

Farm-A-Syst

AVSWCD is revising and updating the Maine **Farm-A-Syst** program originally implemented by the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension. This program is being put into place to protect public drinking water supplies and to be used as a tool to help farmers and other land owners recognize areas on their property that is impacting groundwater. Once these areas are discovered, the next step is to create an action plan to address ways the areas of greatest concern can be improved. AVSWCD is making the program more user friendly by changing the formatting, tweaking the language and updating the program with the most current laws, regulations, references and contact information. There will be 13 separate fact sheets with accompanying worksheets focused on different areas around the farm that impact ground/drinking water. Each section will include information on the potential impacts of these practices on public drinking water wells.

Farm-A-Syst Sections:

Preliminary Screening Quiz

1. Private Drinking Water Well Condition
2. Pesticide Storage and Handling
3. Fertilizer Storage and Handling
4. Improving Petroleum Product Storage
5. Improving Hazardous Waste Management
6. Household Wastewater Treatment
7. Livestock Waste Storage
8. Livestock Yards Management
9. Silage Storage
10. Milking Center Wastewater Treatment
11. Irrigation Wells
12. Site Evaluations
13. Groundwater

Remember:

Groundwater is a valuable and limited resource.

Clean drinking water depends on our careful land management.

Nearly half of Maine people use groundwater to drink.

Funding for this project is provided by the State of Maine CDC Drinking Water Program.

What can the Farm-A-Syst program do for you?

- ◆ **Help you protect groundwater and drinking water on your farm.**

Contact Us At...

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Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District

Groundwater and Drinking Water Protection



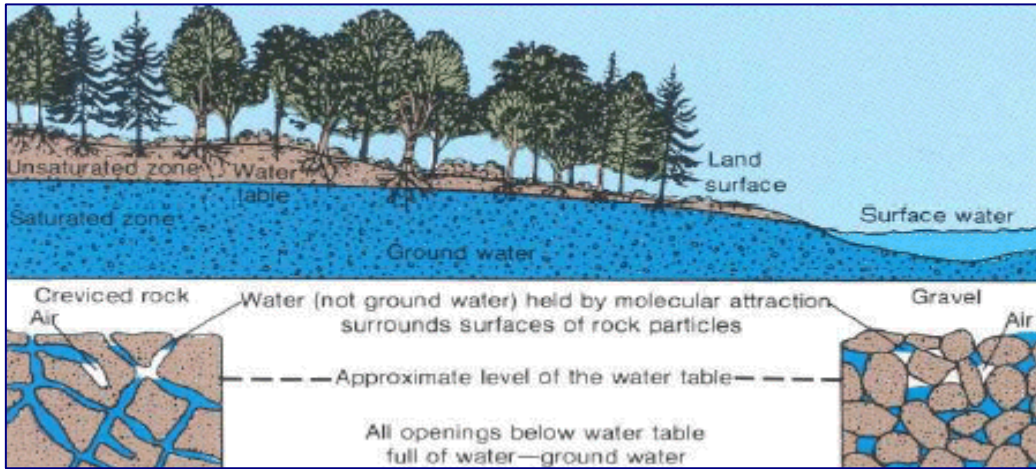
The purpose of this project is to develop and test a program that will provide education, outreach and assistance to farms and other large landowners in public water supply protection areas.

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Groundwater Simplified

- ◆ Groundwater comes from the rain that falls on your land.

Groundwater is found beneath the surface of the ground in cracks and fractures of bedrock and between the individual grains of unconsolidated sediments such as sand and gravel.

Groundwater Basics

- ◆ Activities on the surface of the land affect the quality and quantity of both ground and surface water.
- ◆ Groundwater and surface water are interconnected.
- ◆ Surface slope does not always indicate the direction a pollutant might move once it gets into groundwater.

Why Is Protecting Groundwater Important?

Nearly half of Maine people use groundwater to drink. Groundwater also contributes to lakes and streams. Besides drinking water, clean groundwater is important for irrigation, livestock, industries and wildlife habitat. Protecting groundwater now:

- ◆ Protects public health
- ◆ Is cheaper than cleaning it up later!

What Can I Do?

Keeping groundwater safe helps protect our health and quality of life here in Maine. You can help by:

- ◆ Practicing careful land use management and preserving open spaces;
- ◆ Maintaining equipment to avoid leaking fluids onto the ground;
- ◆ Reporting significant spills to the Maine DEP spill hotline 1-800-482-0777;
- ◆ Reporting other hazardous materials issues to the Maine DEP at 452-1942; and
- ◆ Joining the **Farm-A-Syst** program to learn techniques to help protect groundwater.

How Is Groundwater Threatened?

Quantity: As rural areas are developed, we are using more groundwater and reducing the areas that recharge the groundwater supply. Developed areas can also increase the risk of contamination.

Quality: Practices such as improper storage or disposal of oil, gas and hazardous materials and excess application of pesticides and fertilizers can contaminate groundwater. This in turn can affect our drinking water. Once contaminated, cleaning up groundwater is a costly, difficult, and time consuming process...if it can be done at all.

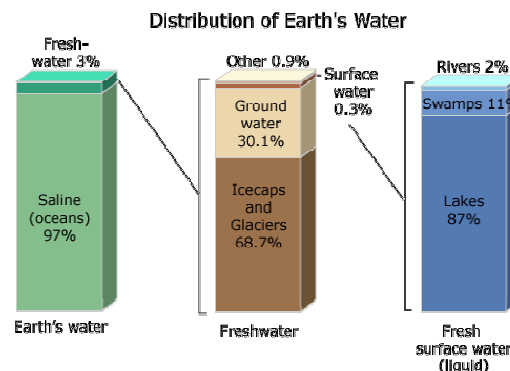
Farm-A-Syst can help you identify opportunities specific to your property and land use.

We Can Protect Groundwater Together

- ◆ By managing your farm carefully and preserving open space such as farms and forested land.

Participating in **Farm-A-Syst** will give you the necessary tools to assess your property and help you recognize what you are doing right as well as things that could use improvement. For instance, did you know you were at a lower risk of contaminating groundwater if your silage moisture content is below 65% and depending on the type of silo you have, it should be located at least 100-300 feet downslope from the well?

Here are two graphs showing how valuable a resource groundwater is.



How much of Earth's water is usable by humans?

