

# Uinta APRIL 2020 County

## **Is Your Well Water Safe?**

Living in a rural community, many of us use water from a private well. Private wells are not regulated by EPA or the State, so we, as private well owners, are responsible for making sure our water is safe. Testing the water quality of your private well on a regular basis is important to maintaining a safe and reliable water source.

Testing the suitability of your water quality for its intended uses is important. Whether it is for drinking water, for everyday household chores such as laundry and cleaning, watering livestock or pets, or for irrigation. This testing will help you make informed decisions about your water and how you use it.

#### How often should I test my well?

Private well water should be tested at a minimum once per year. This will help:

- Identify existing problems
- Ensure water is suitable for it's intended use, especially if it is used as drinking water
- Track any changes overtime
- Determine the effectiveness of any treatment systems that have been installed

Well water quality can change over time, and sometimes it can change suddenly. Most times changes go unnoticed because there is no change in color, taste or smell. Harmful bacteria, parasites and viruses that cannot be seen with the naked eye can cause immediate sickness in humans if not properly treated. Certain chemical contaminants found in a water source can cause long term health problems that may take years to develop. Testing your well water often will identify unsafe water and allow you to take the actions needed to make sure it is safe to use.

#### Where can I get my well water tested?

Every year, the Uinta County Conservation District offers a Well Water Testing Day. This program is used to educate well owners and remind them to get their well water tested regularly. Through this program, UCCD helps with the cost of testing and shipping so that private well owners can get their water tested at a more affordable cost.

#### How does it work?

The program is simple, just follow these basic steps:

- 1. Choose which test option is best for you, then pre-register and pre-pay by May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 2. Pick up the sampling kit you ordered from the UCCD office in the Valley, or the UW Extension Office in Evanston the week of June 1-5, 2020.
- 3. <u>Sample your water the morning of June 9<sup>th</sup> and bring the sample back to the UCCD office or UW Extension office before 11:00 am!</u>

We will take care of the rest!

Don't assume your well water is safe. Take advantage of UCCDs Well Water Testing Day opportunity to be sure that it is! Contact UCCD or visit our website for more information and to register.

\*All results will be sent directly to the private well owner from the lab, UCCD does not see any of the results.

## UINTA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## Arsenic

#### New "Add-On" option for Well Water Testing Day 2020

Over the past few years, several people have asked about testing their well water for arsenic. Arsenic is an element that occurs naturally in rocks and soil. Arsenic can get into the water supply from natural deposits in the earth or from industrial and agricultural pollutions. Arsenic that has been released into the environment by industry is removed from the air by rain, snow and gradual settling. Once on the ground or in surface water, arsenic can slowly enter ground water. High arsenic levels in private wells may be an indication of improper well construction or overuse of chemical fertilizers or herbicides in the past.

You can't see, taste or smell arsenic in water, but it is linked to many health problems in humans including a number of problems with cardiovascular, pulmonary, immune, neurological and endocrine systems. Arsenic is considered a known human carcinogen. Long term exposure to levels greater than the standard may cause cancer of the bladder, lungs, skin, kidneys, nasal passages, liver and prostate. Arsenic is regulated under the US EPA Primary Drinking Water Regulations. Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations Chapter 8, Table 1 has set a standard of 0.05 mg/L for domestic, 0.1 mg/L for agricultural and 0.2 mg/L for livestock uses of groundwater. The following is a link to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Qualitys "Know Your Well" where you can fine more information about arsenic and other common contaminants found in private wells.

#### http://deq.wyoming.gov/wqd/know-your-well/

Although here at UCCD we are not aware of any arsenic problems in our county, we still wanted to give the citizens of Uinta County the opportunity to test for it. This year, we are offering it as an additional test that can be added on to any other test. Please note that it is not a stand-alone option, you cannot test just for arsenic.

If you do find that you have arsenic in your well water, there are a few options for treatment. Boiling water does NOT remove arsenic and in some cases can increase the concentration as the water evaporates. You may want to consider treatment methods such as reverse osmosis, filtration, distillation or ion exchange. No matter what treatment method you choose, make sure your filter removes what you think it does!



Uinta County Conservation District, 204 East Sage Street, Lyman, WY



The printing of the WY Grape Guide has been delayed. Once it is printed and businesses are able to open back up, UCCD will have copies available at our office. We will use our website, Facebook, Instagram and other avenues to let you know when they are available!

