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Groundwater and Wells

Second Edition

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Water: Mankind's Most Vital and Versatile Resource . . .	1
Chapter 2. Origin of Water	7
Formation of the Ocean Floor and Continental Land Masses	10
Origin of the Earth's Hydrosphere	14
Evolution of the Earth's Atmosphere	16
Chapter 3. Formation of Aquifer Systems	19
Weathering	19
Erosion	20
Alluvial Aquifers	21
Sedimentary Rock Types	26
Glacial Deposits	31
Igneous and Metamorphic Rock Aquifers	42
Chapter 4. Weather Patterns and the Hydrologic Cycle	46
Coriolis Effect	49
How Precipitation Occurs	49
Causes of Precipitation	51
Effect of Precipitation on Groundwater	52
Hydrologic Cycle	53
Pathways of Water After it Falls to Earth	56
Chapter 5. Occurrence and Movement of Groundwater	59
Types of Subsurface Water	59
Energy Contained in Groundwater	62
Aquifer Functions	66
Flow Nets	79
Groundwater Flow Velocities	81

Chapter 6. Groundwater Chemistry	86
Origin of the Chemical Constituents of Groundwater	88
Units of Measure	89
Important Properties of Water	90
Groundwater Constituents	97
Water Quality	107
Methods to Present Water Quality Data	114
Importance of Water Chemistry	116
Chapter 7. A Summary of Groundwater Resources of North America	118
Groundwater in the United States	119
Canada	140
Mexico	147
Chapter 8. Groundwater Exploration	150
Hydrogeologic Reports	151
Maps	153
Aerial Photographs	157
Formation Sampling	160
Geophysical Exploration Methods	168
Surface Geophysical Methods	170
Borehole Geophysical Methods	180
Analysis of Aquifers Using Pumping Test Data	202
Chapter 9. Well Hydraulics	205
Definition of Terms	206
Nature of Converging Flow	207
Cone of Depression	211
Equilibrium Well Equations	212
Nonequilibrium Well Equation	218
Modified Nonequilibrium Equation	219
Hydrogeologic Conditions that Affect Time-Drawdown Graphs	223
Calculating Drawdown for Intermittent Pumping Situations	235
Distance-Drawdown Graphs	236
Well Interference	242
Well Efficiency	244
Radius of Influence	245
Recharge and Boundary Conditions	246
Combined Use of Semilog Graphs	247
Effect of Partial Penetration	249
Water-Level Recovery Data	252
Theis Nonequilibrium Well Equation	260
Other Methods of Aquifer Analysis	264
Chapter 10. Well Drilling Methods	268
Cable Tool Method	268

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C
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V
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E
V
C
I
:
:

36
88
89
90
97
37
14
16

18
19
40
47

50
51
53
57
60
68
70
80
02

05
06
07
11
12
18
19
23
35
36
42
44
45
46
47
49
52
60
64

58
68

California Stovepipe Method	277
Direct Rotary Drilling	278
Drilling Fluids	286
Reverse Circulation Rotary Drilling	289
Air Drilling Systems	295
In-Verse Drilling	299
Dual-Wall Reverse Circulation Rotary Method	301
Drill-Through Casing Driver	304
Jet Drilling	307
Hydraulic-Percussion Method	309
Boring with Earth Augers	310
Driven Wells	313
Drilling Procedures When Boulders are Encountered	314
Fishing Tools	316
Grouting and Sealing Well Casing	317
Plumbness and Alignment	333
Chapter 11. Drilling Fluids	340
Types of Drilling Fluids	340
Functions of a Drilling Fluid	341
Properties of Water-Based Drilling Fluids	343
Treatment of Mix Water for Drilling Fluids	362
Mixing Additives into Water-Based Systems	364
Air Drilling	366
Drilling Fluid Additives	385
Guidelines for Solving Specific Drilling Fluid Problems	386
Typical Drilling Problem	392
Chapter 12. Well Screens and Methods of Sediment-Size Analysis	395
Continuous-Slot Screen	396
Other Types of Well Screens	401
Sediment-Size Analysis	405
Chapter 13. Water Well Design	413
Casing Diameter	414
Casing Materials	418
Well Depth	431
Well Screen Length	432
Well Screen Slot Openings	434
Pressure-Relief Screens	447
Formation Stabilizer	447
Well Screen Diameter	449
Open Area	450
Entrance Velocity	450
Screen Transmitting Capacity	453
Selection of Material	454

