

CITY OF MARSHALL WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM

The City of Marshall is continuing a comprehensive program to protect the City's water supply. The City's wellhead protection area, or WHPA, has been defined and approved by the State of Michigan. The City is currently working on ways to help better safeguard drinking water. The WHPA represents the zone around the City's well field, identified by geologic and hydraulic factors, that is managed to prevent contamination of the water supply. A majority of the WHPA lies north of the City limits in portions of Marshall, Marengo, and Lee and Convis Townships in what is mostly agricultural area. Residents within the WHPA have been given a survey and asked to identify any abandoned wells on their properties. The City is working with Peerless-Midwest Inc. to complete an abandoned well search. City and Peerless Midwest representatives may also visit select properties within the WHPA. **Abandoned wells that are not sealed off pose a risk because contaminants that accidentally enter the wells, such as oil or gasoline, could directly enter the subsurface aquifer. Just one pint of oil can expand over an acre of water within the aquifer.** Abandoned wells are essentially a direct conduit to the subsurface aquifer, and are an important part of the WHPA Program. Potential or existing contamination sources uncovered by the survey will be outlined in the WHPA management plan. Strategies are being developed for managing and/or monitoring areas within the WHPA to prevent potential pollutants from reaching the water supply. The plan also includes public education and participation, as well as a strategy to handle emergencies concerning the water supply. Other community-wide efforts include groundwater education programs at local schools and the installation of new signs identifying the WHPA. Residents within the WHPA that have abandoned wells on their property should have them properly sealed. The City, with help from a state grant program, will assist in the coordination of sealing the abandoned wells within the WHPA. A WHPA Committee, made up of City and Township residents and officials, was formed to aid in the management of the WHPA Management Plan.

Why Wellhead Protection?

Water is the most basic resource in life. We all need it to survive. Most of the people in Mid Michigan rely on groundwater for their drinking water. Wellhead protection is a strategy to protect the public supplies from pollution that can threaten health and lives.

Wellhead protection also protects our investment in the community. The program protects wells and water treatment systems. The cost of treating contaminated groundwater or finding another source of water far outweighs implementing a protection program for the resources already in place.

The future economic development of the City and surrounding areas depends on it. A clean and reliable source of drinking water is a positive aspect of any community. It is a major selling point in attracting new businesses and industries and keeping the existing ones. The groundwater utilized by the City is considered some of the highest quality water in the Midwest.

Groundwater is filtered and cleaned naturally in underground aquifers. The City of Marshall "taps" the aquifer with wells to provide public drinking water. Groundwater is the cleanest, most reliable, and often least expensive source of drinking water. Protecting this resource makes good sense environmentally, economically, and most importantly, for our health. The City has been and will continue to be proactive to ensure a safe supply.

What Can You Do To Help?

1. Have abandoned wells on your property properly sealed. Due to grants, the cost may be free! Contact the City of Marshall's Environmental Program Coordinator, Cheryl Vosburg, at 269-781-3289 for more information and eligibility requirements.
2. Take toxic household chemicals to a recycling center for proper disposal. Several household hazardous waste collection events are scheduled throughout the year.
3. Don't use fertilizers & lawn chemicals excessively. Follow directions for use, to conserve and save money.

The City of Marshall's drinking water is regularly tested for a variety of potential contaminants to ensure a safe supply. However, we must all do our part to protect this precious resource!

