

INTRODUCTION

There are estimated to be more than 400 drainage wells in Orange County, Fla., which receive inflow water from various sources and introduce this drainage into the Upper Floridan aquifer. Sources of inflow to these wells include overflow from lakes, and direct runoff from lawns, streets, parking lots, and rooftops. Inflow to drainage wells is of variable quality (Schiner and German, 1983) and can introduce contaminants to the Upper Floridan aquifer and possibly to the underlying Lower Floridan aquifer.

Historically, drainage wells were used to relieve or prevent flooding in topographically-located basins and low areas. However, there are indications that in the early 1900's a few unspecified drainage wells were used for disposal of sewage effluent and manufacturing wastes (Telfair, 1948). The first documented use of a drainage well was in 1904 for the disposal of lake overflow from Lake Greenwood in southeast Orlando (Sellards and Gunter, 1910). Many drainage wells were drilled in Orlando during the unusually wet period from 1926 to 1928. Records of drainage wells before 1937 are scarce due to the lack of a regulatory permitting system for drainage wells before that year.

Many permits were issued for drainage wells during the wet periods of 1948, 1954, 1959, 1960, and 1964. However, there were no restrictions on the use of drainage wells until the 1960's. Drainage-well permits have not been issued since 1966 except for the repair or replacement of existing drainage wells.

Drainage wells in the Orlando area generally were not completed in the Lower Floridan aquifer, which is the sole source of public-supplied drinking water in the area, but were completed in the Upper Floridan aquifer at depths of 400 ft or less. However, one drainage well was reportedly drilled to a depth of 1,070 ft (Black, Crow, and Eidness, Inc., 1968). Capacities of drainage wells to accept inflow differ and are related to well and aquifer characteristics. Inflow capacities of drainage wells in the Orlando area generally range from about 200 gallons to as much as 9,200 gallons, which was observed at a drainage well in southeast Orlando (Bradner, 1991).

Water quality in most supply wells completed in the Lower Floridan has not been affected by drainage-well inflow as recently as 1979 (Schiner and German, 1983). However, because of the potential for downward leakage from the Upper Floridan to the Lower Floridan aquifer, concerns have been raised since that time about the quality of water being introduced to the ground-water system through drainage wells, particularly in the southwest part of Orlando. To address these concerns, an assessment of existing drainage wells and sources of potential ground-water contamination associated with these wells was made by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District, during the latter part of 1990. As part of this assessment, drainage wells and public-supply wells in southwest Orlando were inventoried and data were collected on land use and potential sources of contaminants in the basins contributing inflow to the drainage wells.

Two numbering systems are used to identify wells in this report. The first system uses a map reference number to identify wells in figure 2 and tables 1 and 2. The second system uses a well identification number that is used for storage and retrieval of data from the USGS data management system, the National Water Data Storage and Retrieval (NWDSS) System. The identification number for the NWDSS system consists of 15 digits. The first 6 digits denote the degrees, minutes, and seconds of latitude; the next 7 digits denote the degrees, minutes, and seconds of longitude; and the last 2 digits (assigned sequentially) identify the wells within a 1-second grid.

Casing depths of drainage wells in the study area range from 68 to 280 ft, based on existing data. For several of the drainage wells, measured casing depths differ from reported casing depths. The largest difference was at well 19, which has 10 ft more casing than was reported. Most measured casing depths are within 5 ft of their reported depths.

Well depths were measured in 14 of the drainage wells. Measured well depths ranged from 133 to 777 ft and differences between reported and measured well depths ranged from 506 ft shallower to 71 ft deeper. Well 15 is 506 ft shallower than previously reported and well 15 is 71 ft deeper than reported. Well depths that were shallower than reported could be due to filling with silt and debris or collapse of part of the open-hole interval of the well. Well depths greater than previously reported indicate that some of the wells either were drilled deeper than the depths reported or, possibly, were deepened at a later date. All drainage wells within the study area with measured or reported well depths were determined to be in the Upper Floridan aquifer, based on depths to the top of the Floridan aquifer system reported by Lichter and others (1968).

The overall condition of each drainage well inventoried during this study was assessed to the extent possible. Many wells had severely rusted casings and some had jagged casing edges visible at the surface. At least two wells had breaks in the casing below the water table of the surficial aquifer system. One well had deteriorated and bricks from the manhole housing the wellhead were collapsing around and into the well.

