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NEWS RELEASE

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Clean Ground Water is Vital to the Health and Safety of Idahoans *March 9 - 15 Observed as Ground Water Awareness Week*

(Idaho) - Governor Otter has declared March 9 – 15, 2014 as Idaho Ground Water Awareness Week. Ground water, the water beneath the earth's surface, is vital to the health and safety of Idahoans. Ground water supplies approximately ninety-five percent of Idahoans with their drinking water.

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:

- **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.
- **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. (Please see attached list of approved labs for well water testing).
- **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. County specific information about household hazardous waste events is listed below.

Bonneville County: Household hazardous waste events will be held on the second Saturday of each month, May thru September. They will be held at the Bonneville County transfer station, 2455 Hemmert Avenue in Idaho Falls. Contact email is Blair Hillam at bhillam@co.bonneville.id.us.

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Madison County: Household hazardous waste events will be April 8 & 9, May 6 & 7, June 10 & 11, July 8 & 9, August 5 & 6, and September 2 & 3. They will be held at the Madison County transfer station, 530 Airport Road in Rexburg from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Contact number is 356-3102.

For more information about ground water awareness week, please contact Merrill Hemming, Public Water Coordinator at Eastern Idaho Public Health District. His number is 533.3129. Or, please visit these websites:

- DEQ's ground water quality webpage at www.deq.idaho.gov/ground-water-protection
- EPA's ground water and drinking water webpage at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/index.cfm>
- Eastern Idaho Public Health District's webpage at www.phd7.idaho.gov

Also, for updates on Ground Water Awareness Week and other health district news, "like us" on Facebook (search for Eastern Idaho Public Health District) at <https://www.facebook.com>.

About Eastern Idaho Public Health District

Eastern Idaho Public Health District (EIPHD) is one of seven local health districts throughout the state of Idaho. We serve eight counties including: Bonneville, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton. We were formerly known as District 7 Health Department. We changed our name in 2007 to help differentiate ourselves from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW). The mission of Eastern Idaho Public Health District is: to prevent disease, disability and premature death; to promote healthy lifestyles; and to protect and promote the health and quality of our environment. To accomplish this mission, we provide clinics, health education, consultative services, referrals for special medical care, environmental health protection, and epidemiological investigations. These services are available to every resident within our eight-county area.

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