

**INTRODUCTION**

The study area, which coincides with the Mississippi Alluvial Plain section of the Coastal Plain physiographic province in Arkansas, is bounded to the north by the Missouri State line, to the south by the Louisiana State line, and to the east by the Mississippi River. The Fall Line (the physiographic boundary between the Coastal Plain and the Interior Highlands), the Monticello Ridge, and the Crowley River Basin form the western boundary of the study area.

The predominant land use in the study area is agriculture. Rice and soybeans, the principal crops, are dependent on large quantities of fresh water for irrigation. The main source of irrigation water in the Mississippi River Valley alluvial aquifer, herein referred to as the alluvial aquifer, is groundwater. Approximately 4.76 Mgal of water were withdrawn from the alluvial aquifer in 1990 (Holland, 1993), most of the use for agricultural irrigation and the predominant crop type is rice.

The U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Arkansas Geological Commission, has been measuring water levels for 48 years in a network of wells completed in the alluvial aquifer to determine the effects on water levels of large withdrawals for irrigation. In 1984, this network was enhanced by adding wells for which water levels are measured by personnel of the local districts of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Water-level measurements made in more than 700 wells in both networks in 1992 were used to prepare the water-level maps presented in this report. This report was prepared in cooperation with the Arkansas Geological Commission, the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, local conservation districts, and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and is intended to document the effects of withdrawals on water levels in the alluvial aquifer.

Maps shown in this report were prepared from data collected by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The map report shows the potentiometric surface in the alluvial aquifer before (spring) the 1972 pumping season, the change between the spring 1987 and the spring 1992 potentiometric surfaces, and the depth to water in the spring of 1992. Hydrographs show water-level changes from spring 1963 to spring 1992 in Arkansas, Chicot, Crittenden, Lonoke, and Prairie Counties. When data are original observations by U.S. Geological Survey personnel in 257 wells completed in the alluvial aquifer are included in table 1. Water-level measurements made by personnel of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service are available in a separate report (Westerfield and Trencher, 1993).

**AQUIFER DESCRIPTION**

The Mississippi River Valley alluvium is composed of flood-plain and terrace deposits of Quaternary age. The flood-plain deposits generally consist of gravel and coarse sand in the lower part to silt and clay in the upper part. Lithology of the terrace deposits is similar to that in the flood plain (Bowell and others, 1968).

The total thickness of the alluvium ranges from near zero along the Fall Line to a maximum of about 220 ft. The upper sand and clay layer varies in thickness from a few feet to more than 75 feet and forms a confining layer for the underlying alluvial aquifer. The alluvial aquifer generally is 100 to 150 feet thick. Intensive groundwater withdrawals in some areas have resulted in the long-term decline of water levels below the top of the aquifer.

Yields of wells generally range from 1,000 to 3,000 gal/min (Peterson and others, 1983). The alluvium is discontinuous in Crowley Ridge, and extends from north of the Missouri-Arkansas boundary southward to Helena, Arkansas. These Tertiary deposits are much less permeable than the alluvial aquifer (Bowell and others, 1968).

**POTENTIOMETRIC-SURFACE MAP**

The potentiometric-surface map indicates the altitude to which water levels would rise in tightly cased wells completed in the alluvial aquifer. A potentiometric-surface map is shown for spring 1992. This map reflects conditions prevailing the seasonal withdrawal for irrigation and is based on water-level measurements made in 717 wells between March and June 1992. The potentiometric-surface map includes stage measurements at gaging stations on streams and rivers. Stage data are used to assess the relation between streams and the aquifer.

The potentiometric-surface map reflects the areal ground-water flow patterns within the alluvial aquifer, with movement generally being perpendicular to the contours in the direction of the hydraulic gradient. The regional direction of ground-water flow is to the south and southeast except where affected by intensive groundwater withdrawals and near rivers that are in hydraulic connection with the alluvial aquifer. By parts of Arkansas, Lonoke, and Prairie Counties, and from Monroe County to western Craighead County are large areas where the potentiometric surface has been depressed by large withdrawals of ground water for irrigation.

Water levels are highest in the spring when water levels have recovered from the previous year's withdrawal and lowest in the fall at the end of the irrigation season. Water levels average about 2.6 ft lower in the fall than the spring (Westerfield and Trencher, 1993).

**FIVE-YEAR WATER-LEVEL CHANGE MAP**

The 5-year water-level change map reflects the differences between the spring 1987 and spring 1992 potentiometric surfaces. Declines of more than 2.6 occurred in many areas primarily as a result of ground-water withdrawals for irrigation. The largest area of decline was noted west of Crowley Ridge in Craighead and Prairie Counties, and in these other areas extending from northern Arkansas County into Lonoke, Prairie and White Counties. Withdrawals from the alluvial aquifer during 1990 totaled 441 Mgal in Craighead and Prairie Counties and 847 Mgal in Arkansas, Lonoke, Prairie, and White Counties (Holland, 1993). Withdrawal totals for 1992 were not available but probably were similar to those in 1990. In many areas, water levels rose 5 ft or more in response to higher stream stages or reduced ground-water withdrawals.