The ability of the wells to accept runoff varies with the operational status of the wells. Sixteen of the drainage wells listed in table 2 are classified as active (capable of readily accepting surface runoff). Three wells are partially blocked by obstructions, two are temporarily blocked, and three are filled with debris. Two wells are capped and six wells are plugged. Eleven wells could not be located, so their operational status is unknown.

The primary source of inflow to each well is listed in table 2. Of the 38 drainage wells listed in table 2, 18 were designed to receive lake overflow. The remaining wells were designed to receive street runoff, recharge from the surficial aquifer system, or air-conditioning return flow or process wastewater. Street runoff is the primary source of inflow for 11 wells; seepage from the surficial aquifer system is the source of inflow for 6 wells and wastewater discharge is the source of inflow for 3 wells. The original design for well 1 was lake overflow and for well 5 was surface runoff. However, leakage from the surficial aquifer system was observed as subsurface inflow through deteriorated casings at both wells.

The frequency of inflow to drainage wells depends on the source of the inflow water. Lake overflow and seepage from the surficial aquifer system tend to be relatively continuous and steady at low flow rates for long periods of time. However, drought conditions, which lower the lake levels and the water table in the surficial aquifer system, can result in no inflow. If lake levels are at or near the drainage-well inflow-control elevation, inflow can occur as a result of small amounts of rainfall in the basin. Street runoff tends to produce sudden, large periodic inflows. During extremely wet periods, high lake levels can flood drainage-well basins which normally receive only street runoff. The frequency of inflow of process-wastewater depends on the process which produces the wastewater.

Of the 16 wells classified as active, 12 receive long-term inflow; the other 4 receive periodic inflow. Of the remaining 22 wells classified as inactive or unknown, inflow frequency at 14 wells is unknown, and the remaining 8 are capped or plugged. The frequency of inflow listed in table 2 differs from the design frequency for certain wells receiving street runoff. Inflow to some wells designed to periodically drain street runoff was observed during the drought of December 1990, when no storm runoff was present. One possible source of this inflow could be water from lawn irrigation entering storm sewers which lead to these drainage wells.

Based on the basin boundaries shown in figure 2, the drainage wells in the study area potentially accept inflow from about 8,800 acres. Basin 14 (wells 6 and 7) is the largest potential contributing area, about 2,600 acres. The smallest potential contributing area for an active drainage well is basin 10 (wells 15 and 16), about 43 acres.

Many of the basins contain more than one well. The drainage areas of the basins are reported as acres per total number of wells (table 2) because it is difficult to delineate contributing areas to each well. The greatest number of wells in any one basin is four. Basin 17, for example, contains drainage wells 1, 2, and 3, which collectively drain 602 acres. Multiple drainage wells in a basin allow more rapid drainage of surface runoff; however, some wells in some basins are inactive.

Many drainage wells in the study area no longer accept inflow because of flow diversion or because the wells have been capped. Wells 30, 31, 32, and 33 in basin 1, for example, have all been replaced by a lift station that pumps the water from the Lake Venus basin into a canal leading directly to Shingle Creek. Well 30 has been capped, well 33 is known to be plugged, and wells 31 and 32 were not located, but are believed to be plugged. Thus, there are no known active drainage wells in the Lake Venus basin. Well 16 in the Lake Beardsall basin (basin 10) has been plugged. Drainage from the Lake Beardsall basin is now diverted into the Clear Lake basin (basin 7), which discharges through a canal into Shingle Creek. Well 13, originally intended to drain the Clear Lake basin, is now blocked. Of the approximately 8,800 acres originally served by drainage wells in the study area, the drainage from about 2,600 acres is now diverted to Shingle Creek. Thus, only about 6,150 acres are now drained by "active" wells.

Some basin boundaries have been altered by manmade changes in the surface drainage system. For example, in the Clear Lake basin (basin 7) the potential drainage area approximately doubled when storm sewers from the east and west sides of U.S. Highway 441 were connected. Some basins are interconnected to allow excess surface runoff to enter adjacent basins during extreme hydrologic events.

Inorganic contaminants in runoff from fertilized agricultural areas, streets and paved areas, and commercial and industrial areas (fig. 2), are common constituents in drainage-well inflow in the study area. Large areas of agricultural land in the study area are fertilized and the volume of vehicle traffic on the streets and highways is large. The potential for the introduction of inorganic contaminants from nonpoint sources to drainage-well inflow exists in all basins and potential sources of these contaminants from point sources exist in 11 of the 17 basins. Fourteen potential point sources for inorganic contaminants were identified; they included plant nurseries, parking lots, and plating companies.