In the meantime, it is **available online** and we hope that you are able to enjoy it there for now. **You can view/download a copy at <u>bit.ly/WY-grape-guide</u>. We hope you find it useful in the growing season ahead!** 

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**Conservation Distri** 

## Jim Gerrish to be keynote speaker at 2020 Soil Health Day



Jim Gerrish is an independent grazing lands consultant with more than 20 years of experience in beef-forage systems research and 20+ years raising cattle and sheep. If you want to ranch for environmental benefits and make money, Jim Gerrish will help you get the most out of your pastures by focusing on the things you can control. Jim has dedicated his life to helping farmers and ranchers more effectively manage their grazing lands for economic and environmental sustainability.

Author of "Management-Intensive Grazing: The Grassroots of Grass Farming" and "Kick the Hay Habit: A Practical Guide to year-around Grazing", Jim has a wealth of knowledge on how to capture more solar energy with every acre, how to get more water into your soil, how to keep minerals cycling efficiently through your pastures, and how to create more biodiversity across and through your pasture landscape.

Jim is a popular speaker at conferences around the world. He and his wife, Dawn, own and operate American Grazing Lands Services LLC, offering consultation services as well as equipment to support farmers and ranchers improve the health and sustainable productivity of grazing lands. Visit their website to find out more about their consulting services and grazing management tools, including electric fencing, stock water systems, forage seed, and other management tools at <u>https://www.americangrazinglands.com/</u>.

Jim currently resides in the Pahsimeroi Valley of Idaho where he manages a ranch unit consisting of 450 center pivot irrigated pastures, 90 acres of flood ground, and several hundred acres of rangeland.

We are excited to have Jim as the keynote speaker at this years Soil Health Day in Lonetree on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Not only will he speak on the 9<sup>th</sup>, but has also agreed to stick around for a field day workshop the next day!

This is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to fine tune their grazing operations for added income. Mark September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on your calendars now, you don't want to miss this!!



Son nearth Day in Lonetree

#### September 10 Field Day with Jim Gerrish

More details about Soil Health Day and the field day with Jim Gerrish will be coming soon! Check our website, www.uintacountycd.com or give us a call in the next few weeks for more information.

## Nitrogen Deposition Through Precipitation

Nitrogen is often one of the more limiting nutrients required by plants. It is used for the formation of amino acids, proteins, and DNA, and is essential for plants and animals to grow and live.

While the majority of nitrogen in the air (70% or more of the atmosphere), is unavailable to plants, nitrogen fixing processes such as lightening and combustion engines provide nitrogen compounds that could be utilized by plants if they can be transferred to the soil. That transfer occurs through precipitation- rain and snow.

As any precipitation falls through the air, it gathers existing nitrogen compounds on its way down. While more nitrogen is gathered by rain, there are aspects of snowfall that can increase the amount of nitrogen that makes it into the soil.

As nitrogen is gathered by precipitation, its availability to plants is dependent on moisture infiltration. In some cases, a torrential downpour of rain can cause much of the available moisture to runoff. By contrast, the slower melt of snow, as long as the ground isn't frozen, can increase moisture infiltration and with it any nitrogen compounds it carries.

How much nitrogen is provided through precipitation? It is estimated that 0.9-3.5 pounds of nitrogen are deposited per acre in the western United States per year (Mark E. Fenn et al.) This won't fulfill your pasture fertilizer recommendations, but it does give some help to the surrounding rangeland vegetation that is important to western Wyoming's agricultural community.

#### References

Mark E. Fenn, Richard Haeuber, Gail S. Tonnesen, Jill S. Baron, Susanne Grossman-Clarke, Diane Hope, Daniel A. Jaffe, Scott Copeland, Linda Geiser, Heather M. Rueth, James O. Sickman, Nitrogen Emissions, Deposition, and Monitoring in the Western United States, *BioScience*, Volume 53, Issue 4, April 2003, Pages 391-403, <u>https://doi.org/10.1641/0006-3568(2003)053[0391:NEDAMI]2.0.C0;2</u>

## **Education Corner**

### **Attention Educators!**

The Wyoming Stewardship Project is the new Wyoming Ag in the Classroom curriculum available to Wyoming educators and students. Units are available for free to teachers as an online resource and are fully aligned to Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. With a goal to empower Wyoming educators to use this resource in their own classrooms, WYAITC is offering a two-day Wyoming Stewardship Project workshop in Evanston on June 29-30<sup>th</sup>!