**DEPTH-TO-WATER MAP**

Water levels in the alluvial aquifer are shallowest near the Fall Line and near large streams, such as the Arkansas, Mississippi, and White Rivers, that are in hydraulic connection with the aquifer. The water levels are shallow (less than 20 ft below land surface) along the Fall Line because the aquifer is near the surface in this area. Water levels are shallow near large streams for two reasons: (1) decreased use of ground water due to the availability of surface water, and (2) recharge to the aquifer by water from the stream. Water levels more than 100 ft below land surface occur in two areas: the first area is located in Arkansas, Lonoke, and Prairie Counties and the second area is in Cross and Prairie Counties west of Crowley Ridge. Both of these areas have large ground-water withdrawals.

**LONG-TERM HYDROGRAPHS**

Hydrographs for wells in the alluvial aquifer in Arkansas, Chicot, Crittenden, Lonoke, and Prairie Counties (figure 1) show water-level changes from spring 1963 to spring 1992. The wells in Lonoke and Prairie Counties are in areas of large withdrawals, and the respective hydrographs show nearly continuous water-level declines that average 1.4 ft/yr. The well in Arkansas County also is in an area of large ground-water withdrawal and its hydrograph shows declines that average 0.6 ft/yr. The hydrographs for the wells in Chicot and Crittenden Counties indicate no long-term change or trend in water levels for the last 29 years, but show small yearly fluctuations that probably are influenced by the stage in the Mississippi River.

**WELL-NUMBERING SYSTEM**

The well-numbering system used in this report is based upon the location of the wells according to the Federal land survey used in Arkansas. The component parts of a well number are the township number, the range number, the section number, and three letters which indicate, respectively, the quarter section, the quarter-quarter section, and the quarter-quarter-quarter section in which the well is located. The letters are assigned counterclockwise, beginning with "A" in the northeast quarter or quarter-quarter or quarter-quarter-quarter section in which the well is located. For example, well 050702CBA1 is located in Township 5 North, Range 7 East, and in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 28. This well is the first well in this quarter-quarter-quarter section of section 28 from which data were collected.

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For purchase write to:  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Book and Open-File Reports Section  
Federal Center  
Box 25425  
Denver, Colorado 80225

**CONVERSION FACTORS AND VERTICAL DATUM**

Multiply	By	To obtain
feet (ft)	0.3048	meter
foot per year (ft/yr)	0.3048	meter per year
million per minute (gal/min)	0.0227	liter per second
million per day (Mgal/d)	0.0438	cubic meter per second

Note: In this report, "sea level" refers to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD of 1929)—a geoid datum derived from a general adjustment of the first-order level nets of the United States and Canada, formerly called Sea Level Datum of 1929.

