



Denver Basin Aquifers  
Private Well Owners Association

# Protect Our Wells

<http://protectourwells.org>

Jan-Mar / 2004

## Important Dates:

- **El Paso County Water Authority**—1st Wednesday each month, County Office Building

## Interesting Websites:

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/gwlevels>

<http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/techniques.html>

<http://watertechnonline.com>

<http://groundwater.org>

**“Groundwater issues have not been forgotten.”**

## POW SPECIAL MEETING

**Date:** March 14, 2004

**Time:** 3:00 PM

**Place:** Black Forest Community Center

**Water, water, water!**

*(See insert for more info)*

## Who Is Protect Our Wells?

*“Protect Our Wells (POW) is the only organization that is concerned about your water.”*

*Larry Stanley*

There is one fact about the groundwater supply in Northern El Paso County with which no one will disagree. The water supply is not renewable except in geological terms (thousands of years).

Everyday we mine our water supply and it will eventually be depleted. Several areas of El Paso County are already in danger, areas near the foothills and areas using the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Alluvial Aquifer are certainly at risk.

While major water suppliers have voice and representation on the El Paso County Water Authority, private well owners have no one to represent their needs. Protect Our Wells (POW) was formed in 2002 to fill the gap that our elected officials have chosen to ignore. As developers continue to gobble up lands and speed the mining of the water supply, private well

owners have been relegated to a back-seat position. All we have been able to do is sit back and watch as hungry builders and uncaring politicians put life styles, dependent on private wells, at risk.

Why should you join POW? We are the only group that represents your and your neighbor's needs. The larger our membership the more our politicians will listen to our needs and our concerns. POW is made up of homeowners who are concerned about preserving and protecting their lifestyles. Please ask your friends and neighbors to join our group and please participate in our community meetings and volunteer to help us. That is the only way we can send a message to our political leaders that our needs are important.

Remember that Protect Our Wells is the only organization that is concerned about your water. Join with us to defend our rights and our lifestyles.

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El Paso County leaders acting like their “cousins” in Douglas County

## Selling Your Home - Senate Bill 101 Could Impact You!

Senate Bill 101 was approved on Feb 17th and could become effective on July 1st.. It will require sellers of residential property whose water supply, well or water provider, is 50% or

more non-renewable to make a disclosure of such as part of the contract.

A non-renewable water source is water from the Denver, Dawson, Arapahoe, Laramie-Fox Hills not

included in a groundwater management district and non-tributary water.

**The buyer shall have a claim for damages and court costs if the seller fails to make this disclosure.**

# “Running Dry” Revisited

by Bea Crandall

If you are too busy to keep up with all the newspapers, you may have missed a special report called “Running Dry”, a four-day series that began November 22, 2003 in the Rocky Mountain News. **This report validates POW's concerns** about the Denver Basin aquifer system (the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and the Laramie/Fox Hills).

The series speaks not only to statistics, but also to the human element. The people who, because of growth and its voracious thirst for water, have wells that are running dry, must take their laundry in to town, let their lawns die, and must get water from friends or relatives in another town. Some have even drilled new wells at costs between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

The report references wells in the western edge of the Denver Basin in Douglas County (just north of El Paso County) near Castle Rock, Castle Pines North, Highlands Ranch, and Parker. But, most of us in unincorporated El Paso County get our water from these same aquifers.

## Denver Basin Project

An essential part of that article includes the Denver Basin Project or the Kiowa Core Project, a project conducted by researchers from the Denver Museum of Natural History, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Colorado Division of Water Resources, Colorado State University and many others. In 1999, cores were drilled through all four aquifers, one in Castle Pines and one in Kiowa. In addition to numerous scientific factors, the results of the study revealed that the Office of the State Engineer has been overestimating the amount of water in these aquifers by approximately 30%. This is an important

finding because it is the State Engineer who determines the amount of water that developers and individual water users may extract for each project.

## The Denver Basin Rules

These figures are based on an 18-year old formula contained in a state regulation, “The Denver Basin Rules”.

According to Glen Graham, Senior Geologist at the Division of Water Resources, the revision of this document is on hold pending the outcome of additional studies that the state is working on. **POW will be monitoring this closely** and will provide an update at our Special Meeting, March 14th. The Office of the State Engineer is “concerned but not panicked”.

Douglas County Commissioners have revised their development regulations for that area. However, we are not aware of any preventive action by our El Paso County Commissioners.

