

Dept. of Natural Resources: Celebrate and protect groundwater this Groundwater Awareness Week and year-round

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MADISON, Wis. – Join the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in celebrating groundwater, both during this Groundwater Awareness Week, March 8-14, and all year long.

The annual awareness week highlights how important groundwater — water that exists underground — is to Wisconsinites and the rest of the nation. Groundwater is often a forgotten resource because it is not easily visible, yet we use it every day.

About two-thirds of people living in Wisconsin rely on groundwater for their drinking water. This valuable resource also supports continued growth in tourism, agriculture and manufacturing industries.

“Wisconsin has abundant water resources with groundwater making up a significant share of that rich supply,” said Carla Romano, DNR groundwater section manager. “But the quality and quantity of groundwater can vary throughout the state. That is why it is important to consider using conservation measures and protection strategies including source water protection, legislation and education about groundwater. Awareness is the first step in safeguarding groundwater now and for future generations.”

Here are steps that everyone can take to help protect this valuable natural resource:

- **Save water:** Don't let the water run. Turn off the water when you brush your teeth or shave. Keep a cold pitcher of water instead of waiting for water to get cold. Fix your leaks to save water and money.
- **Test, tend and treat your private water system:** Well owners should [test their water](#) annually and whenever there is a change in taste, color or appearance.
- **Reduce chemical use:** Use fewer chemicals around your house and yard. Dispose of potentially toxic chemicals responsibly by checking with local authorities, using designated collection points and following guidelines. Check out the DNR's [Household Hazardous Waste webpage](#). Or better yet, don't use any chemicals at all.
- **Use natural alternatives:** Use natural cleaners such as vinegar, lemon juice and baking soda. Remember to use native plants in your landscape because they use less water and fertilizer.
- **Reduce, reuse and recycle:** Reducing the amount of stuff you purchase and consume is the most effective option. Reusing and recycling keep items out of landfills and preserves natural resources.
- **Be conscious of product choices:** Choose household products carefully avoiding items that may contain harmful chemical such as PFAS. Information about PFAS and their impacts on the environment is available on the [DNR's website](#). Everyday purchases can contribute to groundwater contamination if not selected and used responsibly.

Many substances that can impact groundwater quality do not change the color, smell or taste of the water. For that reason, routine water testing is important for all well users. It is recommended to test for bacteria and nitrate at least once a year and arsenic and lead at least once every five years. Well users might want additional testing based on local conditions and nearby land use. More information about recommended tests is available in the DNR's [Drinking Water Tests for Private Wells fact sheet](#).

About National Groundwater Awareness Week

Groundwater Awareness Week, first established in 1999, is an annual observance highlighting the responsible development, management and use of groundwater. It is also a way to recognize well drillers, pump installers, hydrogeologists, groundwater policy advocates and other water professionals who work diligently to provide safe drinking water now and for years to come.

This week and beyond, think how land use, groundwater contamination and climate change impact groundwater quantity and supply.