



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD recognizes Groundwater Awareness Week March 11 through 17

All living organisms need water to thrive and protecting such a precious resource is the primary mission of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). The MWRD is joining the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to promote National Groundwater Awareness Week from March 11 through 17.

Groundwater filters through permeable surfaces and underground spaces between sand, gravel, and cracks in rock in geological formations called aquifers. Over 90 percent of all public drinking water systems rely on groundwater to supply the population with drinking water. Aquifers also provide water for lakes and replenish streams and rivers.

Groundwater supplies vary from one area to another. Local communities are responsible for protecting a community's groundwater supply, and they do this through rules and regulations.

The 13th annual National Groundwater Awareness Week is designed to educate the public about the importance of groundwater and water well stewardship. Every person can take action to preserve and protect groundwater for human and environmental needs.

The U.S. EPA offers the "Citizen's Guide to Ground Water Protection" at Citizen's Guide to Ground Water Protection PDF which encourages citizens to take an active and positive role in protecting their community's ground water supplies.

To learn more about pharmaceutical collection, visit www.dea.gov.

Our water environment... Take it personally.

Here are some actions you can take to protect the quality of our ground water:

Don't pour harmful substances down your drain or toilet. These substances can eventually enter our aquifers and contaminate groundwater. In addition, water treatment plants are not designed to dispose of products that contain hazardous substances such as medications.

Put trash in its proper place. Carelessly discarded materials, such as packaging and plastic bags, are top offenders to water pollution.

Pick up pet waste. The waste contains bacteria and parasites and when washed into a lakes, streams and rivers, the waste decays and can lead to poor water quality.

No dumping allowed. Hazardous wastes that are dumped or buried in the ground can contaminate the soil and filter into groundwater or be carried into a nearby body of surface water by runoff during rainstorms.

Limit your purchases of hazardous products. Only buy products you need and substitute a nonhazardous product when possible.

Take advantage of community-based collections. The MWRD and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration will team up to collect unused or expired medication on April 28, 2012. Contact the MWRD Office of Public Affairs for more information.