Activities producing and using pesticides and petroleum-based cleaning products and fuels are potential sources of organic chemical contaminants in drainage-well inflow throughout much of the study area. Seventy-four activities, which use organic chemicals and are potential point sources for organic contaminants were located near wells in 10 of the 17 basins. These activities include manufacturing plants, gas stations, and automotive repair and salvage shops, all of which use cleaning fluids such as trichloroethylene. These types of activities generally are concentrated in small areas in the more commercial parts of the study area. Although a large number of potential sources for organic contaminants exist in these basins, a literature search indicated that there is no evidence that these contaminants are reaching any of the public-supply wells tapping the Lower Floridan aquifer.

Land uses and activities within a 14 square-mile area in southwest Orlando were inventoried between October and December 1990 to identify potential sources of contamination to drainage-well inflow. This inventory was made to address concerns about the effect that drainage wells might have on the quality of water from the Lower Floridan aquifer which is the source for public water supplies in the area.

Thirty-eight individual drainage wells and three public-supply wells were identified within the study area. The wells are located in 17 basins totaling about 8,800 acres. All drainage wells within the study area were determined to be completed in the Upper Floridan aquifer.

The overall condition of the 38 drainage wells also was determined. Many wells have deteriorated casings and two wells have breaches in the casings below the water table. Sixteen wells were determined to be active. Three wells were determined to be inactive, 6 wells are plugged, and the status of 11 wells is unknown because they could not be located.

Drainage wells in the study area currently drain about 6,150 acres of the 8,800 acres in the study area because some inflow previously entering drainage wells has been diverted to streams. Many of the basins contain more than one drainage well, although some of these wells may be inactive. Basin 14 (wells 6 and 7) has the largest potential contributing area, about 2,600 acres. Stormwater-management practices have approximately doubled the potential drainage area of the Clear Lake basin by connecting storm sewers on the east and west sides of U.S. Highway 441. Some basins are interconnected to allow excess surface runoff to enter adjacent basins during extreme hydrologic conditions.

The primary sources of inflow to the 38 drainage wells within the study area are lake overflow (18 wells), street runoff (11 wells), water from the surficial aquifer system (6 wells), and wastewater (3 wells).

Measured casing depths of drainage wells in the area ranged from 70 to 279 feet (ft), and generally were within 5 ft of reported depths. Measured drainage-well depths ranged from 72 to 292 ft and were from 506 ft shallower to 71 ft deeper than reported depths.

The three public-supply wells within the basin for drainage wells 6 and 7 have between 982 and 1,045 ft of casing and are open to the Lower Floridan aquifer. The zone of the Floridan aquifer system tapped by these public-supply wells and the zone tapped by drainage wells 6 and 7 are vertically separated by about 500 ft.

City and county zoning classifications were used to classify land use within the study area (based on the potential to produce a contaminant hazard) into five groups: residential, commercial, undeveloped, paved, and industrial. Field inspection of the study area confirmed the existence of four possible contamination hazards: inorganic chemicals, organic chemicals, and microbiological matter. Suspended sediments are a potential contaminant in all basins.

The potential exists for microbiological contamination in drainage-well inflow, particularly in the 13 basins where drainage wells receive large volumes of lake-overflow water. The potential exists in all basins for inorganic contaminants in runoff from nonpoint sources such as fertilized areas, paved areas, and commercial industrial areas to enter drainage wells. Fourteen potential point sources for inorganic contaminants were located within 11 of the 17 basins. The potential sources include plant nurseries, parking lots, and plating companies.

Seventy-four activities which use organic chemicals and are potential point sources of organic contamination to drainage-well inflow were located near wells in 10 of the 17 basins. These activities include automotive repair shops, gasoline stations, manufacturing plants, and salvage yards, which use petroleum fuels and cleaning solvents such as trichloroethylene.

SUMMARY

Land uses and activities within a 14 square-mile area in southwest Orlando were inventoried between October and December 1990 to identify potential sources of contamination to drainage-well inflow. This inventory was made to address concerns about the effect that drainage wells might have on the quality of water from the Lower Floridan aquifer which is the source for public water supplies in the area.

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Climate and Land Use

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The potential sources of contaminants in the study area are closely related to land use. For example, runoff from agricultural and residential areas commonly contains nutrients (associated with fertilizers) and organic pesticides. Runoff from areas of manufacturing and industrial activities commonly contains various types of solvents, and runoff from urban streets can contain organic compounds and trace elements such as lead associated with automobile emissions.