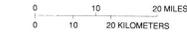


LOCATION OF STUDY AREA IN EASTERN ARKANSAS

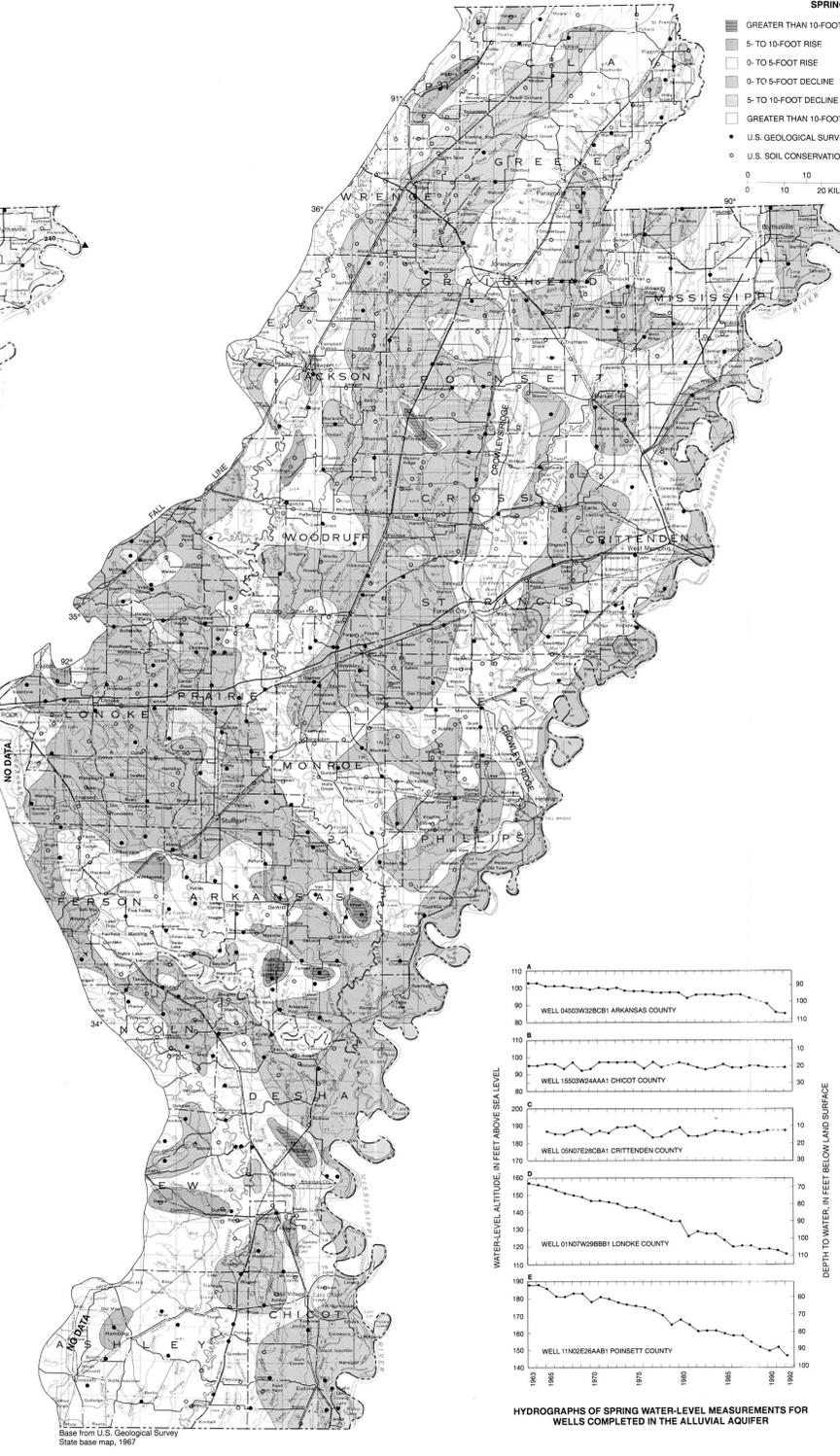


POTENTIOMETRIC SURFACE OF THE ALLUVIAL AQUIFER, SPRING 1992

- 120 POTENTIOMETRIC CONTOUR—Shows altitude at which water level would have stood in tightly cased wells. Dashed where approximately located. Contour interval 10 feet. Datum is sea level.
- A U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OBSERVATION WELL—Letter when present, corresponds with hydrograph.
- o U.S. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE OBSERVATION WELL
- ▲ GAGING STATION



Base from U.S. Geological Survey State base map, 1967



CHANGE IN THE POTENTIOMETRIC SURFACE OF THE ALLUVIAL AQUIFER FROM SPRING 1987 TO SPRING 1992

- GREATER THAN 10-FOOT RISE
- 5- TO 10-FOOT RISE
- 0- TO 5-FOOT RISE
- 0- TO 5-FOOT DECLINE
- 5- TO 10-FOOT DECLINE
- GREATER THAN 10-FOOT DECLINE
- U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OBSERVATION WELL
- o U.S. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE OBSERVATION WELL



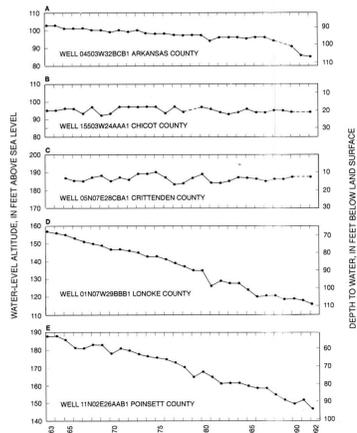
Base from U.S. Geological Survey State base map, 1:100,000, 1967

DEPTH-TO-WATER MAP, SPRING 1992

- o— LINE OF EQUAL DEPTH-TO-WATER—Dashed where approximately located. Hatchures indicate depression. Contour interval 20 feet. Datum is land surface.
- o U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OBSERVATION WELL
- o U.S. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE OBSERVATION WELL



Base from U.S. Geological Survey State base map, 1:100,000, 1967



HYDROGRAPHS OF SPRING WATER-LEVEL MEASUREMENTS FOR WELLS COMPLETED IN THE ALLUVIAL AQUIFER

Well No.	County	Year	Water Level (ft)	Depth to Water (ft)	Station
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1963	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1964	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1965	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1966	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1967	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1968	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1969	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1970	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1971	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1972	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1973	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1974	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1975	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1976	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1977	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1978	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1979	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1980	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1981	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1982	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1983	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1984	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1985	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1986	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1987	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1988	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1989	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1990	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1991	100	10	W
046002B2C81	Arkansas	1992	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1963	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1964	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1965	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1966	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1967	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1968	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1969	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1970	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1971	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1972	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1973	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1974	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1975	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1976	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1977	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1978	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1979	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1980	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1981	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1982	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1983	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1984	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1985	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1986	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1987	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1988	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1989	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1990	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1991	100	10	W
155002A4A1	Chicot	1992	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1963	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1964	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1965	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1966	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1967	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1968	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1969	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1970	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1971	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1972	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1973	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1974	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1975	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1976	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1977	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1978	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1979	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1980	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1981	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1982	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1983	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1984	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1985	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1986	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1987	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1988	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1989	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1990	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1991	100	10	W
060702CBA1	Crittenden	1992	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1963	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1964	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1965	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1966	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1967	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1968	100	10	W
010702B8B1	Lonoke	1969			