

Unconsolidated Aquifer Systems of Putnam County, Indiana

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The unconsolidated aquifer systems of Putnam County are composed of sediments deposited by, or resulting from, a complicated sequence of glaciers, glacial meltwaters, and post-glacial precipitation events. Eight unconsolidated aquifer systems have been mapped in Putnam County: the Dissected Till and Residuum / Till Veneer; the Tipton Till; the Martinsville Hills / Tipton / Wabash Lowland Till Subsystem; the Tipton Complex; the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash; the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Subsystem; the White River and Tributaries Outwash; and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Subsystem. Because of the complicated glacial geology, boundaries of the aquifer systems in this county are commonly gradational and individual aquifers may extend across aquifer system boundaries. Approximately 28 percent of all wells in this county are completed in unconsolidated deposits.

The thickness of unconsolidated deposits in Putnam County is quite variable, due to the deposition of glacial material over an uneven bedrock surface. Unconsolidated deposits in the county typically range from bedrock exposure at the surface to about 250 feet thick in the buried valleys.

Regional estimates of aquifer susceptibility to contamination from the surface can differ considerably due to a wide range of variation within geologic environments. In addition, man-made structures such as poorly constructed water wells, unplugged or improperly abandoned wells, and open excavations can provide contaminant pathways that bypass the naturally protective clays.

Dissected Till and Residuum / Till Veneer Aquifer System

In Putnam County, the Dissected Till and Residuum Aquifer System, and the Till Veneer Aquifer System, are mapped as one system because they are similar in composition and in aquifer characteristics. As in counties to the south, the Dissected Till and Residuum Aquifer System includes areas where pre-Wisconsin and/or Wisconsin till is thin and dissected due to deep down-cutting by streams or where soils have formed directly from bedrock due to weathering. The Till Veneer Aquifer System encompasses areas where the unconsolidated material is predominantly thin till overlying bedrock. This system is chiefly the product of the deposition of glacial till over an uneven, eroded bedrock surface rather than erosion of till by younger streams. Also included in this aquifer system are relatively thin deposits of alluvium, colluvium and gravel outwash overlying shallow bedrock in many stream valleys.

Much of west-central and southern Putnam County is mapped as Dissected Till and Residuum, especially along Big Walnut Creek where the tributary streams are deeply incised. In most of the

northern and eastern portions of the county thin till over bedrock is mapped as the Till Veneer Aquifer System. Total thickness of this system generally ranges from about 20 to 50 feet.

The Dissected Till and Residuum / Till Veneer Aquifer System has the most limited groundwater resources of the unconsolidated aquifer systems. There is little potential for groundwater production in this system in Putnam County, and most wells are completed in the underlying bedrock. Potential aquifers within this system include thin isolated sand and/or gravel layers, and surficial sand and gravel outwash or alluvium. The total thickness of the Dissected Till and Residuum / Till Veneer Aquifer System is typically less than 50 feet, with static water levels ranging between 5 and 15 feet below the surface. Most of the wells have reported capacities of 5 gallons per minute (gpm) or less with some borings being reported as dry. There are no registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities utilizing this system.

This system is generally not very susceptible to contamination from surface sources because of the low permeability of the near-surface materials. However, there are areas where protective clay layers are thin or absent. These areas are very susceptible to contamination.

Tipton Till Aquifer System

The Tipton Till Aquifer System is mapped primarily in the north and northeastern portions, with a few isolated areas in the central section, of Putnam County. This aquifer system ranges in thickness from about 50 feet to more than 150 feet, and consists primarily of glacial till with intertill sand and gravel layers. However, the sand and gravel aquifers in this system tend to be relatively thin and discontinuous.

This aquifer system is generally capable of meeting the needs of most domestic and some high-capacity users in Putnam County. However, approximately 60 percent of wells started in this system utilize the underlying bedrock aquifer. Individual sand and gravel units are commonly 5 to 15 feet thick with well depths ranging from about 50 to 190 feet. Domestic well yields are typically 10 to 50 gpm and static water levels range from flowing to about 130 feet below the land surface. There are no registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities using the Tipton Till Aquifer System.

A small area of the Tipton Till Aquifer System overlies a buried bedrock valley in the northeastern portion of the county. The total unconsolidated thickness generally exceeds 200 feet in this area. Only one reported well utilizes the deeper aquifer within the buried bedrock valley. The sands and gravels of the aquifer utilized by this well is reported to be 20 feet thick, and the reported yield is 100 gpm.

The Tipton Till Aquifer System typically has a low susceptibility to surface contamination because intertill sand and gravel units are commonly overlain by thick glacial till. Shallow wells completed in this system are moderately susceptible to contamination.

Martinsville Hills / Tipton / Wabash Lowland Till Aquifer Subsystem

The Martinsville Hills / Tipton / Wabash Lowland Till Aquifer Subsystem is found throughout Putnam County; however, this system is predominantly mapped in the northern half of the county. The subsystem is mapped similar to that of the Tipton Till Aquifer System. However, potential aquifer materials are generally thinner and potential yields are less in the subsystem.

About 90 percent of wells started in this subsystem in Putnam County are completed in the underlying bedrock aquifer system. However, the Martinsville Hills / Tipton / Wabash Lowland Till Aquifer Subsystem is capable of meeting the needs of most domestic users in the county. Potential aquifer materials include relatively thin, discontinuous intertill sand and gravel deposits. These intertill sand and gravel aquifer materials are commonly less than 10 feet thick. The wells producing from this subsystem are typically completed at depths ranging from about 25 to 125 feet. Domestic well yields are generally 5 to 10 gpm and static water levels range from 10 to 100 feet below the surface. There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (two wells) utilizing this subsystem. These wells are situated at the toe of the dam to Glenn Flint Lake and appear to be under the influence of the lake. The reported capacities are 100 gpm for each well. The use for this facility is public supply.

