

Groundwater

Importance

Groundwater is one of the earth's most important natural resources. It replenishes lakes and streams and provides a source of drinking water. About 45 million people, including a high percentage of the rural population, supply much of their own drinking water from domestic wells. Michigan has more than 1.12 million homes supplied by private wells. This is more than any other state in the nation. Groundwater wells are also used by many municipalities, and overall, groundwater provides about 37 percent of the nation's public water supply.

Community Water Systems

Community water systems, whether Tribally-operated or city-operated, supply a portion of the Tribal community with their drinking water. All of the LTBB's water systems are supplied solely by groundwater. To ensure that the public is not exposed to any associated health risks, public water supplies are required to undergo regular monitoring. Parameters that are monitored in public water supply testing include but are not limited to: Coliform Bacteria, Volatile Organic Compounds, Synthetic Organic Compounds, Fluoride, Chloride, Hardness, Nitrate, Sulfate, and various Metals.

The Environmental Services Department (ESD) is responsible for sampling, analysis, and reporting on the LTBB's public water systems. Some of the ESD's main responsibilities are:

- Monitoring the LTBB Community Housing water system
- Monitoring the Tribe's non-community water systems
- Writing and distributing annual Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs) for the Community Housing water system. (The purpose of CCRs is to disclose any drinking water quality issues/violations to the public and to assure the public that the water is safe to consume.)

All analytical data for the LTBB's public water systems, including LTBB Community Housing, is on file in the ESD and is available upon request. Since CCRs and analytical data can be difficult to understand,

the ESD is also available to help Tribal Citizens interpret these reports or to help answer any questions related to drinking water quality.

In 2005, the LTBB finalized a Source Water Assessment to further evaluate the current condition of groundwater supplying the Tribe's water systems and to identify potential sources of contamination. The LTBB Source Water Assessment was prepared by the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan Inc. The assessment also includes a Wellhead Protection Plan to insure the future integrity of groundwater on Tribal grounds.

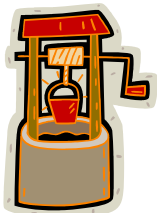
Private Groundwater Wells

The remaining portion of Tribal Citizens rely on private wells as their main source of drinking water. Regular monitoring is not required for private groundwater wells, so many private wells are only tested once after being drilled. Thus, it is critical to periodically evaluate each well to make sure that the water is safe for consumption.

To easily and accurately ensure the quality of the drinking water, the ESD uses Water-Safe All-in-One screening tests from the Silver Lake Research Company to test multiple water quality parameters. Parameters monitored include Lead, Pesticides, Nitrate/Nitrite, Chlorine, pH, Hardness, and Bacteria. The water test takes approximately 15 minutes to perform, and the results are known within 48 hours. The ESD then sends a letter explaining the test results to the resident and recommends whether additional testing should be performed. The ESD also provides collection and shipping of samples for more extensive groundwater testing required for new well installation, real estates transactions, ect.

The ESD offers all Tribal Citizens free well water screening kits and information regarding the quality of your drinking water. For those Tribal Citizens living outside Emmet, Charlevoix, and Cheboygan counties, we will mail the testing kits w/instructions to your home and provide you with information to help interpret the results. The ESD is concerned with the quality of our environment and the health of Tribal Citizens. We strongly encourage you to have your well water tested annually. Call the number listed below to set up an appointment.

If you have any questions or concerns about groundwater or the services offered please contact:





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