

Water Quality of the
Glacial-Outwash Aquifer in the
Great Miami River Basin, Ohio

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ABSTRACT

The present water-quality conditions of the highly productive glacial-outwash aquifer in the Great Miami River basin of southwestern Ohio are documented by analyses of water from 98 samples collected from 1964 to 1976. The water quality is generally good, with low concentrations of iron, nitrate, and nitrite. Ammonia as nitrogen up to 11 milligrams per liter, nitrite plus nitrate nitrogen as nitrogen up to 0.8 milligrams per liter, total organic carbon up to 7.7 milligrams per liter, and dissolved solids up to 1250 milligrams per liter were maximums. Chloride concentrations in the vicinity of Dayton are higher than those of the surrounding area but do not exceed 100 milligrams per liter. Changes in the chemical character of the water with time are apparent at some sites, but definitive trends are difficult to establish due to lack of consistent, documented data. Maps depicting the present distribution of dissolved solids, dissolved iron, dissolved manganese and total organic carbon are presented.

INTRODUCTION

This investigation deals specifically with the glacial-outwash aquifer in the valley of the Great Miami River in Montgomery, Warren, and Butler Counties of Ohio. The aquifer is the most productive ground-water source in the state. It is highly developed and requires artificial recharge in many areas to maintain the high level of withdrawal. In the Dayton area some pumping was estimated at 162 million gallons (6.116 x 10⁹ liters) per day in 1972 (Fidler, 1975). Increased demands for water by residential, commercial, and industrial users require more artificial recharge, and plans are in progress to fulfill this need. The water quality of a highly developed outwash aquifer that receives extensive induced recharge is susceptible to rapid degradation. In order to define areas where water-quality problems exist and to determine the causes of these problems, it is necessary to document the basic water-quality characteristics of the aquifer. The purpose of this report is to provide the results of a cooperative chemical-quality investigation conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the Miami Conservancy District which documents the general water quality of the region.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Numerous reports (several of which are listed in Selected References) of investigations of the geology, hydrology, hydrogeology, and chemistry of the area have been published by the Miami Conservancy District, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the State of Ohio. Most of these reports contain chemical-quality data either as the main subject or as supplementary information. However, reports that emphasize chemical quality are either results of investigations of small areas or are limited to a specific aspect of water quality.

SITE SELECTION

Approximately 100 sampling sites were selected, the largest proportion within Montgomery County, to assure both horizontal and vertical distribution of wells representing a variety of water uses. Sites also were chosen on the basis of accessibility and probable long well life. Wells constituted all sampling sites except site 92, which was a spring. A few wells in the bedrock aquifers (denoted by footnote 3, table 1) also were sampled for a qualitative comparison with water from the outwash aquifer. Site locations and owner identification data are given in figure 1 and table 1, respectively. Results of chemical analyses are given in table 2.

SAMPLE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Samples were collected between January and June 1976, preserved, and analyzed according to standard U.S. Geological Survey methods (Brown and others, 1970). All samples were pumped, as a pumped sample is generally more representative of water in an aquifer than a sample of standing water from a well casing, pump housing, or pressure tank. Specific conductance, pH, temperature, and hardness were measured in the field and, where possible, water levels were measured. Other chemical constituents in table 2 were determined at the U.S. Geological Survey laboratory in Albany, New York.

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Specific Conductance

Specific conductance is a measure of the ability of a solution to carry a current, and varies with temperature and the type of ions in the solution. Natural waters generally exhibit a linear relationship between specific conductance and dissolved solids (the ratio of specific conductance in micromhos per centimeter at 25°C to dissolved solids in mg/L) where A is a factor ranging in value from 0.5 to 1.0 (Hem, 1970). The mean values for specific conductance and dissolved solids of the samples in this study when substituted into this equation yielded a value for A of 0.57. Specific conductance ranged from 435 microhm/cm at site 60 to 1,425 microhm/cm at site 90. The mean was 794 microhm/cm. Specific conductance seemed to be higher in the vicinity of the major industrial and population centers; and in localized rural areas of Miami County.

pH

The importance of the pH of raw water supply is associated with its corrosive effect on plumbing fixtures, distribution lines, and water-treatment facilities as well as with its effect on water-treatment processes. Generally, corrosiveness of water increases with decreasing pH; that is, highly alkaline water also will attack materials. The National Academy of Sciences (1972) recommends that the pH range for public water supplies be between 5.0 and 9.0. pH values, which were fairly uniform throughout the study area, indicated that the ground water was slightly alkaline. The median pH was 7.5. The minimum was 7.0 at site 5 and the maximum was 8.6 at site 94.

