

Groundwater

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GROUNDWATER:

How else are you going to know where to put your well?

Okay, so you may not really need to know where to put a well. But IF you figure out enough of this book to choose a good well site, then you'll also know enough to take care of the GROUNDWATER that we depend on in Pennsylvania.

AND WHY, YOU MIGHT ASK, SHOULD WE TAKE CARE OF THE GROUNDWATER?

Well, that depends. How much do you like being able to turn on the faucet to get a drink? How much do you like having an indoor bathroom instead of an outhouse? How much do you like being able to take a shower when you're dirty? Do you like clean streams?

You knew there wasn't going to be an easy answer, didn't you?

If we're going to have clean water for all those things we've gotten used to, we have to know enough about our water to take care of it. And because a lot of the water we use comes from underground, we need to know what the underground water has been up to -- and what we have done to it -- before we take it out to use it.

How are you going to take care of something about which you know nothing?

Knowing about groundwater is important in Pennsylvania. Approximately one-half of the people in the state use groundwater for drinking water supplies. Many of our industries, farms and electric plants need groundwater, too. There are close to a million households in Pennsylvania that rely on their own private groundwater wells for all their needs.

Even metropolitan systems that get their water mostly from surface waters like rivers sometimes use some groundwater, too. Groundwater comes out of wells and other places, like springs.

In fact, in most places under the surface, there's at least some groundwater. In the United States at any given moment, the amount of groundwater is 20 to 30 times the amount in all the lakes, streams and rivers. The questions are: Where? How deep? Can you get it out? And, is it drinkable?

Ready to start? First, you have to find the water table. But before you can do that, you have to know what a water table is.