*“The Office of the State Engineer has been overestimating the amount of water in these aquifers by approximately 30%.”*  
*The Office of the State Engineer is “concerned but not panicked”.*

Bob Reynolds, a geologist who worked on the Denver Basin Project, would like to see the State Engineer's office “establish a grid of monitoring wells throughout the basin” and believes that should have happened long before now. POW and other agencies, in conjunction with the El Paso County Water Authority Board, has already initiated a well-monitoring program within El Paso County, however, funding is needed.

You can find the Rocky Mountain News series “Running Dry”, as well as the Gazette article, “Water supply low – and dropping quickly” on POW's new website at:

<http://protectourwells.org>, under “Media”. These are a “must read” for anyone who gets their water from the Denver Basin Aquifers.

If you do not have a computer, ask a friend or relative who has one, or go to the library.

In addition, many water articles have appeared in the Black Forest News, making it an excellent source for local water issues. Their website is:  
<http://www.blackforestnews-co.com>.



<http://capp.water.usgs.gov/>

# Groundwater Events

<p>→ El Paso County Water Authority released "El Paso County Water Master Plan"</p> <p>→ Protect Our Wells (POW) Founded Initial Meeting - Panel Discussion Kurt Wells, Consulting Hydrologist Steve Monson, Water Attorney Ken Rowberg, County Planning Kevin Rein, State Engineers' Office</p> <p>→ "El Paso County Water Master Plan" adopted as "El Paso County Water Report"</p> <p>→ POW Meeting Dr. George Bolling, UCCS professor Explained hydrologic and structural features of the Denver Basin aquifers, especially the Dawson equifer.</p> <p>→ POW Meeting Colorado Springs Utilities Explained plans for Denver Basin wellfields in the Northgate and Briargate areas.</p>	<p>→ Water Working Group Gary Barber, El Paso County Water Authority facilitated. Included POW, the Water Authority's consultant, Colorado Farm Bureau, City Utilities, Upper Black Squirrel Creek Groundwater Management District, and USGS.</p> <p>→ POW Annual Meeting Election of Board of Directors</p> <p>→ POW Meeting to update members of POW activities.</p> <p>→ Colorado Springs Utilities announces major scaleback of its Denver Basin groundwater extraction plans from 10 million gallons per day to 3.5 gallons per day.</p> <p>→ POW submitted preliminary comments for the El Paso County Water Supply Standard</p> <p>→ POW Special Meeting</p>	<p>Spring 2002</p> <p>Fall 2002</p> <p>Late 2002</p> <p>11/10/2002</p> <p>12/05/2002</p>
<p>→ Water Working Group Gary Barber, El Paso County Water Authority facilitated. Included POW, the Water Authority's consultant, Colorado Farm Bureau, City Utilities, Upper Black Squirrel Creek Groundwater Management District, and USGS.</p> <p>→ POW Annual Meeting Election of Board of Directors</p> <p>→ POW Meeting to update members of POW activities.</p> <p>→ Colorado Springs Utilities announces major scaleback of its Denver Basin groundwater extraction plans from 10 million gallons per day to 3.5 gallons per day.</p> <p>→ POW submitted preliminary comments for the El Paso County Water Supply Standard</p> <p>→ POW Special Meeting</p>	<p>Spring 2003</p> <p>04/01/03</p> <p>08/23/03</p> <p>10/11/2003</p>	<p>Feb 2004</p> <p>3/14/2004</p>

Summer 2002  
Fall 2002  
Late 2002  
11/10/2002  
12/05/2002

Compiled by *Judy von Ahlefeldt*

## POW Website: New Name, New Design & New Features

The POW web site has moved to:  
**<http://protectourwells.org>**  
 and has been redesigned to provide additional features and capabilities.

The new format does require a relatively recent web browser, Netscape 5.0 or IE 6.0 and higher. We are still putting things together, so some pages don't do anything yet.

### Update Your Membership Data

One of the new features allows you to log in and make changes to your secure membership information (Edit Profile).

