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National Ground Water Awareness Week March 6-12, 2011
Discover and Protect Ohio's Hidden Resource

Ground water resources are expected to become more valuable in coming years due to increasing demand for water and concerns about the quality of future ground water. During National Ground Water Awareness Week (March 6-12), Ohio EPA encourages Ohioans to learn how to protect this vital natural resource.

In Ohio, nearly half of all cities, villages, schools, businesses and industries depend on ground water for drinking, processing and irrigation. Almost five million people in the state drink ground water provided by community public water systems and nearly one million more meet their water needs using ground water from private wells.

Ground water resources can become compromised in areas where there is poor land use planning and poor water resource management. This causes costs for water to increase, including the cost for water treatment, monitoring, remediation and finding alternate water supplies. In addition, lack of good water supplies can impact human health, ecological systems and a community's economic success. It is simpler, less expensive and more reliable over the long-term to protect ground water.

Here are some ways to protect ground water:

- minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other lawn and garden chemicals, avoiding overapplication;
- properly dispose of hazardous substances such as motor oil or household chemicals instead of dumping on the ground, pouring down the drain, or flushing down the toilet;
- clean and service septic systems routinely to ensure optimal performance;
- properly dispose of outdated pharmaceuticals without flushing down the toilet;
- get involved with local water resource or watershed protection efforts; and
- ask public drinking water suppliers what you can do to support protection efforts if you live in a community where the public drinking water source is ground water.

Ohio EPA, in cooperation with other state and federal agencies, characterizes the state's ground water resources, focusing protection efforts in those areas that are most vulnerable to sources of contamination. Ohio EPA also helps communities develop and implement local drinking water source protection plans to ensure a long-term safe source of ground water.

More information about Ohio EPA's Source Water Assessment and Protection Program is available at www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/swap.aspx.