



THE SPOKANE AQUIFER JOINT BOARD

Local Water Utilities United for Safe Drinking Water

The Spokane Aquifer Joint Board (SAJB) is made up of twenty-two water purveyors throughout the Spokane Area (including the City of Spokane) dedicated to providing clean, safe drinking water to your homes, offices and industries, every day. Collectively, approximately 122 wells supply water to more than 300,000 customers. This water comes from the Rathdrum Prairie - Spokane Aquifer.

BENEATH YOUR FEET IS OUR SOLE SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER, the Aquifer, which lies between 20 to 600 feet below the earth's surface. There is no protective layer between surface activities and the gravelly 'sponge' through which the water passes. This means that our water supply is particularly vulnerable to contamination from the improper disposal and handling of hazardous materials that we may use at home, in our schools, at businesses and manufacturing facilities.

The SAJB is pursuing four areas of emphasis to increase citizen awareness and cooperation in protecting this irreplaceable resource. However, **individual efforts are key to maintaining our high quality drinking water.**

EDUCATION and AWARENESS – This subcommittee is tasked with developing and implementing a long-term awareness campaign targeted at citizens living and working over our drinking water supply, the Rathdrum Prairie - Spokane Aquifer.

HOUSEHOLD CONTAMINANT DISPOSAL – provides assistance to residents with pickup and disposal of contaminants by augmenting the current collection efforts of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System. Dispose of ALL household hazardous materials properly and at **NO CHARGE** by using one of the three Waste Transfer Stations that accepts them.

You may call the **Recycling Hotline** for more information at **747-6800**.

In North Idaho call: **Kootenai Co. Solid Waste Department 208/769-4402**. For recycling & Household Hazardous Waste exchange/collection **208/446-1433 Office 208/446-1430**

PRO-ACTIVE BUSINESS ASSISTANCE - provides assistance and information (not enforcement) to small businesses for contaminant disposal methods and procedures. If your business generates less than 200 pounds of dangerous waste or 2.2 pounds of acute hazardous waste per month, call: **Spokane Solid Waste Management @ 625-7898**.

If your business generates more than 200 pounds of dangerous waste or more than 2.2 pounds of acute hazardous waste per month, call: the **Washington State Dept. of Ecology @ 329-3409**.

POTENTIAL CONTAMINANT SOURCE INVENTORY - development & maintenance of a regional potential contaminant source inventory database. Under current Washington State regulations for wellhead protection, every two years water purveyors are required to notify potential contaminant sources (businesses) that are located within defined wellhead protection areas. This is a reminder of the business location over the Aquifer, and the need to protect it.

For more information, visit us on the Web:
www.spokaneaquifer.org or call the
SAJB Wellhead Protection Program office @
363-1066



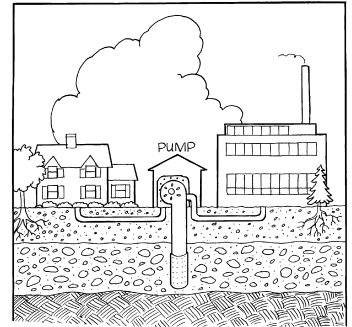
AQUA DUCK: "Don't Pollute YOUR Water. It's BENEATH You!"

The AQUIFER – What’s It To You?

An AQUIFER is any underground permeable layer of rock or sediment that holds water and allows water to pass through. The Rathdrum Prairie-Spokane Valley Aquifer formed during the last Glacial Age, between 12,000 and 1.6 million years ago. A series of catastrophic floods originating in Montana flowed through this area depositing thick layers of sediments including sand, gravel, cobbles, and boulders.

Where Does Our Drinking Water Come From?

The water that flows through the sediments comes from the lakes in this area – Pend Oreille, Spirit, Hayden, Coeur d’Alene, Twin, Hauser, Newman, and Liberty Lakes – all of which drain into the Aquifer, never reaching the Spokane River (with the exception of Lake Coeur d’Alene). Water falling in the form of rain, snow and sleet soaks in to the ground and also serves to *recharge* the Aquifer.

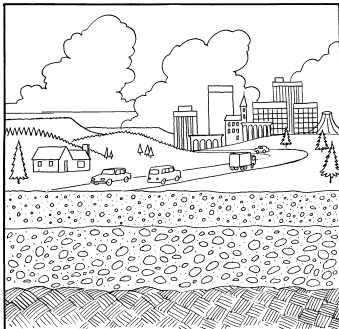


The Rathdrum Prairie-Spokane Valley Aquifer

The Aquifer beneath Coeur d’Alene, Post Falls and Rathdrum and the greater Spokane area is the sole source of drinking water for more than 400,000 people. The water is below ground at varying depths and is one of the fastest moving aquifers known, pushing through the sediment deposits at an estimated average of 50 feet per day.

What About Water Quality?

State regulations require that public wells be routinely sampled for constituents including inorganic chemicals, volatile organic contaminants, and synthetic organic contaminants. Wells are also sampled for coliform bacteria. Aquifer water quality is good in its natural state and requires no treatment or additives before it enters the distribution system. Water quality test results are in the Consumer Confidence Report, which is sent to you by your water purveyor each year.



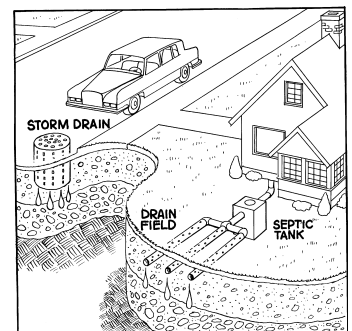
Does the Aquifer and the Spokane River Have a Connection?

There are particular areas or ‘reaches’ along the Spokane River where the river discharges to the Aquifer, and other reaches where the Aquifer adds water to the river. The interchange occurs all the time, and fluctuates as river and aquifer levels change.

What’s the best way to protect the Aquifer?

You can do your part by disposing of contaminants properly. In Spokane there are three Transfer Stations that accept household contaminants at **no charge**. For

hours and location, call 625-6800. In addition, keep your vehicles maintained and free of drips, and regularly maintain your septic system if you are not hooked to the sanitary sewer.



What if I have my own private well?

Test the water once a year, for nitrates and coliform. The Spokane Regional Health District is a state certified lab for this testing; call 324-1560 ext. 6. The names of other state certified labs in the area are available from the Cooperative Extension office @ 477-2169. For more information on well water testing, check the WSU Cooperative Extension Home*A*Syst website at:

<http://homefarmasyst.wsu.edu/Drinking/>

How can I learn more?

Check out www.spokaneaquifer.org, and click on the duck holding a sign about our Virtual Field Trip. You’ll learn more about groundwater and surface water, the formation of our aquifer, other aquifers in the U.S., drinking water in general, potential sources of contamination, and also more things you can do to help protect your drinking water source.