

I have served for several years on the South Benton County Citizen Advisory committee. We have dealt with several land use issues pertaining to ground water/well water challenges. Many developers are seeking out large land parcels in the country. We have witnessed developers purchasing considerable sized wooded areas such as 50 acre parcels. They come in and log it and then divide it up into as many parcels as they possibly can. It is required by our county that each parcel has to have an adequate water source in order to pass for the rural residential qualifications. The developer will often times come in and drill a well for each parcel. To our astonishment, the developer is permitted to perform their well water test in March, which is known to be when our surface ground water is at its highest saturation due to all of the winter's rain. The developer is also allowed to hire their own private well driller to be the one who tests the well for its supposed output! We strongly believe the country should have their own professional who will come out to test the well for its output. We also feel that the testing should actually be done in the dry months which is August through October. The developers sell off these parcels to unsuspecting customers. They build their dream homes and often times their wells run dry towards the middle of Summer to the middle of the Fall. Other problems that have occurred is when existing neighbors bordering the new parcels start to have well water problems because of all the new homes depleting the aquifer. There is a state law that can protect existing land owners wells that border the new homes. Unfortunately this law usually does not help the situation because it is extremely hard to prove the route of the ground water. In court, often times the developer will claim that the existing land owner already had well water problems BEFORE the new homes were ever built. Our community decided to acquire some well water monitors through a business called WellIntel. This high-tech well monitoring device sends sonic pulses down to the well water level several times per hour and then utilizes bluetooth waves to transmit the data to our computer. The computer then sends the data directly to WellIntel. Their technicians process this data into records and graphs. It has been very beneficial for our community to accurately monitor their wells with real time data. If the unfortunate event occurs where a developer builds some new homes and our existing wells are effected, we will have the scientifically backed data to prove that our well was directly affected by their actions. I strongly feel that there needs to be more accurate studies of the ground water. I am in strong support of the Water Resources Department entering into agreement with United States Geological Survey. There are just too many people with too little water resources for there to be insufficient monitoring going on. Sincerely, Garrick Balsly