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NEWS RELEASE

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An Abundant Supply of Clean Ground Water is Vital to the Health and Safety of Idahoans

March 10-16 Observed at Ground Water Awareness Week

Ground water, the water beneath the earth's surface, is vital to Idahoans. Ground water supplies approximately ninety-five percent of Idahoans with their drinking water.

National Ground Water Awareness Week will be observed March 10-16, 2013, to foster citizen awareness of the importance of clean ground water. Governor Otter has declared March 10-16 Idaho Ground Water Awareness Week as well.

To help protect human health and ground water quality and conserve water resources in Idaho, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) and the Public Health Districts offer the following guidance:

- Test private wells for pollutants. Septic systems, animal waste, fertilizers and pesticides, flooding and naturally occurring compounds, such as arsenic and fluoride, can contaminate ground water. Private well owners should have their well water tested for possible contaminants if their wells have never been tested or if the water tastes, smells, or looks strange. In addition, annual testing for bacteria, nitrate and other contaminants of local concern is recommended.
- Prevent hazardous materials from seeping into the ground. Ways to help protect ground water include disposing of hazardous materials properly, using pesticides and fertilizers according to label instructions, constructing water wells properly and closing/decommissioning problem wells, and properly maintaining septic systems.
- Use water wisely. Conserve this valuable resource by using water-efficient appliances and toilets, using low-flow shower heads, fixing toilet and faucet leaks, and running the dishwasher only when it is full.

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For more information, visit these websites:

- DEQ's ground water quality webpage at www.deq.idaho.gov/ground-water-protection
- DHW's well water webpage at healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/WellWater/tabid/1128/Default.aspx for information on well water testing
- IDWR's well construction and drilling webpage at www.idwr.idaho.gov/WaterManagement/WellInformation/default.htm
- ISDA's water quality program webpage at www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/Environment/water/indexwater.php for information on monitoring for pesticides and education and prevention programs
- Eastern Idaho Public Health District's webpage at www.phd7.idaho.gov

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