

Unconsolidated Aquifer Systems of Fountain County, Indiana

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The unconsolidated aquifer systems of Fountain County are composed of sediments deposited by, or resulting from, a complicated sequence of glaciers, glacial meltwaters, and post-glacial precipitation events. Six unconsolidated aquifer systems have been mapped in Fountain County: the Till Veneer; the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till; the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Subsystem; the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Complex; the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash, and the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Subsystem. Because of the complicated glacial geology, boundaries of the aquifer systems in this county are commonly gradational and individual aquifers may extend across aquifer system boundaries.

The thickness of unconsolidated deposits in Fountain County is quite variable due to the deposition of glacial material over an uneven bedrock surface. The depth to bedrock ranges from outcropping along many of the streams and the Wabash River to over 200 feet deep in the southeast portion of the county.

Regional estimates of potential contamination to aquifer systems from the surface can differ considerably by location. Variations within geologic environments can result in a wide range of susceptibility to these systems. In addition, man-made structures such as poorly constructed water wells, unplugged or improperly abandoned wells, and open excavations can provide contaminant pathways that bypass the naturally protective clays.

Till Veneer Aquifer System

The Till Veneer Aquifer System has the most limited groundwater resources of the unconsolidated aquifer systems in the county. The system consists of thin till, generally less than 50 feet thick, which directly overlies an uneven bedrock surface. The Till Veneer Aquifer System is mapped throughout Fountain County with the largest area situated in the north-central portion of the county.

Potential aquifers within this system include relatively thin sand and/or gravel layers with most of the wells having reported capacities of less than 10 gallons per minute (gpm). Therefore, very few of the reported wells penetrating this aquifer system in the county are completed in unconsolidated materials, which are bypassed for the generally more productive underlying bedrock. In this county the depth of the few wells completed in the Till Veneer Aquifer System range from 20 to 50 feet deep with static water levels ranging between 5 and 32 feet below the surface. There are no registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities reported in this system.

This system is not very susceptible to contamination from surface sources because of the low permeability of the near-surface materials. However, there are areas where bedrock is extremely shallow with thin to no clay deposits above the aquifer resource, therefore, these areas are considered to be at moderate to high risk to contamination.

Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System

The Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System is mapped predominantly in the northeast section, and in the central and south-central portions in the of the county. The system consists of glacial till separated by intratill sand and gravel layers. Saturated aquifer materials within this system include sand and/or gravel deposits commonly 5 to 15 feet thick.

This aquifer system is capable of meeting the needs of most domestic and some high-capacity users in Fountain County. However, approximately 24 percent of wells started in this system utilize the underlying bedrock aquifer. Wells producing from the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System are typically 40 to 170 feet deep. Domestic well capacities are commonly 10 to 50 gpm, and static water levels range from 10 to 50 feet below the surface.

There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (2 wells) using the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System. Reported capacities for both wells are 120 gpm each. This facility is used for public water supply.

The Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System typically has a low susceptibility to surface contamination because intratill sand and gravel units are commonly overlain by thick glacial till. Wells producing from shallow aquifers are moderately susceptible to contamination.

Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem

Areas where unconsolidated materials are generally greater than 50 feet in thickness, yet have limited aquifer potential, are mapped as the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem. Total thickness of unconsolidated deposits in this system is over 160 feet in places.

The Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem is mapped throughout the county. The subsystem is mapped similar to the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer System; however, potential aquifer materials are typically thinner and yields are generally less in the subsystem.

Approximately 85 percent of the wells started in the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem are completed in the underlying bedrock aquifer system. However,

this subsystem is capable of meeting the needs of some domestic users in the county. The few wells producing from this subsystem are completed at depths greater than 45 feet. Potential aquifer materials include intratill sand and gravel deposits that range from about 2 to 15 feet in thickness. Well yields range from 2 to 12 gpm, and reported static water levels range from 7 to 92 feet below the land surface.

There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (2 wells) using the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Aquifer Subsystem. However, these shallow wells are not used as a drinking water source. Reported capacities for the individual wells are 75 and 100 gpm. The use for this facility is irrigation.

This subsystem is generally not very susceptible to surface contamination because intratill sand and gravel units are overlain by thick till deposits. Wells producing from shallow aquifers are moderately susceptible to contamination.

Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Complex Aquifer System

The Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Complex Aquifer System is mapped in the north-central portion of Fountain County. Complex multiple glacial advances resulted in alternating layers of clay and till with single or multiple, stacked, sands and gravels that are quite variable in lateral extent and thickness.

This system is capable of meeting the needs of domestic and most high-capacity users in the county. Wells in this system are commonly completed at depths ranging from about 50 to 165 feet and produce from saturated aquifer materials typically 10 to 25 feet thick. Domestic well yields are commonly 10 to 75 gpm, and static water levels range from 10 to 80 feet below the surface.

There are three registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities (7 wells) using this system. Reported capacities for individual wells range from 110 to 1600 gpm. The uses for these facilities are industry, public supply, and irrigation.

The Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Complex Aquifer System is not very susceptible to contamination where overlain by thick clay deposits. However, in some areas where surficial clay deposits are thin, the shallow aquifer, if present, is at moderate to high risk.

Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System is mapped primarily in the west along the Wabash River, and in a relatively small area in the north-central portion of the county. This system includes thick glacial outwash sands and gravels capped by recent alluvial deposits. Total thickness of unconsolidated deposits in this system is up to 160 feet in places.

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System has the potential to meet the needs of domestic and high-capacity users. The few wells utilizing this system have been reported at depths ranging from 52 to 128 feet with saturated sand and gravel aquifer materials commonly 10 to 40 feet thick. Static water levels range from 20 to 45 feet below the surface.

There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (1 well) with a reported yield of 600 gpm. The use for this facility is irrigation.

This system is highly susceptible to surface contamination where sand and gravel deposits are near the surface and have little or no clay deposits. However, areas that have overlying thick clay deposits are moderately susceptible to contamination.

Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem is mapped adjacent to the Wabash River in the north, and in the central and southwestern sections of the county. The subsystem is mapped similar to the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System. However, potential aquifer materials are generally thinner, with thicker overlying silt and/or clay materials, and potential yields are less in the subsystem than in the system. Total thickness of unconsolidated deposits ranges from approximately 60 feet to over 100 feet.

Few wells are completed in the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem in Fountain County. The wells in this subsystem are completed at depths ranging from 53 to 142 feet. Saturated aquifer materials include sand and gravel deposits commonly 10 to 35 feet thick. This subsystem has the potential to meet the needs of domestic and some high-capacity users.

There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (4 wells) using this system. Reported capacities for individual wells range from 280 to 600 gpm. The use for this facility is public supply.

Areas within this aquifer system that have overlying clay deposits are moderately susceptible to surface contamination; whereas, areas that lack overlying clay deposits are highly susceptible to contamination.

Registered Significant Groundwater Withdrawal Facilities

There are seven registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities (16 wells) using unconsolidated aquifers in the county. These wells utilize the Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till, Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Till Subsystem, Central Wabash Valley / Tipton Complex, Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash, and Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Subsystem Aquifer Systems. Reported capacities for individual wells range from 75 to 1600 gpm. The dominant use for these facilities is public water supply. Other uses include irrigation and industry. Refer to the table for additional well details, and to the map for facility locations.

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