

MSU Extension Publication Archive

Archive copy of publication, do not use for current recommendations. Up-to-date information about many topics can be obtained from your local Extension office.

Groundwater Everybody's Resource Everybody's Responsibility
Michigan State University Extension Service
Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program
Revised January 2007
4 pages

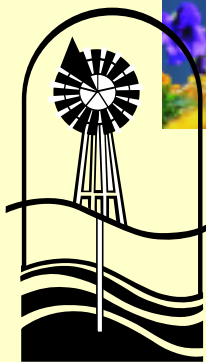
The PDF file was provided courtesy of the Michigan State University Library

Scroll down to view the publication.

Groundwater

Everybody's Resource
Everybody's Responsibility

**Take
Action
Now!**



**Michigan
Groundwater
Stewardship
Program**

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

Check Inside

- Water Cycle **2**
- Groundwater Quiz . . . **3**
- Risky Practice/
Safe Practice **4**

Everybody depends on a safe, reliable water supply.

Think about it — what would you do if you couldn't depend on your water system for clean water? Your life would change greatly!

For billions of years, the same water has been in use. Every drop you use today was used by other plants and animals. Perhaps your next glass of water passed through a dinosaur!

Likewise, when water leaves your home and yard — to the wastewater treatment system, through evaporation, by soaking into the ground, or by running into rivers and lakes — it will be used again.

No one “owns” the water we all share and enjoy. Everybody has the responsibility to keep this precious resource as clean as possible for the benefit of people today and tomorrow.

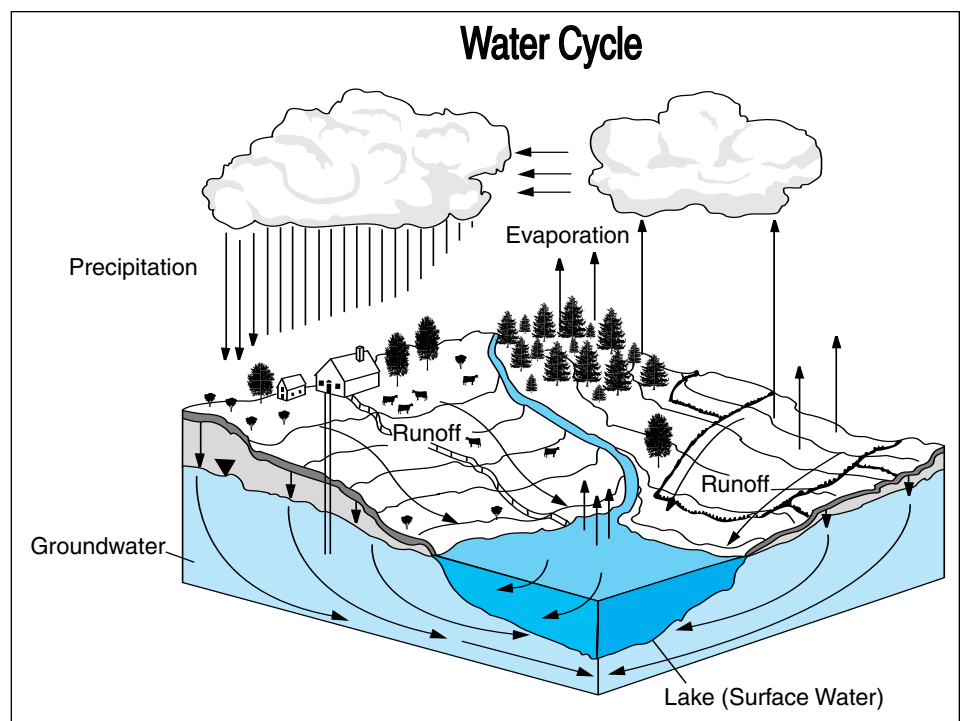
Groundwater is the water that fills spaces between rocks and soil particles. Approximately half of Michigan's residents, and nearly all rural residents, depend on groundwater for their drinking water supply. Even people who use water from the Great Lakes or other surface water sources depend on groundwater. As the water cycle illustrates, groundwater and surface water are interconnected. It is often difficult

to separate the two water sources because they “feed” each other. This is why one can contaminate the other.

Are you a groundwater steward?

Your activities affect the quality of Michigan's groundwater—your drinking water. To find out if your everyday actions are helping or harming, take the groundwater quiz, on p. 3.