Design of Domestic Wells	458
Design for Sanitary Protection	460
Special Well Designs	461
Chapter 14. Installation and Removal of Well Screens	464
Pull-Back Method	464
Open-Hole Methods for Screen Installation	472
Filter Packed Wells	476
Installation of Plastic Screens	483
Bail-Down Procedure	485
Wash-Down Method	487
Jetting Method	489
Installing Well Points	491
Removing Well Screens	492
Chapter 15. Development of Water Wells	497
Well Development	497
Factors that Affect Development	499
Well Development Methods	502
A Comparison of Three Development Methods	521
Use of Polyphosphates in Development	522
Development of Rock Wells	523
Allowable Sediment Concentration in Well Water	526
Aquifer Development Techniques	528
Chapter 16. Collection and Analysis of Pumping Test Data	534
Conducting a Pumping Test	535
Measuring Drawdown in Wells	547
Well Efficiency	554
Step-Drawdown Tests	555
Problems of Pumping Test Analysis	559
Chapter 17. Water Well Pumps	580
Variable Displacement Pumps	581
Positive Displacement Pumps	604
Pumps Used to Circulate Drilling Fluid	606
Air-Lift Pumping	608
Pump Selection	608
Water Storage	610
Chapter 18. Water-Quality Protection for Wells and Nearby Groundwater Resources	612
Choosing a Well Site	614
Predicting the Pollution Potential at a Drilling Site	616
Well Design	617

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durir
Disinfe
Sealing
Horizo
Pitless
Sealing
Chapter 19.
Major
Well F
Well F
Well F
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Persc
Desig
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Aqui
Chapter 22
Dew
Well
Infil
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Pres

Disinfection Procedures Required to Maintain a Sanitary Well	
during Drilling	618
Disinfecting Wells and Piping	619
Sealing the Wellhead	624
Horizontal Suction Lines	625
Pitless Adaptors	627
Sealing Abandoned Wells	627
Chapter 19. Well and Pump Maintenance and Rehabilitation	630
Major Causes of Deteriorating Well Performance	631
Well Failure Caused by Incrustation	633
Well Failure Caused by Iron Bacteria	646
Well Failure Caused by Physical Plugging of Screen and Surrounding Formation	655
Importance of Screen Design on Rehabilitation	657
Well Failure from Corrosion	658
Pump Maintenance	665
Chapter 20. Groundwater Law, Water Well Specifications, and Well Contract Problems	670
Groundwater Law	671
Water Well Specifications	675
Contract Problems	696
Chapter 21. Groundwater Monitoring Technology	702
Major Federal Legislation Pertaining to Groundwater Quality and Monitoring Procedures	703
Groundwater Contamination Sources	705
Effect of Aquifer Characteristics on the Spread of Groundwater Contamination	707
Delineating Contaminant Plumes	712
Monitoring Contaminant Movement (Transport)	714
Locating Monitoring Wells	715
Personnel Safety at Monitoring Sites	717
Design of Monitoring Wells	719
Sampling Monitoring Wells	726
The Task of Groundwater Protection	728
Aquifer Restoration	730
Chapter 22. Alternative Uses for Wells and Well Screens	734
Dewatering	734
Well-Point Systems Used for Water Supply	760
Infiltration Galleries	761
Collector Wells	768
Injection Wells	769
Pressure-Relief Wells	777

Wells for Heat Pumps	783
Surface-Water Withdrawal	789
Chapter 23. Water Treatment	796
Components of Water Treatment and Waste Treatment Systems	798
Treatment Technologies Appropriate for Meeting Drinking Water Regulations	799
Point-of-Use Water Treatment Systems	824
Chapter 24. Wise Use of Groundwater	837
Estimating Groundwater Use, Recharge, and Volume in Storage	838
Impact of Droughts on Groundwater Supply and Use	843
Managing Groundwater Supplies	846
References	861
Glossary	885
Appendices	893
Index	1073

at selected points in an often irregular field. This generally involves the installation of multiple wells that are mutually interfering, and therefore the specific capacity is less than optimal. This contrasts with the conventional water well approach, where the number of wells is limited for a certain yield, interference is minimized or avoided altogether, and maximum well efficiency is of paramount importance. Well efficiency is usually of secondary importance in the design of well-point dewatering systems, because most of these systems are installed in highly heterogeneous sediments and are usually pumped for only brief periods. Ease of installation, ruggedness, and flexibility in design are generally more important factors than well efficiency. On the other hand, efficiency is quite important for deep wells which individually are much more expensive to construct and are usually pumped for long periods. High efficiency minimizes the number of deep wells required for a dewatering system.