Temperature

Temperature of ground water is usually uniform within an aquifer and normally fluctuates only slightly seasonally in shallow aquifers. For this reason, temperature may be used as an indicator of pollution as it was at site 90, where a temperature of 25°C was recorded. Site 90 is located in close proximity to the Miami Conservancy District's holding pond. This was the maximum observed temperature and over 10°C greater than the mean of 13.5°C; the second highest temperature was 18.0°C at site 1. Temperature was lowest, 10.0°C, at sites 57 and 67.

Silica

Silica in the presence of calcium and magnesium forms boiler scale. Most natural waters contain from 1 to 30 mg/L of silica (Hem, 1970). Silica concentrations were well within this range, with values ranging from 5.5 mg/L at site 57 to 20 mg/L at site 27. The mean was 11.1 mg/L.

Calcium and Magnesium

Concentrations of iron greater than 300 µg/L cause staining of laundry and laundry fixtures, precipitates in plumbing and degrades the general esthetic qualities of water (National Academy of Sciences, 1972). Figure 2 is a map depicting the area distribution of iron in water from the aquifer. Iron concentrations varied widely, but were locally high. The maximum iron concentration, 5,600 µg/L, was observed at site 37, with a minimum of 0 µg/L at sites 22 and 39. The mean concentration was 810 µg/L.

Manganese (Dissolved)

Manganese precipitate causes problems similar to those of iron. Figure 3 is a map depicting the area distribution of manganese in the water from the aquifer. Manganese concentrations were generally well below 200 µg/L; however, they were generally above the 50 µg/L maximum recommended by the National Academy of Sciences (1972) for drinking water. Concentrations ranged from 0 µg/L at numerous sites to 630 µg/L at site 7. The mean concentration was 97 µg/L.

Iron (Dissolved)

Calcium and magnesium combine with various anions to form boiler scale and also combine with fatty acids in soaps to form curd. The amount of calcium and magnesium present generally governs the water hardness, which is discussed later in this report. The mineralogical composition of the geologic formations of the area is responsible, in part, for the occurrence of significant quantities of both elements. Calcium concentrations ranged from 12 mg/L at site 94 to 160 mg/L at sites 17 and 67. The mean concentration was 60 mg/L. The range for magnesium was 13 mg/L at site 94 to 61 mg/L at site 67. The mean concentration was 36 mg/L.

Sodium

Because most samples exhibited low concentrations of sodium, and since sodium tends to be present in significant quantities in industrial waste and sewage effluent, sodium may be used as a pollution indicator. However, water softening also increases sodium concentration. The high concentration at site 60, 120 mg/L, may be due to contamination by water-treatment reagents, despite precautionary measures. The high concentration (250 mg/L) at site 90, which does not have water-treatment apparatus, indicated water-quality problems. Sites 31, 35, 38, 49, 94 and 98 exhibited high concentrations (greater than 50 mg/L), that may indicate pollutional stress. High sodium concentrations also were observed in the wells penetrating rock aquifers (footnote 3, table 1). Concentration ranged from 3.8 mg/L (sites 7 and 79) to 250 mg/L (site 90). The mean was 25 mg/L.

Potassium

Potassium concentrations were low, possibly because potassium easily combines with weathering products, particularly clay minerals of hydrolytic sediments. Potassium concentrations ranged from 0.7 mg/L at site 80 to 50 mg/L at site 90. The mean was 3.6 mg/L.

Sulfate

Sulfate ions in drinking water can affect taste as well as produce caustic effects. The National Academy of Sciences (1972) indicates that a sulfate content can be experienced at low sulfate concentrations if the water is high in magnesium. Sulfate concentrations were well below the 250 mg/L level recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, (1972) for public supply; however, the major industrial centers exhibited sulfate values slightly higher than the mean of 73 mg/L. Sulfate concentrations ranged from 1.2 mg/L at site 87 to 270 mg/L at site 35.

