

GEHR Watershed Minute #9

What's Ground Water?: (186 words)

A sizable amount of rainwater runoff seeps into the ground to become ground water. Ground water moves into water-filled layers of porous geological formations called aquifers. If the aquifer is close to the surface, its ground water can flow into nearby waterways or wetlands, providing a base flow.

Depending on your location, aquifers containing ground water can range from a few feet below the ground's surface to several hundred feet underground. Aquifer recharge areas are locations where rainwater and other precipitation seeps into the Earth's surface to enter an aquifer. Contrary to popular belief, aquifers are not flowing underground streams or lakes.

Ground water moves at an irregular pace, seeping from more porous soils, from shallow to deeper areas and from places where it enters the Earth's surface to where it is discharged or withdrawn.

Ground water is important because it is the primary drinking water source for half of the state's population. Most of this water is obtained from individual domestic wells or public water supplies which tap into aquifers. New Jersey agriculture also depends on a steady supply of clean ground water for irrigation.