If pumping test data are not available to provide estimates for transmissivity and storage, the hydraulic conductivity of the surficial material can be estimated from the graphs in Figure 22.1, provided the density of the material is known. Density is obtained from a standard penetration test (ASTM D1586) in which the number of blows per foot are recorded as a split-spoon sampler is driven by a 140-lb (63.5-kg) hammer falling 30 in (762 mm) (see Table 22.1). Transmissivity is then calculated by multiplying the hydraulic conductivity by the estimated thickness of the material to be dewatered.

Storage coefficients can also be estimated if pumping test data are not available. Storage coefficients for unconfined aquifers range from 0.01 to 0.3, and for confined aquifers they range from 10^{-5} to 10^{-3} . For coarse-grained material in an unconfined aquifer, a storage coefficient of 0.2 is generally used. If finer material is present (clays or silts), there may be more water in the pores, but the actual volume of water removed from clays and silts during dewatering may be quite small as compared to coarser grained material. For confined conditions, a storage coefficient of 10^{-5} is assumed for fine-grained sandstone/siltstone formations, whereas 10^{-3} is a good value for clean, coarse-grained sandstone.

Effective dewatering of fine sediments will require much more time and considerably closer well spacings because of significantly lower transmissivity. In practice, only enough water is removed from these fine sediments to increase the density to the point where the material is stable. Some capillary water is needed in the pore spaces to bond or hold the small grains together. Sand drains, electro-osmosis techniques, and well-point systems put under vacuum are methods used to dewater fine-grained materials. Firms familiar with these and other techniques should be consulted when fine-grained materials are to be dewatered.

Table 22.1. Soil Density from Standard Penetration Test (ASTM D1586)*

Granular Soils	Cohesive Soils
0 - 10 Loose	0 - 4 Soft
10 - 30 Medium dense	4 - 8 Medium stiff
30 - 50 Dense	8 - 15 Stiff
Over 50 Very dense	15 - 30 Very stiff

*Blows per foot of a 140-lb hammer falling 30 inches on a standard split-spoon sampler.
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Table 5.1 Porosities for Common Consolidated and Unconsolidated Materials

Unconsolidated Sediments	η (%)	Consolidated Rocks	η (%)
Clay	45-55	Sandstone	5-30
Silt	35-50	Limestone/dolomite (original & secondary porosity)	1-20
Sand	25-40	Shale	0-10
Gravel	25-40	Fractured crystalline rock	0-10
Sand & gravel mixes	10-35	Vesicular basalt	10-50
Glacial till	10-25	Dense, solid rock	< 1

volume of water an aquifer can hold, it does not indicate how much water the aquifer will yield.

When water is drained from a saturated material under the force of gravity, the material releases only part of the total volume stored in its pores. The quantity of water that a unit volume of unconfined aquifer gives up by gravity is called its specific yield (Figure 5.5). Specific yields for certain rocks and sediment types are presented in Table 5.2. Some water is retained in the pores by molecular attraction and capillarity. The amount of water that a unit volume of aquifer retains after gravity drainage is called its specific retention. The smaller the average grain size, the greater is the percent of retention; the coarser the sediment, the greater will be the specific yield when compared to the porosity. The surface area for different-size sand grains is shown in Table 5.3. Note the large increase in surface area for the finest sediment. As the surface area increases, a larger percentage of the water in the pores is held by surface tension or other adhesive forces. Therefore, finer sediments have lower specific yields compared to coarser sediments, even if they both have the same porosity.

Specific yield plus specific retention equals the porosity of an aquifer. Both specific yield and specific retention are expressed as decimal fractions or percentages. Specific yields of unconfined aquifers (equivalent to their storage coefficients*) range from 0.01 to 0.30. Specific yields cannot be determined for confined aquifers because the aquifer materials are not dewatered during pumping.

