

WELL CHARACTERISTICS AND PERFORMANCE

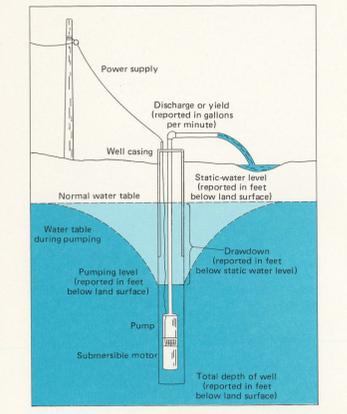
General Statistics

Records of wells drilled in 1960 or later were analyzed for depth to water, total depth, completion method, and construction. Information about wells drilled since 1960 is virtually complete, and these wells are likely to have been constructed according to practices that minimize potential for pollution.

Most of the wells are 6-in. (150-mm) diameter domestic wells. (See diagram of typical well installation.) Wells are airlift or bailer tested by the driller to determine yield.

About half the wells were drilled by the cable-tool method and half by rotary or air-rotary method. More than 95 percent of the wells were completed by open-hole construction, using a surface or conductor casing but no screen or perforated pipe opposite water-yielding intervals.

In 50 percent of the wells the reported water levels have been 20 ft (6 m) or less and in 90 percent the levels have been shallower than 60 ft (18 m) below land surface. Fifty percent of the wells have total depths of 110 ft (34 m) or less and 90 percent have total depths less than 225 ft (69 m).



The specific capacity of a well is a measure of the potential yield of the well and is reported as the discharge rate divided by the amount of lowering of the water level during bailing or pumping. Specific capacity depends on the ability of the geologic formation to transmit water and on the efficiency of the particular well. The specific capacity of nearly half the wells is 0.1 gal/min or less per foot of drawdown (0.02 l/s per meter). Many wells are adequate for domestic supplies, but the low values of specific capacity indicate that yields would be too low and power consumption too high for practical use of well water for crop irrigation.

In areas underlain by rocks of low permeability, some of the wells were "overtested" by the driller; that is, the reported rate of withdrawal may have been attained only through drawdown of the water level to near the bottom of the well. This means that the well could only sustain a pumping rate smaller than the tested rate. Most wells were tested for only 1 hour; reported values for tests of longer duration are more reliable for estimating the specific capacity or the sustained yield of the well.

Well-Characteristics Map

The well-characteristics map covers the same areas as the geohydrologic map. It is intended to show data for selected existing wells that will help the prospective owner or driller of a well to estimate the probable depths and performance that may be expected. However, because local conditions are

highly variable, depths or performance of the wells shown on the map are not necessarily typical of the local area. Also, in many local areas, the number of wells is insufficient to determine average values. Other factors being equal, wells located in valleys will generally require shallower depths or yield more water than wells located in adjacent highlands.

One or more of the following approaches can be used to estimate prospects for obtaining a water well: (1) Use data shown on the map for nearby wells that can be expected to be in similar formations (keeping in mind the possibilities shown in the diagram showing depth-horizontal distance relation of dipping beds); (2) obtain advice from a well driller with local experience; (3) check on the availability of new or more recent information from the office of the U. S. Geological Survey in Portland, Ore., or the Oregon Water Resources Department in Salem, Ore.; (4) consult with well owners in the vicinity of the proposed drilling location.

CHEMICAL CHARACTER OF THE GROUND WATER

Ground water in the Drain-Yoncalla area is diverse in chemical character, as indicated by the different shapes and sizes of the chemical diagrams on the geohydrologic map. There is no definite pattern of distribution of the types of water, but waters with a high concentration of dissolved solids are more likely to be found near the contacts of the basalt member and the sandstone and siltstone member of the Umpqua Formation. In waters of high dissolved-solids concentrations, calcium and chloride or sodium and chloride are commonly dominant over the other ions. Calcium and chloride are usually dominant in water from the basalt member of the Umpqua Formation. Sodium and bicarbonate are dominant in most waters from the sandstone and siltstone member of the Umpqua. Calcium and bicarbonate are likely to be dominant in surface water or ground water from alluvium near streams. The Tye Formation is not characterized by a single type of water, except that high concentrations of dissolved solids are not common.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE USABILITY OF GROUND WATER

Criteria and Standards

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) (1974) recommended criteria that might be used to establish standards of quality for water used for drinking or other purposes. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (1975) published preliminary regulations that will become standards for public water supplies in June 1977. Some (but not necessarily all) of the criteria or standards that may be pertinent to samples listed in the table of chemical analyses include:

