

Potentiometric Surface Map of the Unconsolidated Aquifers of Knox County, Indiana

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Knox County is located in southwestern Indiana and is bounded by the counties of Sullivan, Greene, Daviess, Pike and Gibson to the north, northeast, east, southeast and south. The state of Illinois borders the county to the west.

The potentiometric surface is a measure of the pressure on groundwater in a water bearing formation. Wells are completed in aquifers at various depths, and typically, under confined conditions (bounded by impermeable layers above and below the water bearing formation). However, some wells are completed under unconfined (not bounded by impermeable layers) settings. Water in a confined aquifer, which is under hydrostatic pressure, will rise in a well above the top of the water bearing formation. In contrast, groundwater in an unconfined aquifer, which is at atmospheric pressure, will not rise in a well above the top of the water bearing formation.

Static water-level measurements obtained from individual wells used to construct county Potentiometric Surface Maps (PSM) are indicative of the water-level at the time of well completion. The groundwater level within an aquifer constantly fluctuates in response to rainfall, evapotranspiration, groundwater movement and pumpage. Therefore, measured static water-levels in an area may differ due to local or seasonal variations. Because fluctuations in groundwater are typically small, static water-levels can be used to construct a generalized PSM. As a general rule, but certainly not always, groundwater flow approximates the overlying topography and intersects the land surface at major streams.

The potentiometric surface map of the unconsolidated aquifers was mapped by contouring the elevations of 263 static water-levels reported on well records received primarily over a 50 year period. Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates, used in locating the water wells,

were either physically obtained in the field, determined through address geocoding, or reported on water well records. The location of the majority of the water well records used to make the PSM were field verified. Elevation data were obtained from a digital elevation model. Quality control/quality assurance procedures were utilized to refine or remove data where errors were readily apparent.

Generally, the mapped potentiometric surface contours are for the upper 100 feet of the unconsolidated materials and utilize wells constructed within these depths. If the shallow data is sparse or unavailable, wells greater than 100 feet in depth are used to complement the mapping.

Potentiometric surface elevations range from a high of 500 feet mean sea level (msl) in the south-central portion of the county near Monroe City, to a low of 390 feet msl in the southwest portion of the county along the Wabash River south of Vincennes, and along the White River southwest of Decker. Groundwater flow direction within the majority of the county is generally westward towards the Wabash River and its major tributaries. Potentiometric contours are not extended through areas of the county where data is lacking and/or unconsolidated deposits are thin or unproductive.

The county PSM can be used to define the regional groundwater flow path and to identify significant areas of groundwater recharge and discharge. County PSM's represent overall regional characteristics and are not intended to be a substitute for site-specific studies.