



Seawater Intrusion

Beneath coastal land, fresh water “floats” on seawater. Pumping from wells causes the fresh/salt boundary to rise.

Seawater intrusion renders the water not potable. Permanently pumping down the aquifer one foot causes the seawater boundary to rise 40 feet.

Please post the attached cards in your bath and kitchen for guests and renters!

BE AN ISLANDER... CONSERVE WATER!

- Don't let water run if cooking, doing dishes, washing hands or brushing teeth.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines fully loaded.
- Take shorter showers...turn water off while lathering up.
- Minimize toilet flushes.
- Reuse a pan of water by the door to wash sandy feet.
- Save washing of cars, boats and large dogs for a trip to town!

Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee

Your Guemes AQUIFER

Our island, like most others, has a very limited water supply and we need your help to sustain it. We rely on underground aquifers for our water, which are only recharged by rainfall.

Most rainfall never makes its way into the aquifers, as it is taken up by plants or runs to the sea. We need to be water wise to protect our groundwater and prevent wells from drying-up or failing due to seawater intrusion.

Sole Source Aquifer

We have no rivers or lakes on Guemes Island and our only source of water is ground water. In 1997 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated Guemes Island as a Sole Source Aquifer.

Drought

Guemes Island is in a rain shadow and gets an average of 29 inches of rainfall each year. Seattle gets about 36 inches on average. Some years see below-average rainfall. Low rainfall means trees and plants are drier and at risk of disease and fire. Wells in different areas of the island have gone dry at times because of overuse and dry weather.

We can help protect our water supply.



In the garden:

Landscape with native and drought resistant plants.

Collect and use rainwater for outdoor needs.

Reduce evaporation:

- mulch
- water early or late in the day
- use a soaker hose or drip irrigation
- if you set a sprinkler, set a timer.

When building or remodeling:

- Use water saving plumbing fixtures, dishwashers and washing machines
- Avoid the use of garbage disposals, as they use a great deal of water. Try composting your vegetable scraps or toss them in the garbage

At the well:

- install a meter
- take monthly readings to determine usage and detect leaks
- restrict well pumping rate to minimize the risk of seawater intrusion

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- Do not water your lawn or pressure wash
- Collect rainwater for use in the garden
- Wash cars and boats in town
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