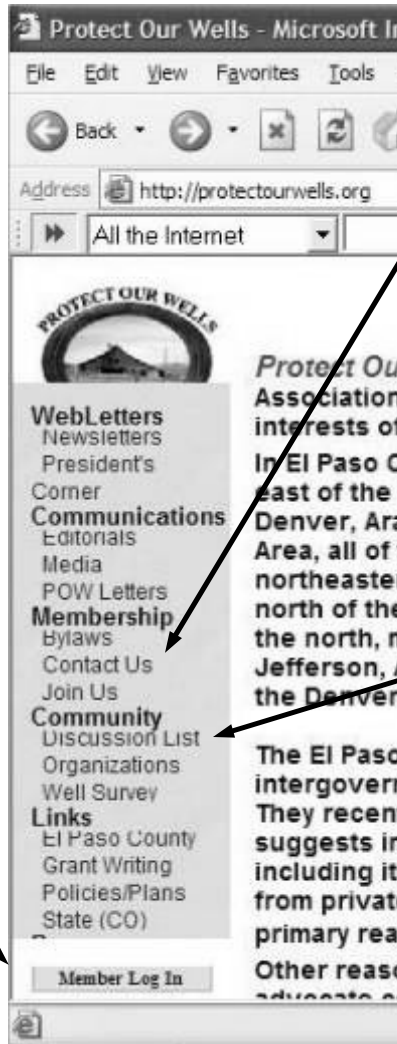
In order to log in, simply click the Member Log In button at the lower left of the page, and then supply a username, normally your email address, and password.

### Account Setup: Did You Give Us Your Email Info?

Passwords have been setup for everyone that provided an email address on their registration form. If we have your email address, you can obtain your password by email. Enter your email address (USERNAME) and then click the E-Mail Password button. You should receive the password almost immediately. Using the password and your email address as your username will allow you to log on.

### Account Setup: We Don't Have Your Email Info or It Has Changed

If you did not supply an e-mail address when you filled out your membership form, or if your email address has changed, it's easy to contact our Mem-



*Works best with Netscape 5.0  
or IE 6.0 and higher.*



bership Director, Rich Painter. Go to the Contact Us page, then click on Rich's name to initiate the email request.

### Setup Complete

When you've successfully logged in, the page menu on the left will include the Edit Profile item. Using this menu item will allow you to update your address, contact telephone numbers, and your interests in POW activities.

### Need Multiple Log ins?

We have even made provisions for separate log ins and profiles for both spouses in a membership. If you have a need for that capability, please contact Rich Painter (Contact Us page).

### Let's Discuss IT

Discussion List, an email list, is another new site feature. Membership in POW is not required—but is encouraged—to subscribe to this list. Under "List Info" you provide your email and password then add or change your subscription preferences. (Note: We automatically subscribed all our current members with email addresses to this list. This password is different from your membership log in, but you have the capability to change them to be the same.)

You can start a discussion by simply "posting" a message—send a normal email to the list server address: [pow@protectourwells.org](mailto:pow@protectourwells.org).

We use a list moderator to review and approve all posts before they actually go out to the list. Keep in mind that everyone on the discussion list receives every post and response.

We hope this discussion list will result in an improved dialog about ground water issues in our community.

If you have any questions or problems with the website or the discussion list, please email Fred Herman from the Contact Us page.

## Useful Terms

**Ground Water:** Literally water that is in the ground. It doesn't occur in caverns or underground rivers but in the pore spaces between grains in clastic rocks (Denver Basin), or in open fractures in harder rocks (Foothills). Think of the open space in a can of marbles.

**Clastic Rocks:** Rocks that form by the accumulation of clastic or detrital sediments - gravels, sands, silts, and clay - producing after consolidation, conglomerates, sandstones, siltstones and shales. These are usually laid down in layer-cake fashion although lateral variation is common.

## POW President's Message

After over a year of working with public officials including the El Paso County Water Authority, El Paso County Board of Commissioners, the El Paso County Planning Commission and the Colorado Springs City Council, I have drawn a few unsettling conclusions. The leaders of our county are acting just like their "cousins" in Douglas County by ignoring the fact that outside of a few cities in our county, the rest of us depend upon non-renewable water sources. In northern Douglas County their situation is becoming critical because nobody stepped up to take responsibility for their dwindling aquifers. Guess what, El Paso County leaders are willing to repeat history and ignore their responsibility to us.

For example, there are several engineering reports that indicate that the Upper Black Squirrel Alluvial Aquifer is being mined at increasing rates and is likely to run out of water in the next thirty or

so years. The response of the County Commissions...approve more development projects using, you guessed it, water from this dwindling aquifer. On several occasions POW has asked our Commissioners to take this situation seriously, and on one occasion we were literally laughed at by Tom Huffman.

