

Ground Water: A Low-Profile, Valuable Resource

(NAPSA)—By nature it keeps a low profile, but ground water is a natural treasure that plays a key role in ecosystems, human life, and economic activity around the world. It also is an abundant, renewable global resource that, if carefully protected and managed, can continue in these roles indefinitely.

Ground water is the water that soaks into the soil from precipitation and moves downward to fill cracks and other openings in beds of rocks and sand. It provides a significant portion of the flow of many streams and replenishes wetlands. It makes up about 90 percent of the fresh water on earth, not including polar ice caps. In the U.S., 47 percent of the population depends on ground water for its drinking water supply.

This resource plays a key role in farming, too, by providing more than 36 percent of the water needed for agricultural irrigation taking place in the U.S., and providing 41 percent of the water used in raising livestock.

Many people do not, however, take ground water's merits into consideration when making decisions involving their own water supply, such as choosing a home or taking a stand on local water supply regulations. In addition to often being the most cost-effective water supply, ground water provided by private household water wells allows consumers to guard the purity of their own water by protecting it from contaminants and scheduling regular maintenance checks and bacterial tests.

Water well contractors can assist homeowners by determining the feasibility of installing a water well, choosing the best type of well for conditions, and ulti-



mately completing a water well project.

Consumers looking for qualified water well contractors in their area have a valuable tool in the Contractor Lookup service on the National Well Owners Association Web site—www.wellowner.org. Sponsored by the National Ground Water Association, the Web site also includes:

- Tips for developing a private water supply
- Information on standard well installation contracts
- Water quality issues
- Well maintenance recommendations
- Facts about ground water

NGWA is a not-for-profit membership association that actively encourages learning more about ground water and private water wells.

For more information, please call (800) 551-7379.