



# Where Does Your DRINKING WATER Come From?

The City of Buffalo has developed a **WELLHEAD PROTECTION PLAN** in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Rural Water Association Source of Water Program

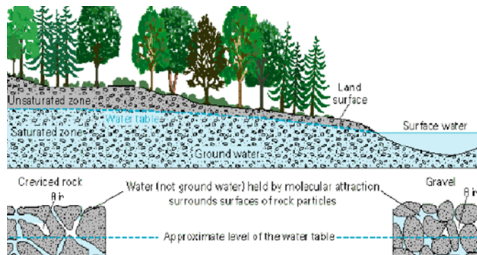


## A community effort to protect public wells...

The City of Buffalo relies on groundwater for their drinking water supply. The City owns and operates 5 wells. These wells draw water from a groundwater aquifer located several hundred feet underground. Groundwater aquifers are vulnerable to contamination from human land surface activities.

The City of Buffalo has a Wellhead Protection Plan. Receiving the approval from the Minnesota Department of Health, the amended Wellhead Protection Plan will continue to protect the City of Buffalo's source of water and the environment. This plan has been prepared in conjunction with several local, county and state agencies. The Minnesota Department of Health is the lead agency for the State's Wellhead Protection Program.

## What is Groundwater?



Groundwater is the water that fills the small spaces between rock particles (sand, gravel, etc.) or cracks in solid rock. Rain, melting snow, or surface water becomes groundwater by seeping into the ground and filling these spaces. The top of the water-saturated zone is called the **water table**.

When water seeps in from the surface and reaches the water table, it begins moving towards points where it can escape, such as wells, rivers, or lakes.

An **aquifer** is any type of geologic material, such as sand or sandstone, which can supply water wells or springs.

The groundwater, which supplies wells, often comes from within a short distance (a few miles) of the well. How fast groundwater moves depends on how much the well is pumped and what type of rock particles or bedrock it is moving through.

## Most Minnesotans get drinking water from wells.

Wellhead Protection is a way to prevent drinking water from becoming polluted by managing possible sources of contamination in the area which supplies water to a public well. Wellhead Protection will be an ongoing need for communities. Everyone has an important part to play in protecting drinking water wells—today and for the future. Become involved with the implementation of Buffalo's **WELLHEAD PROTECTION PLAN**.

## How do wells become polluted?

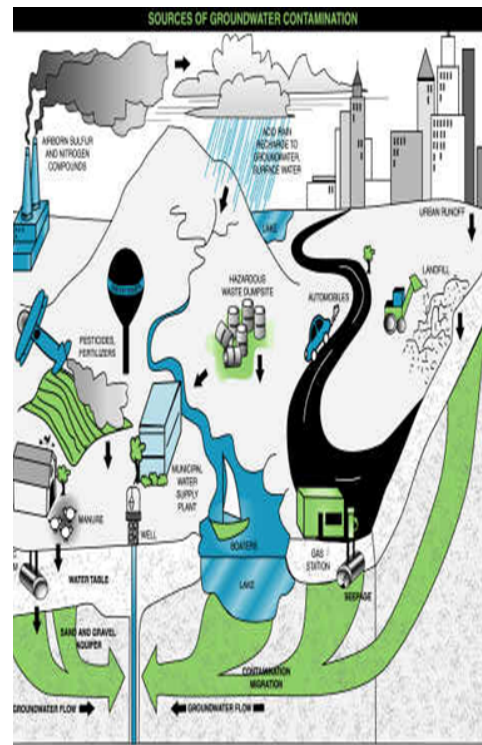
Wells become polluted when substances that are harmful to human health get into the groundwater. Water from these wells can be dangerous to drink when the level of pollution rises above health standards. Many of our everyday activities can cause pollution. Much can be done to prevent pollution, such as wise use of land and chemicals. The expense of treating polluted water or drilling new wells can also be avoided. Help avoid drinking water contamination by being an environmentally aware citizen.

**For Further Information Contact:**

**Cara Hesse - Water Superintendent**

**Phone: 763.684.5432**

**Email: [cara.hesse@ci.buffalo.mn.us](mailto:cara.hesse@ci.buffalo.mn.us)**



©2000 The Groundwater Foundation. Illustration by C. Mansfield, The Groundwater Foundation.

## What steps did The City of Buffalo take to develop a Wellhead Protection Plan?

1. Form a Community Planning Team.
2. Identify the land area to be protected.
3. Identify land uses and possible sources of pollution in the wellhead protection area and determine how vulnerable the wellhead protection area is to pollution.
4. Implement ways to prevent groundwater pollution.
5. Develop an alternate way to supply water if the public well becomes polluted.

## What Can You Do?

1. Recognize and manage possible sources of contamination on your property.
2. Use hazardous products as directed and dispose of them properly.
3. Help identify land uses and possible sources of contamination on your property.
4. Conserve water.