We have also been trying to start a program to gather long term data about the condition of our aquifers and how fast they are being drained throughout El Paso County. While the Water Authority has expressed some interest in the program they are unwilling to pay for it, and properly so. When the Commissioners set up the Authority they chose to have it represented only by large water providers. This means much of our County is not represented on the Authority. The members do not feel

that they should have to pay for the water study in areas that they do not represent... and I agree. The Water Authority should be reconfigured to include representation from all non-city areas of the county. Then the Authority could make recommendations for this study to the Commissioners.

Unfortunately, until the Water Authority is reconfigured we will not have the ability to find out what is happening to our water. Further unless we can elect Commissioners who want to start developing renewable resources, we will continue down the road traveled by Douglas County. Unfortunately today's elected officials will not be around to take the heat when the water starts to run out.

*Larry Stanley*

## POW Advocates Scientific Approach.....

... to Groundwater Management.  
*By Judy von Ahlefeldt*

POW President Larry Stanley, members Judy von Ahlefeldt and Herb Vore, and POW consulting hydrogeologist, Julia Murphy R.G., attended Water Working Group Meetings during Spring of 2003 to craft frameworks to inventory wells and monitor groundwater use in El Paso County. Other participants in the group included Kathy Hare of the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Groundwater Management District, Charlie Pridgeon of the El Paso County Farm Bureau, Bruce Lytle of Halepaska and Associates, a United States Geological Service (USGS) representative and members of Colorado Springs Utilities. Gary Barber, representative of El Paso County Water Authority, facilitated the meetings.

During the course of the meetings several things became apparent:

1. The State Engineer's database appears to be incomplete with regard to residential wells in the Denver Basin.
2. There is almost no information on Dawson aquifer water levels in El Paso County.
3. Long-term monitoring data is scarce to non-existent for most other aquifers with the exception of a few commercial wells, mainly in alluvial aquifers south of Colorado Springs.
4. At the State and County levels, there are no plans to inventory and monitor Groundwater underlying EL Paso County.

5. Development projects which are dependent on the groundwater resource continue to be approved, even though there is no tracking system to determine cumulative effects on this resource.

6. The 1985 models used for groundwater allocation by the State Engineer, may fail to address the reality of groundwater supplies.

The Water Working group suspended meetings during the summer of 2003, with a Preliminary Groundwater Monitoring Program. A major obstacle to further progress is funding. Funding must be procured through a source that will provide long-term security for the monitoring program.



**Reminder!  
Renew  
POW  
Membership  
\$25**

**At the Special  
Meeting  
March 14, 2004  
or  
Mail check  
POW  
P.O. Box  
88241,  
Colorado  
Springs, CO  
80908-8241**



Sandra Martin, Newsletter Editor  
Protect Our Wells  
7505 Mallard Dr  
Peyton, CO 80831



**Special Meeting**  
**Sunday, March 14, 2004 3:00 PM**  
**(See Insert)**

## Protect Our Wells-Directors

<b>President:</b>	Larry Stanley	719-495-7825	<b>Treasurer:</b>	Larry Stanley	719-495-7825
<b>Vice President:</b>	Fred Herman	719-570-0342	<b>Webmaster:</b>	Fred Herman	719-570-0342
<b>Vice President:</b>	Rich Painter	719-495-7054	<b>Director:</b>	Bea Crandall	719-495-4213
<b>Secretary:</b>	Sandy Martin	719-683-6587	<b>Director:</b>	Herb Vore	719-488-9083
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Sandy Martin	719-683-6587			

**For Information: See our Website <http://protectourwells.org> or email: [info@protectourwells.org](mailto:info@protectourwells.org)**

## About Our Organization

Protect Our Wells (POW), dba Denver Basin Aquifers Private Well Owners Association, is a non-profit, citizen-based organization formed to advocate the interests of private well owners in the Denver Basin. The purpose of Protect Our Wells is to:

- Advocate and promote the unified interests of private well owners at the local and state levels
- Gather information about the status of Denver Basin groundwater supplies and advocate their conservative use
- Educate private well owners about Denver Basin groundwater

The POW Newsletter is a quarterly publication available by mail or on the website.

Annual membership is \$25. Send check to our treasurer, Larry Stanley, at P.O. Box 88241, Colorado Springs, CO 80908-8241.