

Dept. of Natural Resources: National Groundwater Awareness Week highlights importance of water resource found deep within Wisconsin

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MADISON - Underscoring the importance of Wisconsin's valuable groundwater resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is reminding state residents to protect and conserve water as part of National Groundwater Awareness Week, March 10-16. The agency will provide resources to help people learn about the importance of groundwater and how it impacts our daily lives.

"Groundwater is one of the most widely used and valuable resources on the planet, used for drinking, irrigation, livestock, manufacturing and many other purposes, so it's important to protect it," said Bruce Rheineck, DNR groundwater section chief.

Safe groundwater means safe drinking water for Wisconsin families. - Photo credit: DNR

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Approximately two thirds of the people living in Wisconsin, or nearly 3.9 million, get their drinking water from groundwater. Adequate supplies of safe groundwater are crucial not only to the health of those families, but also for the continued growth of agricultural production and cutting-edge industries in Wisconsin. In fact, the

importance of safe drinking water is the foundation of Governor Evers' declaration that 2019 is the Year of Clean Water and the reason for several initiatives included in his biennial budget proposal.

During this week, homeowners with private wells are reminded to “Test, Tend, Treat” their well. It’s the homeowner’s responsibility to ensure their well water is safe to drink. The “Test, Tend, Treat” method provides some insight to understanding when to hire a water treatment professional.

Test - Water should be sampled on a routine basis, as water quality can change over time. Well water pollutants are often colorless and odorless, making detection at home difficult. The DNR’s well water testing web page has ample information on drinking water supply testing procedures and how to understand the results.

Tend - Regular inspections of wells can protect and reduce the possibility of future issues. Annual inspections should be completed by a licensed or certified water well system professional. Between professional inspections, well owners are encouraged to visually inspect the well to look for any warning signs which might include a cracked well cap, debris on or around the wellhead, or ponding or flooding around the well after storm events.

Treat - Based on the type of contaminants reported in the test results, several types of treatment options are available. Information about water supply treatment options is available from the University of Wisconsin Extension. Wisconsin has established a product approval program for home water treatment devices. Be certain that any treatment unit you purchase or lease has been approved by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

For more information about National Groundwater Awareness Week, visit www.ngwa.org. More information about groundwater in Wisconsin is available at the DNR’s [groundwater web site](#).