A small area of the Martinsville Hills / Tipton / Wabash Lowland Till Aquifer Subsystem overlies a buried bedrock valley in the southeastern part of the county along Mill Creek. The total unconsolidated thickness is up to about 180 feet in this area. Only a few reported wells utilize the deeper aquifer within the buried bedrock valley. The aquifer utilized by these wells is reported to be about 10 feet thick and the reported yield is approximately 10 gpm.

This subsystem is generally not very susceptible to surface contamination because intertill sand and gravel units are overlain by thick till deposits. Wells producing from shallow aquifers are moderately to highly susceptible to contamination.

Tipton Complex Aquifer System (over buried valley with some potential)

The Tipton Complex Aquifer System is mapped in a relatively small area in the northeast corner of Putnam County. There are few wells in this system in Putnam County; however, as mapped in adjacent Montgomery and Hendricks counties, the system is characterized by unconsolidated deposits that are quite variable in materials and thickness, and is typically overlain by thick clay layers, counties. The aquifer is highly variable in depth and lateral extent and generally includes multiple intertill sand and gravel layers. The total unconsolidated thickness is up to about 250 feet.

The deeper more prolific aquifers of this system are capable of meeting the needs of domestic and some high-capacity users in Putnam County. As mapped in Montgomery and Hendricks Counties, saturated aquifer materials in the Tipton Complex Aquifer System range from 5 to 15 feet thick, and wells in this system are completed at depths up to about 200 feet. Domestic well yields range up to 15 gpm and static water levels are about 20 to 50 feet below the surface.

There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (2 wells) using this system. This facility is used for irrigation. The reported yields for the wells are 900 and 1,000 gpm.

The Tipton Complex Aquifer System is not very susceptible to contamination where overlain by thick clay deposits. However, in some areas where surficial clay deposits are thin or lacking, the shallow aquifer, if present, is at moderate to high risk.

Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System / White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System is mapped along Big Raccoon Creek in the northwestern portion of the county, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System is mapped in the southwestern and central portions of Putnam County. Both systems include thick glacial outwash sands and gravels, and are capped by a layer of clay, silt, or loess deposits in a few places. The total thickness of unconsolidated deposits in these systems ranges from about 25 feet up to 140 feet.

Both aquifer systems are capable of meeting the needs of domestic and high-capacity users in Putnam County. The wells utilizing these aquifer systems are completed at depths ranging from 25 to 120 feet with saturated sand and gravel aquifer materials commonly 15 to 50 feet thick. Domestic well yields typically range from 10 to 60 gpm with static water levels ranging from 5 to 15 feet below the surface. In the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System there are two registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities (4 wells). Predominate uses for these facilities are public water supply and industry. Reported production for these high-capacity wells ranges up to 675 gpm. In the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System there are two registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities (11 wells). Reported production for these high-capacity wells range between 200 and 1,260 gpm and the use for these facilities is public water supply.

Both the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System are highly susceptible to surface contamination where sand and gravel deposits are near the surface and have little or no clay deposits. However, areas that have overlying thick clay deposits are moderately susceptible to contamination.

Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem / White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem is mapped along Big Raccoon Creek in the northwestern portion of the county, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem is mapped along Big Walnut Creek and Deer Creek in southwestern Putnam County. These subsystems are mapped similar to the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System. However, aquifer materials are generally thinner, overlying silt and/or clay materials are thicker, and potential yields are less in the subsystem.

The Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem have the potential to meet the needs of domestic and some high-capacity users. The wells in these subsystems are completed at depths commonly ranging from 30 to 100 feet. Saturated aquifer materials include sand and gravel deposits that are commonly 10 to 30 feet thick. Domestic well yields typically range from 10 to 50 gpm with static water levels ranging from 5 to 25 feet below the surface. There are no registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities in the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem in Putnam County. However, there are two registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities (7 wells) in the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem. The use for these facilities is public water supply and energy production. Reported production for the high-capacity wells are between 400 and 800 gpm.

A small area of the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem overlies a buried bedrock valley in the southeastern portion of the county along Mill Creek. The total unconsolidated thickness ranges up to about 150 feet in this area. Only a few reported wells utilize the deeper aquifer within the buried bedrock valley. The aquifer utilized by these wells is reported to be about 10 to 50 feet thick and the reported yield is approximately 10 gpm. There is one registered significant groundwater withdrawal facility (4 wells) using this system. The use for this facility is public water supply, and the reported production for each of the high-capacity wells is 350 gpm.

Areas within the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem that have overlying clay deposits are moderately susceptible to surface contamination; however, areas lacking overlying clay deposits are highly susceptible to contamination.

Registered Significant Groundwater Withdrawal Facilities

There are 9 registered significant groundwater withdrawal facilities using unconsolidated aquifers in the county (total of 30 wells). These facilities utilize the Tipton Complex Aquifer System, the Wabash River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System, the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer System, the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem, and the White River and Tributaries Outwash Aquifer Subsystem (over buried valley with some potential). Reported capacities for individual wells range from 200 to 1,260 gpm. The uses for the Putnam County facilities are public water supply, irrigation, energy production and industry. Refer to the table for some details on the wells and to the map for the facilities location.

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