



# Waukesha COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF  
PARKS AND LAND USE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Water from Start to Finish**

Most of us don't spend much time thinking about water. When we need water, we turn on the faucet and there it is! But do you know where that water has come from or where it is going when you are done with it?

Here in Waukesha County, most water comes from one of two places—a municipal well, or a private well. Municipal wells are very deep, usually drawing up water from over 1000 feet underground. Private wells are typically not as deep, often drawing up water from only 100-200 feet underground. Regardless of the well depth, the source of the water is groundwater.

As the groundwater is drawn up, it depletes the water sources in a cone shape around the well. Recharge areas are needed to replace the water that has been pumped out. These areas are not always located in the same area as where the water is removed. In fact, the recharge area for our deep water aquifer is actually located in the western portion of Waukesha County and Jefferson County. To put it simply, water must be able to soak into the ground to become groundwater. Parking lots, roads and buildings do not allow water to soak in, so as these structures are added to the landscape, recharge areas are diminished. In fact, rivers and streams become inundated with polluted runoff, as more and more impervious surfaces are added and our groundwater sources continue to shrink.

Now, what about the other end of the process? When you are through with the water—where does it go? The answer is very similar in that it is either a municipal treatment system or a private treatment system. A private treatment system is a septic or mound system that treats wastewater on-site. With the exception of solids that are occasionally pumped and removed, all water remains on site.

The municipal treatment system will collect all wastewater from a community, then treat and clean that water before releasing the water into a local river or stream. Basically, the water we pump from our groundwater is released into a river where it flows either into the Gulf of Mexico or Lake Michigan. We are essentially sending our water away. Perhaps we'll miss it some day? Start conserving water now. Conserve Water—One Drop at a Time.

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