

Hennepin County Landowner Guide

for
Conserving
Natural
Resources

<i>Getting Started – Assess Your Land</i>	1
<i>Identifying and Protecting Natural Areas</i>	6
<i>Protecting and Establishing Prairies</i>	9
<i>Managing Forest and Woodland Areas</i>	13
<i>Plants that Need to be Controlled</i>	18
<i>Protecting Water Resources</i>	22
<i>Preserving Wetlands</i>	27
<i>Providing Habitat for Wildlife</i>	30
<i>Managing Pastures and Livestock</i>	34
<i>Maintaining Wells</i>	39
<i>Maintaining Septic Systems</i>	42
<i>Managing Your Waste</i>	46
<i>Resources</i>	51



This guide is intended to help landowners care for their land and the natural resources on their property. The guide recommends practices that can be implemented to protect and enhance natural systems. Each section also suggests resources and publications that offer additional, more specific information for each subject area.

This guide provides information regarding natural areas such as prairies, wetlands, water resources and woodlands. Information about the control of noxious weeds and invasive plants, management of pastures and livestock, maintenance of private wells and septic systems, care of wildlife habitat, and management of household wastes is also included. By promoting environmental stewardship, we hope to preserve and enhance the environment in Hennepin County for current and future generations.

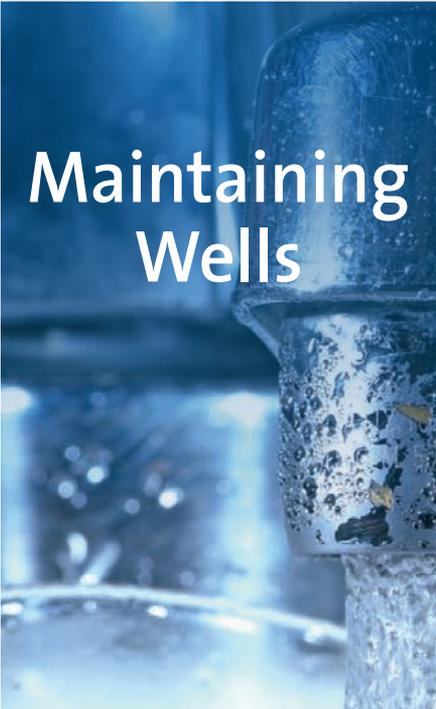
This resource was produced by Hennepin County Environmental Services in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Service of Hennepin County.



Hennepin County
Environmental Services
612-348-3777



www.hennepin.us/landownerguide



Maintaining Wells

Many landowners get their water from a well instead of from a municipal water supply. Proper care and maintenance of your well is important to ensure that you and your family have a healthy source of drinking water.

How do I know if I have a well?

When you purchase land, the seller is required to disclose information about the location and status of any well on the property at the time of sale. This is a legal requirement of the Ground Water Protection Act (Minnesota statutes, section 103I.235).

Maintain your well

Properly constructed wells have an average lifespan of approximately 40 years, depending on use. Although properly constructed wells require little maintenance, there are a few things that you can do to ensure the health and safety of your well.

- Have the water tested by a certified laboratory regularly and keep records. The Minnesota Department of Health has a listing of certified laboratories at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells.

Maintain your well, continued on next page

- Make sure that the cap of the well is securely fastened. If the well cover becomes unfastened, have the water tested for coliform bacteria and nitrates.
- Make sure that the cap of the well is clearly marked to prevent cars or snowplows from hitting it.
- Make sure that surface water runs away from the cap of the well to prevent pooling.
- Keep hazardous products, such as paint, pesticides and motor oil, away from your well.
- If you suspect that you have an old or faulty well, have a well contractor analyze the well to decide what remedies are needed. The Minnesota Department of Health maintains a listing of certified well contractors on their website.

Test your well

Test well water periodically for potential contaminants.

- Wells should be tested at least once a year for bacterial contamination. The presence of coliform bacteria indicates that surface water contaminated by fecal material has seeped into the well.
- Wells should be tested for nitrate every two to three years. High nitrate levels can cause adverse health effects. Sources of nitrate include fertilizer, animal waste or human sewage.

Always make sure the lab you select to test your water has been certified by the state to perform that particular test. Prices for tests will vary. The Hennepin County Environmental Health Division or the Minnesota Department of Health can help you find a qualified laboratory.

Treat contaminated water

The action you need to take to clean up contaminated water depends on the type of contamination.

- If your well is contaminated, contact the Minnesota Department of Health and ask to talk to a drinking water protection specialist.
- If lab tests determine that the number of coliform bacteria exceeds the drinking water standard, contact a well contractor to disinfect the well. The well contractor can also help identify the source of the contamination. Follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health until the well is disinfected.
- If an excess amount of nitrate is found in your well water, follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health. Boiling water will not remove the nitrate. Identify potential sources of nitrates near your well. If the sources cannot be moved, consider sealing your well.

Manage unused wells

You have three options if a well is not in use – you can put the well back into service, seal the well or obtain a maintenance permit for the inactive well.

Sealing the well is recommended if you do not want to put the well back into use. An unused and unsealed well can act as a channel between the surface and the aquifer below, potentially leading to groundwater contamination. Minnesota state law requires that well sealing be done by a licensed well contractor.

If you have questions on how to implement these options, contact the Minnesota Department of Health and ask to talk to a well specialist.

For more information

- Minnesota Department of Health, Well Unit
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells
651-201-4600
- *Well Owners Handbook*
Minnesota Department of Health
St. Paul, Minnesota. 2009.
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/handbook.pdf



Resources

Resources

- Hennepin County Environmental Services
www.hennepin.us/naturalresources
612-348-3777
Hennepin County provides a variety of information and technical assistance for managing your land.
- University of Minnesota Extension – Hennepin County
www.extension.umn.edu/county/hennepin
612-596-2110
The University of Minnesota Extension provides outreach for the University of Minnesota and delivers educational programs and technical assistance on a variety of land management topics.
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
www.mda.state.mn.us
651-201-6000
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
www.dnr.state.mn.us
651-296-6157
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov
763-241-1150, ext. 3
- Minnesota's bookstore
www.minnesotasbookstore.com
Minnesota's bookstore sells a variety of publications from Minnesota state agencies including many of the publications listed in this guide.
- Midwest Plan Services
www.mwps.org
Midwest Plan Services, based out of Iowa State University, sells a variety of low-cost agricultural publications.

Books & publications

- *A Quick Reference Guide for Earth Friendly Home Landscaping*
Hennepin County Environmental Services.
www.hennepin.us/sustainablelandscaping
- *Beyond the suburbs – A landowner's guide to conservation management*
Preece, Kathleen. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, Minnesota. 2001.
- *Guide to Rural Living*
University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, Minnesota. 2001.
www.extension.umn.//ruralliving
- *Living on Acreages*
Carroll, Natalie and Don Jones.
Midwest Plan Services, Ames, Iowa. 2006.
- *Small Scale/Small Field Conservation*
NRCS, Washington, D.C.
landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov



Hennepin County
Environmental Services
612-348-3777

www.hennepin.us/landownerguide

Attention.....If you want help translating this information, call 612-348-3777.

Atención.....Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-348-3777.

OgowHaddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo laceg la' aan wac 612-348-3777.

Ceeb toom.....Yog koj xav tau key pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-348-3777.

TDD/TTY 612-596-6985