

# Groundwater Protection Services YOU Can Use

**Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program  
Washtenaw County  
734-761-6721 x 5**

## **Household Hazardous Waste Collection**

You can dispose of household hazardous waste through the Home Toxics Collection Program in Washtenaw County. The center is located behind the Washtenaw County Western Service Center at 705 North Zeeb Rd. in Ann Arbor. For disposal guidelines and directions to the facility, please call the 24-hour information hotline at 734-222-3950.

## **'Clean Sweep' Pesticide Disposal**

Clean Sweep is a service partially funded by the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program. It allows for the disposal of unwanted, unusable, or outdated pesticides. Disposal sites are located across the state, with the closest to Washtenaw County being in Oakland and Monroe Counties. Please call 248-288-5150 for Oakland County and 734-240-3170 for Monroe County.

## **Drinking Water Well Screening**

Water testing helps you monitor water quality and protect your family from potential risks to their health. You should have your water tested each year for the two most common indicators of contamination: bacteria and nitrates. To learn more about testing your drinking water, contact the Environmental Health Department (734-222-3800), the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (517-335-9216), or any licensed testing lab (look under 'Laboratories-Testing' in the yellow pages).

## **Abandoned Well Closure Assistance**

Abandoned wells are drinking water, agricultural or irrigation wells which are no longer in use. Abandoned wells pose risks to groundwater contamination from a removed cap or deteriorated seal below the surface. They also pose risks to humans and animals because of the open and sometimes hidden pit. Abandoned wells are found both on farms and in residential areas, with the number estimated at over one million in Michigan alone. The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program can provide cost-share funds to help close abandoned wells on agricultural-zoned property.

## **Soil Testing**

A very important step in lawn and garden care, soil testing provides essential information on soil characteristics so that homeowners can be more effective and safe in their fertilizer applications. This service is available year round, but sample collection should be done either early spring or fall, about every three years. Call your local MSU Extension office (734-997-1678) or Conservation District office (734-761-6721x5) for more information.



Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program  
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## Home\*A\*Syst

A free and confidential service to any homeowner or renter in Michigan, Home\*A\*Syst provides proper management tools to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination at the home site. Many different aspects of the home can contribute to water quality problems; Home\*A\*Syst focuses on eight of them: household trash, hazardous household products, storm water, septic systems, yard and garden care, drinking water wells, and fuel storage. Contact Mary Beth Lake at 734-761-6721x5 for a free Home\*A\*Syst packet and assistance.

## **What else can YOU do to protect your water?**

- ☉ Be very careful when using chemicals and hazardous products around floor drains (usually found in the garage or basement). Floor drains are simply pipes that empty into the ground- anything that goes down them goes directly into the ground, without any treatment. Consider plugging or damming your floor drains to prevent spills or leaks from cars from getting into the ground and groundwater.
- ☉ If you choose to change the oil in your car yourself, dispose of the old oil responsibly. While dumping it on the ground is an easy way to get rid of it, it is dangerous to you, your family, and your neighbors. Once the oil gets into the ground, it can get into everyone's drinking water and cause illness. Many 'quick oil change' shops will accept used oil from individuals, often for no cost.
- ☉ Fix leaky faucets and fixtures at home. It seems like a small leak would not be too much to worry about, but consider how much water is wasted if a small leak goes unfixed for several days, weeks, or months. The more water we use, the more water we have to clean up.
- ☉ Have your septic system pumped or at least checked. Septic systems, if not properly maintained, can cause both surface water and groundwater problems. A malfunctioning septic system can cause excessive weed and algae growth in lakes as well as bacteria and nitrates, potentially severe health hazards, in both groundwater and surface water. Depending on the size of your tank and how many people use it, your septic tank should be pumped every 3-5 years. Limiting the amount of solids (paper, food scraps) and hazardous materials (chemicals, additives) that your household disposes in drains can prolong the life of your septic system.



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