#### Workshop provides:

- A hands-on, in-depth look at the Minerals & Energy units
- Collaboration time
- Field trip to connect with local resources
- Lunch and snacks each day of the workshop
- 1 hour UW or PTSB credit available

All 2nd - 5th grade educators are encouraged to attend. Come on your own or as a school team! Registration is free, but space is limited, and registration closes April 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### Register online at wyaitc.org

Poster ContestOpen to all K-12 public, private and home school<br/>students in Uinta County, WYImage: Contest of the school<br/>students in Uinta County, WYImage: Contest of the school<br/>school<br/>without Spollinators?Image: Contest of the school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>school<br/>schoolImage: Delinic<br/>school<br/>school<br/>

Grocery stores would be rather empty without the hard work of bees, birds, butterflies, bats and other pollinators. More than 80% of the world's plants need pollinators to survive, including many that provide the food we eat. But today, many pollinators are in trouble and in decline. When pollinators shrink in number, many plants either produce less seed or no seed at all.

> Poster deadline: April 30th at 4:00 pm



For OFFICIAL RULES AND GUIDELINES visit www.uintacountycd.com



## EDUCATION RESOURCES

The Uinta County Conservation District has a number of natural resource and conservation education items available for public check-out for use in educational settings. Some examples include:

> Orienteering Kit Plant Chest Tracks & Scat Kit Water Chest Weather Tools Field Guides Activity Guides Children's Books

View a full list of the items we have now and as we add to it in the future at

www.uintacountycd.com/check-out-items





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### Wyoming Resource Education Days



\*UCCD offers an outdoor teacher workshop annually to help teachers receive the credits they need while learning valuable information about our natural resources. This years workshop will be WyRED! You will receive the credits you need while spending most of your time outside, learning about the many resources Uinta County has to offer!

## Watering Your Trees

As spring slowly approaches, many of us are making plans to plant trees. Planting trees is a great spring activity and can provide many benefits for years to come. As you make your tree planting plan, a very important factor to consider is providing the right amount of water. The first 3 years are the most critical, but you must also pay attention to watering needs throughout a trees life.

#### How often and how much?

Frequency depends on soil drainage. Soils that drain quickly will require more frequent watering than those that drain slowly. To determine your soils drainage rate, dig a hole 18 inches deep and fill it with water. Let it drain completely. Refill it with water, and time how long it takes for the water to drain.

#### Less than 2 hours = Very Fast 18 hours or more = Very Slow

The best way to know how often and how much to water is to check the soil moisture at 6 inches below the surface. Water when it is dry.

For the first 3 years after planting, if the soil is dry, provide about 1-1/2 gallons of water per diameter inch of the trunk. For all other years, keep an eve on the soil moisture in the first 6 inches below the surface because soil type and weather conditions can influence the demand for water.

#### Tree Roots Need Oxygen!

Soil saturated with water for more than 24 hours can prevent roots from getting oxygen. Watering too much is as dangerous as watering too little (and is harder to correct).

#### When?

Start checking soil moisture and watering when necessary in early spring and continue until the soil freezes. See diagram to determine where to water your tree.

The information for this article was taken from the Wyoming State Forestry Divisions Wyoming Tree Owner's Manual. You can find the full manual on their website at https://wsfd.wyo.gov/forestry-assistance-programs/communityforestry/educational-technical-resources. It has a lot of great information about owning and caring for your trees!

#### First 3 years after planting:



☑ Check every other dav in fast-draining soils, weekly in slowdraining soils

> Water the root ball and just beyond

#### All other years:



trees, at the base and at the dripline

Uinta County Conservation District

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# We've updated our website & logo!

#### www.uintacountycd.com

same address, new look, loads of information!



#### Help us save paper ....

We continue to add to our email list in an effort to reduce our paper use. If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please send your email address to ksabey.uccd@gmail.com. You may also view our newsletters online at www.uintacountycd.com. If you are currently receiving our newsletter and you just don't have the time to read it, please let us know so we can take your name off of the mailing list; it will save us all a lot of

time, money and paper!!