Land use in southwest Orlando is primarily residential, consisting of single family homes with a number of medium-density apartment complexes interspersed with small businesses and some light industries. The heaviest concentrations of commercial and industrial areas lie along State Road 50 in the northern part of the area; along U.S. Highway 441 near the eastern boundary of the study area; and in the commercial parks concentrated in the southwestern part of the study area. The western part of the study area is the least developed and includes a mixture of low-density housing and open fields, but this area is rapidly being developed.

Potential contaminants associated with the various land uses are classified into five types based on contaminant listings in the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (Florida Department of State, 1989) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1986). These five types are suspended solids, inorganic chemicals, organic chemicals, microbiological matter, and radionuclides. Field inspection of the study area confirmed some potential point sources of contamination (fig. 2). The types of contaminants identified with these sources are classified as inorganic, organic, or microbiological. No activities that could produce radioactive contamination were observed in the study area.

Suspended solids contribute to turbidity by interfering with the passage of light through water. Velocities in runoff water generally are high enough to suspend and transport solids. Therefore, suspended solids are a potential contaminant in all drainage wells receiving inflow from surface runoff.

Inorganic constituents and organic compounds used in various manufacturing or cleaning processes are potential contaminants in many areas of light industry. Inorganic and organic contaminants including lubricants, lead, copper, and cadmium are common in runoff from paved surfaces. Runoff from residential lands can contain inorganic and organic contaminants associated with fertilizers and pesticides, and microbiological contaminants. Contaminants from product residue and from cleaning fluids and other solvents commonly are generated in areas of commercial land use.

Microbiological contamination is possible in street runoff and lake overflow to drainage wells. Schiner and German (1983) reported that in some places the upper producing zone of the Florida aquifer system might be contaminated with bacteria because of drainage-well recharge, particularly where drainage wells receive direct street runoff. Wells in 13 of the 17 basins in the study area receive large volumes of lake-overflow water and much smaller volumes of inflow from street runoff and other sources. For the purposes of this report, lake overflow is considered the primary source of water and potential source of microbiological matter to drainage wells (fig. 2), though some of the microbiological matter in the lakes may originate from terrestrial sources.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINANTS

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CONVERSION FACTORS, VERTICAL DATUM, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

Length	By	To obtain
feet (ft)	2.54	millimeter
feet (ft)	0.3048	meter
miles (mi)	1.609	kilometer
Area	0.0007	hectare
square miles (mi ²)	2.590	square kilometer
Volume		
million gallons (Mgal)	3.785	cubic meter
Flow		
gallon per minute (gpm)	0.0038	liter per second
million gallons per day (Mgal/d)	0.0438	cubic meter per second
Transmissivity		
cubic foot per day per square foot	0.0929	cubic meter per day per square meter
feet times feet of aquifer thickness [(ft) ² /ft]		square meter times meter of aquifer thickness

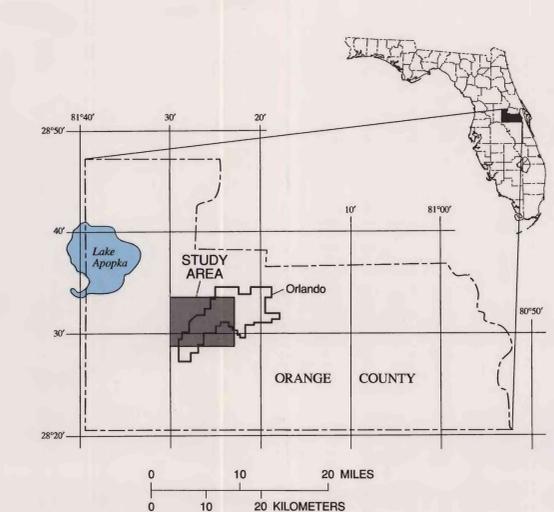


Figure 1. Location of the study area.

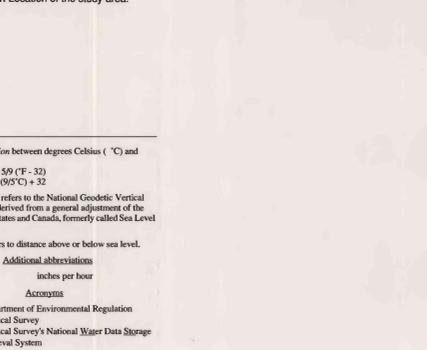


Figure 2. Land-use, basin boundaries, public-supply wells, drainage wells, and potential contaminant sources.

Table 1. Physical characteristics of public-supply wells.

