



Well Survey Project Guards Greene County Wells

Groundwater Guardian Featured Result Oriented Activity

By Jonna Jackson, *The Groundwater Foundation.*

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“Once we get the chance to tell our story, almost all of the folks are appreciative of what we are doing [to protect our groundwater] and express their thanks,” commented Ed Vosicky, of the Greene County, Missouri Groundwater Guardian team. Ed volunteers for the Groundwater Guardian Well Survey Project and works to identify potential groundwater contamination sources. By identifying potential contamination sources, communities are better able to assess the severity and number of threats to their groundwater supply.

The Well Survey Project was initiated approximately three years ago with well and data processing still continuing today. Local senior citizens involved in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteer their time to the Groundwater Guardian team and its Well Survey Project. The first, and perhaps the most important stage of the project, requires volunteers to visit with homeowners regarding wells that may be present on their property. During this visit, volunteers record the type of well that is present (i.e. abandoned, hand dug, etc.), and personal practices of the property owner that may have a direct impact on the county's groundwater quality. The information received from the homeowner is used to plot well locations on maps

and document any other important information pertaining to the groundwater supply. The information is then cataloged into a Geological Information System (GIS) database to assist with current and future wellhead protection plans and allow county officials to investigate problem areas concerning groundwater contamination.

Recorded data on abandoned wells is also used to offer cost-share assistance (through other programs) to property owners for the remediation of the wells. Between the years of 1995

and 1998, the study covered a 48 square mile area, resulting in the surveying of 754 properties. Of these properties, 31% had above ground wells, 12% contained below ground wells, 8% of the properties had abandoned wells, and 5% of the surveyed properties contained hand-dug wells.

Although the project has yielded important data that may be used in the area's Source Water Assessment, perhaps a more important benefit of the project is the information and education that people involved in the project receive. Personal

contact with area property owners gives project volunteers the opportunity to pass on information regarding the proper care of septic systems, well protection, and sinkholes. This personal contact and information motivates more people within Greene County to become aware of groundwater and how their actions can greatly impact its quality.

Senior volunteers involved with the project also learn a great deal about groundwater and its susceptibility to contamination. Mr. Vosicky said, "...it dawned on me that what these folks did on their land...indeed, any pollutants would eventually drain into the lake waters, thus resulting in potentially costly treatments by the water company." Information and knowledge about potential contamination sources should lead to comprehensive source water protection in the City of Springfield and Greene County. For more information about this project, contact Adam Coulter of the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Inc., at (417) 866-1127.



▲ *The Groundwater Guardian Well Survey project provides information about potential groundwater contamination sources.*

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