Constituent	Recommended limit of concentration in mg/l (milligrams per liter)	
	NAS, NAE, 1974	EPA, 1975
Iron (Fe)	0.3	—
Manganese (Mn)	0.05	—
Sulfate (SO ₄)	250	—
Chloride (Cl)	250	—
Fluoride (F)	1/1.8	1/1.8
Boron (B)	2/2	—
Arsenic (As)	.1	.05
Nitrate (NO ₃) + nitrite (NO ₂), expressed as N	3/10	10

- 1/ Value based on average maximum air temperature in vicinity of Drain.
- 2/ For tolerant crops; for sensitive crops limit is 0.75. No recommended limit for human consumption.
- 3/ A separate limit of 1.0 mg/l recommended for nitrite.

The preceding recommended limits are for public supplies; however, concentrations exceeding these values may be acceptable to many users.

Excessive iron or manganese causes staining of plumbing fixtures and laundry and can give a peculiar taste to the water. Chloride in excess of about 500 mg/l and dissolved solids in excess of 1,000 mg/l may give a salty or mineral taste to the water. Sulfate in excessive concentrations can have a laxative effect on persons not accustomed to the water. Fluoride is beneficial in moderate amounts because it

retards dental decay, but in concentrations of more than several milligrams per liter can eventually cause darkening or mottling of children's teeth. Large amounts of nitrate can cause methemoglobinemia (blue-baby effect) in infants.

Excessive hardness is undesirable but seldom is cause for rejection of a water supply. Commercial softeners can be used for most supplies. The U. S. Geological Survey uses the following rating for hardness:

Hardness range (as CaCO ₃) (mg/l)	Rating
0-60	Soft
61-120	Moderately hard
121-180	Hard
More than 180	Very hard

A boron concentration of only a few milligrams per liter has a toxic effect on plants; yellowing of leaves is one symptom. Some plants are more sensitive than others; many nut and fruit trees are among the more sensitive plants.

The sodium-adsorption-ratio (SAR) of a water is a measure of the suitability of the water for irrigation. Where SAR values are high, sodium in the water tends to replace calcium and magnesium adsorbed in the soil, which results in clogging of the soil. The limit of SAR is about 4 for sensitive fruits. Water will be suitable for most other crops if the SAR is less than about 8 to 18 (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, 1974, p. 330).

Local Water Quality

Available water-quality data are listed in the chemical-analysis table. One analysis of water from a stream (Elk Creek at Drain) is included for comparison with ground water.

Iron and manganese are excessive in some ground water that is otherwise of good quality. Ten samples had excessive chloride. Recommended limits for fluoride were equaled or exceeded in four samples, but none was so high that mottling of teeth is likely to occur.

No excessive nitrate concentrations were noted. However, a significant concentration (even though it is less than the recommended limit) is sometimes an indication of possible bacterial pollution. Bacterial pollution can occur if a well is improperly located or constructed. (See Oregon Water Resources Department for current well-drilling regulations.)

No samples exceeded recommended limits for arsenic. Although several contained more arsenic than is typical for ground water, they had far less than has been found in the Fisher Formation in Lane County, where more than 1 mg/l (milligram per liter) has been reported for water from some wells about 20 mi (30 km) northeast of Drain (Goldblatt and others, 1963).

Water from well 23S/4W-28db, located in the mercury-mining area, was found to contain less than 0.0001 mg/l of mercury.

Nine of the samples had more than 1 mg/l of boron — enough to be unsuitable for irrigating sensitive plants. One-fifth of the samples had more than 1,000 mg/l of dissolved solids or a high specific conductance. (Specific conductance can be used to approximate the dissolved solids, which commonly range from 0.5 to 0.8 of the conductance values.) Thirteen of the 39 samples were hard or very hard. SAR's of 10 samples exceeded 8.

Temperature measurements reasonably representative of water in the formations are sometimes difficult to obtain. In the table, the range is from 46° to 73°F (7.5° to 23°C). The average water temperature reported by drillers was 54°F (12°C) — almost the same as the mean annual air temperature at Drain (53°F or 12°C).

Users of some well waters complain of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) odor; the problem can be minimized if the water is aerated prior to use.

On the basis of the table of chemical analyses, areas where dissolved constituents in some of the ground water may typically be high include Putnam, Scotts, and Pleasant valleys, Yoncalla, and Boswell springs.

Water from some wells shows a seasonal increase in dissolved constituents as more water is used. The increase occurs when most of the pumped water comes from the lower part of the aquifer where the dissolved-solids concentrations are higher.