Chloride

The chief sources of chloride in natural waters are sedimentary rocks, industrial waste, and sewage effluent (Hem, 1970). Road salting and home water softeners also may contribute chloride concentration to the environment. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1971). Chloride concentration greatly in excess of 250 mg/L instill a salty taste to drinking water (National Academy of Sciences, 1972). Chloride seems slightly higher south of Dayton and in localized areas of Butler and Miami Counties; however, concentrations were less than 250 mg/L at all but one site. The minimum (6.5 mg/L) occurred at site 33 and the maximum (520 mg/L) at site 90. The mean was 45 mg/L.

Table 1.--Site Identification and Description of Wells in Ohio

Site number	Latitude-longitude	Owner	Depth (ft)	Water-sampling date
1	3918390483814	Bu-1012 Wade Mill Concrete Products at Ross	--	Ind 5-20-76
2	3919080483609	Bu-14 Miami Conservancy District near Hamilton	56	Obs 3-24-76
3	3920190483722	Bu-1018 Dayton Gravel Wolf Creek Pike at Dayton	55	Obs 3-24-76
4	3920300483800	Bu-1009 City of Fairfield well #1 at Fairfield	25	Cbs 3-24-76
5	3920270483507	Bu-1009 City of Fairfield well #3 at Fairfield	176	PS 2-26-76
6	3920150483355	Bu-1008 City of Hamilton well #11 at Hamilton	203	PS 2-26-76
7	3921340483129	Bu-162 Bohneyer Road Landfill at Hamilton	103	Dcm 2-26-76
8	3922108483400	Bu-1002 Hamilton Sewage Treatment at Hamilton	48.5	Ind 3-16-76
9	3923008483177	Bu-1013 Hamilton Sewage Treatment at Hamilton	--	Dcm 3-16-76
10	3924508483300	Bu-36 Champion Park Community Center well #4 at Hamilton	160	Ind 2-25-76
11	3925440483200	Bu-1001 Arco Steel (New Miami) well #10 at Hamilton	176.3	Ind 2-25-76
12	3926050482727	Bu-114 Nicolet Incorporated well #3 near Hamilton	--	Ind 2-24-76
13	3927400483023	Bu-1077 Hickory Farm Church at Hamilton	41	Dcm 2-25-76
14	3928490482515	Bu-1014 Village of Sevenmile Well #1 at Sevenmile	64	PS 2-24-76
15	3928300482737	Bu-1011 City of Trenton well #3 at Trenton	78	PS 2-24-76
16	3929260482535	Bu-1003 Mecco Concrete at Middletown	--	Icm 2-23-76
17	3929240482341	Bu-1015 Arco Steel well #35 at Middletown	226	Ind 3-22-76
18	3929508482204	Bu-1004 Arco Steel well #36 at Middletown	161	Ind 2-24-76
19	3926210481924	Bu-1003 City of Monroe well #3 at Monroe	145	PS 2-24-76
20	3931200482420	Bu-1000 Middletown Water Works well #1 at Middletown	35.5	PS 2-23-76
21	3932540482252	Bu-1005 Post Town School at Middletown	68	Ind 2-23-76
22	3933100481837	Bu-1016 City of Franklin well #6 at Franklin	88	PS 2-06-76
23	3934100481907	Bu-1009 Township of Carroll well #1 at Carroll	61	Dcm 2-25-76
24	3934480482253	Bu-1006 A. Ferguson Oak Lane near Middletown	75	Dcm 2-06-76
25	3935020481924	Bu-1001 Holman Central Street (SR 123) at Carroll	--	Dcm 2-05-76
26	3935240481724	Bu-902 Dayton Power & Light C.B. Hutchings Station well #2 near Miamisburg	105	Ind 2-05-76
27	3936220481838	Bu-914 Pearson Farmington Road near Miamisburg	--	Dcm 4-09-76
28	3936550482155	Bu-1016 Swartz Main Street at Germantown	61	Ind 2-27-76
29	3937380481924	Bu-923 R.N. Shade Janancia Road near Germantown	85	Dcm 2-06-76
30	3937400481842	Bu-920 J. Hart Lower Miamisburg Road near Miamisburg	95	Dcm 2-06-76
31	3937240481729	Bu-912 Monsanto Mound Laboratory well #3 at Miamisburg	80	Ind 2-06-76
32	3938300481707	Bu-63 Box Road Company well #1 (south) at Miamisburg	95	Ind 2-04-76
33	3939240481637	Bu-1016 H. Johnson Upper River Road at Miamisburg	101	Ind 2-06-76
34	394008042047	Bu-924 R. Hoffinger South Lutheran Church Road near Miamisburg	67	Icm 4-08-76
35	3944580482259	Bu-1000 Village of New Lebanon well #3 at New Lebanon	202	PS 5-11-76
36	3946280481134	Bu-1012 L.D. Winkler Soldiers Home Road near Miamisburg	68	Icm 4-08-76
37	3946048104606	Bu-708 Hilltop Concrete at West Carrollton	168	Dcm 2-04-76
38	3946560481505	Bu-1017 Tyson Hydraulic Road at West Carrollton	62	Icm 4-08-76
39	3946208414551	Bu-710 City of West Carrollton well #3 at West Carrollton	51	PS 2-04-76
40	3946580481400	Bu-1002 Montgomery County Sanitation well #14 at Dayton	160	PS 1-30-76
41	3946480481307	Bu-591 Siebenhaert Nursery at Dayton	54	Irr 2-04-76
42	3941270481243	Bu-1001 Montgomery County Sanitation well #2 at Dayton	201	PS 1-30-76
43	3942400481229	Bu-1010 Arco Steel at Dayton	161	Ind 2-27-76
44	3941480481445	Bu-601 Montgomery County Recharge Facility at Dayton	78	Ind 4-09-76
45	3942480481356	Bu-1017 Dayton Sewage Plant well #D1-81 at Dayton	40	Ots 5-18-76
46	3944050481346	Bu-336 Monsanto Chemical Laboratory north well at Dayton	121	AC 1-23-76
47	3944000481244	Bu-523 Dayton Power and Light P.W. 1st Station well #4 at Dayton	159	Pcw 1-30-76
48	3944400481134	Bu-1018 National Cash Register River well at Dayton	129	AC 5-11-76
49	3944400481230	Bu-348 Standard Register at Dayton	140	Pcw 1-22-76
50	3945000481464	Bu-823 Dayton Power & Light Longworth Station Layne well at Dayton	140	Pcw 1-22-76
51	3945470481135	Bu-313 Dayton Fire & Rubber well #2 at Dayton	195	Ind 5-11-76
52	3947200481626	Bu-363 Darling Company at Dayton	60	Ind 4-09-76
53	3947200481626	Bu-1018 Tyson Gravel Wolf Creek Pike at Dayton	61	Ind 2-27-76
54	3945400481111	Bu-884 Delco Products First Street well #8 at Dayton	129	Ind 1-27-76
55	3946050481057	Bu-1005 City of Dayton well #47 at Dayton	123	PS 1-27-76
56	3946380480958	Bu-1004 City of Dayton well #46 at Dayton	65	PS 1-27-76
57	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #45 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
58	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #44 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
59	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #43 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
60	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #42 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
61	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #41 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
62	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #40 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
63	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #39 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
64	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #38 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
65	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #37 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
66	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #36 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
67	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #35 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
68	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #34 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
69	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #33 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
70	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #32 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
71	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #31 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
72	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #30 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
73	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #29 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
74	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #28 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
75	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #27 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
76	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #26 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
77	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #25 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
78	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #24 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
79	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #23 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
80	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #22 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
81	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #21 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
82	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #20 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
83	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #19 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
84	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #18 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
85	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #17 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
86	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #16 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
87	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #15 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
88	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #14 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
89	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #13 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
90	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #12 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
91	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #11 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
92	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #10 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
93	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #9 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
94	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #8 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
95	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #7 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
96	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #6 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
97	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #5 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
98	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #4 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
99	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #3 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
100	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #2 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
101	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #1 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
102	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
103	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
104	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
105	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
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108	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
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119	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
120	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
121	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS 1-27-76
122	3947210481123	Bu-1012 City of Dayton well #0 at Dayton	54	PS