plumbing connections that could allow contaminants to back-siphon down your well.
- ✓ **Plan** ahead to replace your well should it become necessary. Think about where to site your new well.

Questions or concerns? Call the Groundwater Guardian Team at 265-6063.

Keep well records handy and update them regularly. Here are some handy forms that might help you start your well site record keeping process.



In the grid, sketch the location of your home and other structures on your lot in relation to your well. Include distances to your own or your neighbor's septic system, dry wells, barnyards, kennels, abandoned wells and gasoline or fuel oil tanks. Note any significant differences in elevation on your lot, and the general pattern of surface drainage. If a groundwater contour map is available, use it to draw in the groundwater flow direction. If one isn't available, estimate the direction, remembering that groundwater flow is usually toward the nearest stream and often follows surface topography.

Your well records

(If it is available, include a copy of your Wyoming well construction report with your other documents)

Well driller

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

Maintenance service

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

Well construction report

When installed _____	Well depth _____
Depth to water _____	Type of well _____
Casing diameter _____	Casing depth _____
Screen type _____	Screen length _____
Pump type _____	Pump capacity _____
Model _____	Setting _____

Depth	Type of materials encountered

Soil and geologic information (well log)

Wyoming unique well number _____

Well and plumbing maintenance record

Date	Work done	Cost	Work done by:	Comments

(also include here information on any water treatment devices installed in your house)

Well water testing records

(also keep copies of the laboratory reports)

Date	Total coliform bacterial	Nitrate-nitrogen	Fluoride	Other	Reason for sampling	Laboratory