[All wells are completed in the Lower Floridan aquifer, owned by the city of Orlando, and located at the Kirkman Road water plant. All wells are currently (1993) being used, and each can produce as much as 3 million gallons per day.]

Map reference number	U.S. Geological Survey site identification number	Local identification number	Well depth (feet)	Casing depth (feet)	Casing diameter (inches)
1	28300081273701	OUC-19	1,346	1,045	30
2	28300081273601	OUC-33	1,380	982	24
3	28300081274401	OUC-23	1,402	982	24

Table 2. Physical characteristics of drainage wells and drainage-well basins.

[All wells are completed in the Upper Floridan aquifer. Operational status: A, active; B, blocked partially; C, capped; P, plugged; U, unknown. Primary inflow source: L, lake overflow; S, street runoff; T, inflow from surficial aquifer system; W, waste (air conditioning return or process waste disposal). Inflow frequency: M, long-term continuous; N, never; P, periodic; U, unknown. FDOT, Florida Department of Transportation; in, inch; ft, feet; NA, not available; --, no data.]

Map reference number	U.S. Geological Survey site identification number	Owner	Operational status	Primary inflow source	Inflow frequency	Well depth		Casing depth		Location				
						Reported (ft)	Measured (ft)	Reported (ft)	Measured (ft)					
1	28300708124401	Orange County	S-75	A	602 (1)	L	M	133	136	104	8	Lake Catherine at Timbercreek South.		
2	28301108124360	Orange County	S-71	A	602 (1)	L	M	350	121	--	99	Lake Catherine at Timbercreek North.		
3	28300608126001	Orange County	S-72	A	602 (1)	L	M	777	--	263	--	14	Lake Catherine at 35th St Prison.	
4	28300708126501	Unknown	C	C	328 (1)	T	N	450	--	125	--	12	Dick Island Industrial Park.	
5	28301908123501	Orange County	S-74	A	64 (1)	S	P	463	121	105	101	12	W of Rio Vista Ave.	
6 ¹	28302081273501	FDOT	S-79	B ²	2,639 (2)	L	U	450	--	--	--	1	Kirkman Road N of L.B. McLeod Road.	
7 ¹	28302081273501	FDOT	S-79	B ²	2,639 (2)	L	U	450	--	--	--	--	--	Kirkman Road N of L.B. McLeod Road.
8 ¹	28300808126501	Unknown	U	U	129 (4)	T	U	452	--	125	--	--	--	L.B. McLeod Road W of Willie May Blvd.
9 ¹	2830408126101	Unknown	U	U	129 (4)	T	U	452	--	125	--	--	--	L.B. McLeod Road W of Willie May Blvd.
10 ¹	28302081240701	Corporation	U	U	NA	W	U	330	--	102	--	--	--	Rio Grande Ave. at 33rd St.
11	28303081260301	City of Orlando	S-75	A	162 (1)	L	M	--	--	--	--	20	Lake Richmond at SW corner of the Lake.	
12	28304081254201	City of Orlando	S-72	A	145 (2)	L	N	470	--	106	--	--	12	Washington Park Center.
13	28305081243601	Private	U	B ²	1,658 (2)	L	U	109	--	198	--	6	Clear Lake at S end.	
14 ¹	28305081243601	Private	U	NA	NA	W	U	250	--	150	--	4	Michigan Ave. at Orange Blossom Trail.	
15	28301081235501	Orange County	S-63	A	45 (2)	S	M	350	421	--	122	12	Nashville Ave. at 24th in retention pond.	
16	28301081235501	Orange County	S-63	A	45 (2)	S	M	156	145	91	101	8	Nashville Ave. at 24th in NE corner.	
17	28303081254201	City of Orlando	S-74	A	51 (1)	S	P	460	--	124	--	4	Bronxville Ave. at Jones High School.	
18	28314081254201	Orange County	S-57	A	1,260 (3)	L	M	400	256	137	140	16	Lake Mann at Spaulding Ave.	
19	2831508123001	Orange County	S-58	A	1,260 (3)	P	M	141	72	74	72	8	Goldenway at Spaulding Road (City #880).	
20	28322081254201	Orange County	S-56	B ²	1,260 (3)	L	U	240	110	68	70	12	Washington Ave. at Bronson St.	
21 ¹	2831508123801	City of Orlando	U	U	54 (2)	S	U	300	--	138	--	10	Cove Street E of Princeton Ave.	
22 ¹	2831508123801	City of Orlando	U	U	54 (2)	S	U	300	--	138	--	10	Cove Street E of Princeton Ave.	
23	2832108124101													