**groundwater =
river and
lake water =
your DRINKING
WATER**



The Groundwater Quiz

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1) Do you store pesticides at your home that you won't be using? | | |
| 2) Do you use pesticides or fertilizers without reading the label or following the directions? | | |
| 3) Have you ever spilled a pesticide or fertilizer? | | |
| 4) Have you used a pesticide or a fertilizer just before a heavy rain? | | |
| 5) Do you apply fertilizer to your lawn before it begins to green up in the spring? | | |
| 6) Have you ever applied a pesticide when you were unsure of your plant problem? | | |
| 7) When fertilizing the lawn, do you leave fertilizer on the sidewalk or driveway? | | |
| 8) Have you ever poured a pesticide, used oil or paint down a drain or storm sewer or on the ground? | | |
| 9) Do you have a well that is no longer being used? | | |
| 10) Do you have a septic tank that has not been pumped or inspected? | | |
| TOTAL | | |

What's Your Score?

Tally up the number of "yes" responses recorded in the Groundwater Quiz.

| Yes responses | Your groundwater steward rating |
|---------------|--|
| 4-10 | Groundwater ALERT! Your activities present a HIGH RISK of groundwater contamination. You need to take action now! |
| 1-3 | MEDIUM RISK. Your activities present a potential risk of groundwater contamination. You can make improvements. |
| 0 | LOW RISK. Congratulations! You are a groundwater steward. |



We need you to become a groundwater steward.

Please keep reading...

| Risky practice | Safe practice |
|---|--|
| 1) Storing old pesticides that you are not likely to use again. | Getting rid of unwanted pesticides by taking them to a "Clean Sweep" site. Call the Michigan Department of Agriculture at (517) 335-6529 to locate your nearest Clean Sweep site. |
| 2) Using a pesticide without checking the directions. | Reading and following label directions result in the best product performance. Using too much or too little of a product wastes money and can pose a risk for groundwater contamination. |
| 3) Hosing down a pesticide spilled on the driveway. | Collecting spilled pesticide and reusing it, or disposing of it at a Clean Sweep site. Liquid pesticide spills can be collected with an absorbent product such as cat box filler. |
| 4) Applying pesticide or fertilizers before a heavy rain. | Checking the weather forecast to avoid use when rain is predicted. Heavy rains can reduce the effectiveness of the product and increase risk of groundwater contamination. |
| 5) Fertilizing your lawn before it begins to grow in the spring. | Fertilizing your lawn at least 3 weeks after spring green-up to improve turf health and to reduce risk for groundwater contamination. |
| 6) Using a pesticide on your "sick" plant. | Getting the plant problem diagnosed by an expert and considering all treatment options. Not all plant problems require a pesticide. |
| 7) Leaving fertilizer on the sidewalk. | Sweeping fertilizer off the sidewalk and driveway onto the lawn. Rainwater can carry fertilizers into drainage systems that lead to streams, rivers and lakes. |
| 8) Dumping a toxic household product down the drain or on the ground. | Getting rid of unwanted household hazardous products at a local collection program. A toxic product dumped down the drain or on the ground can contaminate your drinking water. |
| 9) Keeping an old well for watering the lawn. | Hiring a licensed well driller to close the old well. Unused wells provide a direct route for possible contaminants to reach groundwater. |
| 10) Saving money (temporarily) by not pumping out your septic tank | Pumping your septic tank every 3 to 5 years. Poor septic system maintenance can contaminate your drinking water and ruin the system. |

These are just a few examples of the many ways to keep Michigan's groundwater clean and safe. We invite you to learn more by contacting your Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program representative. He/she provides free educational and technical assistance to homeowners and farmers to keep our groundwater clean. Contact your representative at your Michigan State University Extension or Conservation District office.

For more groundwater protection ideas, request the following MSU Extension bulletins. They are available free of charge from your local representative or you may order them online at: www.emdc.msue.msu.edu or from the MSU Bulletin Office, 117 Central Services Bldg., East Lansing, MI 48824-1001.

- Home*A*Syst, the home environmental assessment system (WQ-51).
- Managing Shoreline Property to Protect Water Quality (WQ-52).
- Lawn*A*Syst, an environmental risk assessment guide for lawn care practices (WQ-53).



For additional information:
Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program
Michigan Department of Agriculture
PO Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909
Telephone: 517-335-6529

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity institution. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status. • Issued in furtherance of Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thomas G. Coon, Extension director, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824. • This information is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names do not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. This bulletin becomes public property upon publication and may be printed verbatim with credit to MSU. Reprinting cannot be used to endorse or advertise a commercial product or company.