Storage coefficients are much lower in confined aquifers because they are not drained during pumping, and any water released from storage is obtained primarily by compression of the aquifer and expansion of the water when pumped. During

Table 5.2. Representative Specific Yield Ranges for Selected Earth Materials

Sediment	Specific Yield, %
Clay	1-10
Sand	10-30
Gravel	15-30
Sand and Gravel	15-25
Sandstone	5-15
Shale	0.5- 5
Limestone	0.5- 5

(Walton, 1970)

*The coefficient of storage is fully defined in Chapter 9. Briefly, it is the volume of water taken into or released from storage per unit change in head per unit area.

Clastic. Pertaining to a rock or sediment composed principally of broken fragments that are derived from pre-existing rocks or minerals and that have been transported some distance from their places of origin.

Coefficient of permeability. An obsolete term that has been replaced by the term hydraulic conductivity.

Coefficient of storage. The volume of water an aquifer releases from or takes into storage per unit surface area of the aquifer per unit change in head.

Coefficient of transmissivity. See Transmissivity.

Colloid. Extremely small solid particles, 0.0001 to 1 micron in size, which will not settle out of a solution; intermediate between a true dissolved particle and a suspended solid which will settle out of solution.

Cone of depression. A depression in the groundwater table or potentiometric surface that has the shape of an inverted cone and develops around a well from which water is being withdrawn. It defines the area of influence of a well.

Confined aquifer. A formation in which the groundwater is isolated from the atmosphere at the point of discharge by impermeable geologic formations; confined groundwater is generally subject to pressure greater than atmospheric.

Contamination. The degradation of natural water quality as a result of man's activities. There is no implication of any specific limits, since the degree of permissible contamination depends upon the intended end use, or uses, of the water.

Corrosion. The act or process of dissolving or wearing away metals.

Darcy's law. A derived equation for the flow of fluids on the assumption that the flow is laminar and that inertia can be neglected.

Deflocculation. Breakup of flocs of gel structures by use of a thinner.

Density. Matter measured as mass per unit volume expressed in pounds per gallon (lb/gal), pounds per cubic ft (lb/ft³), and kilogram per cubic m (kg/m³).

Desalination. To remove salt and other chemicals from sea water or saline water.

Development. The act of repairing damage to the formation caused by drilling procedures and increasing the porosity and permeability of the materials surrounding the intake portion of the well.

Diatomaceous earth. A light-colored, soft, siliceous earth composed of the shells of diatoms, a form of algae. Some deposits are of lake origin but the largest are marine.

Dispersion. The spreading and mixing of chemical constituents in groundwater caused by diffusion and mixing due to microscopic variations in velocities within and between pores.

Dissociation. A chemical process that causes a molecule to split into simpler groups of atoms, single atoms, or ions. For example, the water molecule (H₂O) breaks down spontaneously into H⁺ and OH⁻ ions.

Drainage basin. The land area from which surface runoff drains into a stream channel or system of channels, or to a lake, reservoir, or other body of water.

Drawdown. The distance between the static water level and the surface of the cone of depression.

Drill collar. A length of extremely heavy steel tube. It is placed in the drill string immediately above the drill bit to minimize bending caused by the weight of the drill pipe.

Drill pipe. Special pipe used to transmit rotation from the rotating mechanism to the bit. The pipe also transmits weight to the bit and conveys air or fluid which removes cuttings from the hole and cools the bit.

Drilling fluid. A water- or air-based fluid used in the water-well drilling operation to remove cuttings from the hole, to clean and cool the bit, to reduce friction between the drill string and the sides of the hole, and to seal the borehole.

Drive point. See Well point.

Effective size. The 90-percent-retained size of a sediment as determined from a grain-size analysis; therefore, 10 percent of the sediment is finer and 90 percent is coarser.

Effluent. A waste liquid discharge from a manufacturing or treatment process, in its natural state or partially or completely treated, that discharges into the environment.

Electrical conductance. A measure of the ease with which a conducting current can be caused to flow through a material under the influence of an applied electric field. It is the reciprocal of resistivity and is measured in mhos per foot (meter).

Electrical resistivity. The property of a material which resists the flow of electrical current measured per unit length through a unit cross-sectional area.

Electrolyte. A chemical which dissociates into positive and negative ions when dissolved in water, increasing the electrical conductivity.