

# Well Water Protection Program

This program assists landowners and local communities that use groundwater for their drinking water supply systems to protect their water source.

The intent of the West Interlake Watershed Conservation District (WIWCD) **Well Water Protection Program** is to minimize the potential for contamination by identifying and protecting the aquifer area that watershed residents are dependant upon and to avoid costly groundwater clean-ups.



Approximately 15% of Manitobans rely on private water supplies for their source of drinking water. The vast majority of private water systems are comprised of wells and cisterns. A small percentage of the private systems rely on surface water (e.g. dugouts or reservoirs) as the water source and apply treatment processes to make the water suitable for consumptive purposes.

Manitoba has an abundance of good quality water. The WIWCD **Well Water Protection Program** is designed to assist watershed residents with the protection and restoration of drinking water sources. Specific drinking water protection projects that the WIWCD will be involved in will include:

## **Abandoned Well Sealing**

## **Flowing Wells**

## **Well Head Protection**

Other projects that provide protection and restoration of the aquifer and water quality will also be considered. Funding for sealing abandoned wells, flowing wells and well head protection will be subsidized to a maximum of \$500.00 (plus GST). District staff is also available to provide general well protection advice.

### ***Abandoned Well Sealing***

Abandoned wells are wells that are no longer in use. Surface runoff can directly enter an aquifer, through an abandoned well, contaminating the aquifer and potentially contaminating nearby wells. Cross-contamination of different aquifers can also occur. Abandoned wells or improperly decommissioned wells can pose a serious threat to groundwater quality and can also be a safety hazard. Therefore, all abandoned wells should be properly plugged to prevent contamination and to eliminate any safety hazards. When a replacement water well is drilled, the old well

**WELL WATER PROTECTION**



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should be sealed. If the well is not marked or covered it can pose a physical hazard to people or animals that might fall into them.

### ***Flowing Wells***

The main concern regarding flowing well areas is the potential for the uncontrolled discharge of water from a well and the resulting loss of the valuable groundwater resource. The uncontrolled discharge of water could also contribute to local drainage and foundation problems. In order to avoid these potential problems it is advisable to ensure that proper well construction methods are used in these areas so that any discharge of water from the well can be controlled.

### ***Well Head Protection***

Pollutants that are spilled or dumped on the surface can seep into the ground and eventually make their way into the well. Once that happens, the well may have to be closed down, or the water may have to undergo additional treatment in order to be used. It can be costly and time consuming to clean up polluted groundwater or find new sources of clean water. Start with protecting the land around the well.

### ***What are potential sources of contamination?***

Pollutants from a variety of activities can seep into the ground and move toward a well.

- Accidental spill of hazardous materials
- Chemical storage
- Storage and spreading of road salt
- Use and spilling of fertilizers and pesticides

### ***What are the benefits of protecting wellhead areas?***

- Avoiding the need to clean up contaminated groundwater
- Reducing the cost of water treatment
- Ensuring a long-term supply of clean water
- Not having to drill new wells when old ones become contaminated

Groundwater is integral to the health and vitality of our communities and environment and we greatly appreciate your help in protecting this valuable resource.

**Please contact the WIWCD office at 204.762.5850 with any questions or feel free to visit us at our office in Lundar, located at 13 Main Street.**

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