

Focus on: Drinking Water Well Tests in the Lower Yakima Valley



Clean & safe water for communities

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for more than 56,000 residents in the Lower Yakima Valley. Elevated concentrations of nitrate can cause health problems and have been found in drinking water in some areas of the Lower Valley. This summer, Department of Ecology scientists hope to sample 170 wells as part of a larger community effort to reduce nitrate sources in the area. The well sampling study has been funded by the state Legislature and is free to eligible participants.

A local groundwater management area group, or GWMA, worked together to develop a plan to reduce nitrate concentrations in local drinking water. The GWMA effort consisted of Yakima County, Yakima Health District, South Yakima Conservation District, Washington State Department of Ecology, other state and federal agencies, farmers, livestock producers, environmentalists, and concerned residents. The goal of the plan is to reduce nitrate concentrations to meet drinking water standards and help ensure drinking water is clean and safe.

Please help with study

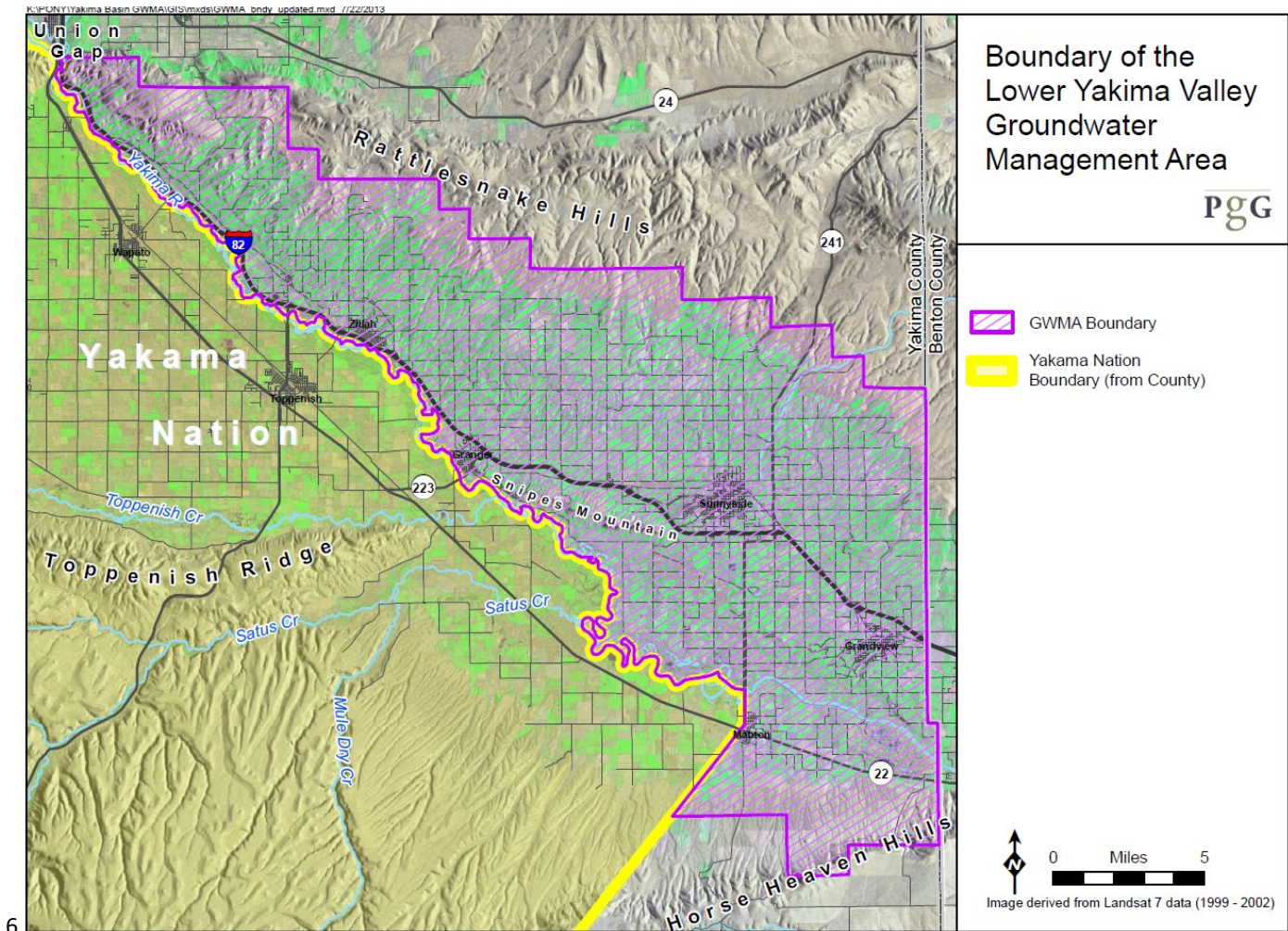
We encourage residents receiving this flyer to participate in this drinking water study to help you to protect yourself and your family from potentially harmful chemicals while also helping our scientists to research ways to prevent contamination. We will send you your test results and explain what they mean. If testing shows there are potentially harmful chemicals in your well water, we may advise you to rely on other sources of drinking water.

How to participate

Hydrogeologist Melanie Redding will work directly with homeowners and residents to arrange for testing. Call 360-407-6524 or email melanie.redding@ecy.wa.gov to sign up. It is free to residents in the study area. (See back page for map.)

Map of the Study Area

The study area, in purple below, is from south of Union Gap to the Horse Heaven Hills, largely east of the Lower Yakima River in Yakima County, not including the Yakama Nation.



Learn about nitrate

Nitrate is a chemical found in fertilizers, manure, and liquid waste discharged from onsite sewage systems. Natural bacteria in soil can convert nitrogen into nitrate. Rain or irrigation water can carry nitrate down through the soil into groundwater. Your drinking water may contain nitrate if your well draws from this groundwater.

To learn more about the health effects of nitrate, contact your state and local health departments.



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6764 or email at EAPPubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.