

Well Mapping Project

In ongoing efforts to improve our ability to protect groundwater sources and the public's health, the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) is carrying out a countywide project to precisely locate all private drinking water wells in the county.

We are trying to physically locate and precisely record the coordinates of all individual drinking water wells in Howard County using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit. Over time, we are sending letters to everyone for whom county records indicate an individual drinking water well to seek their cooperation and their permission to access their property for this purpose.

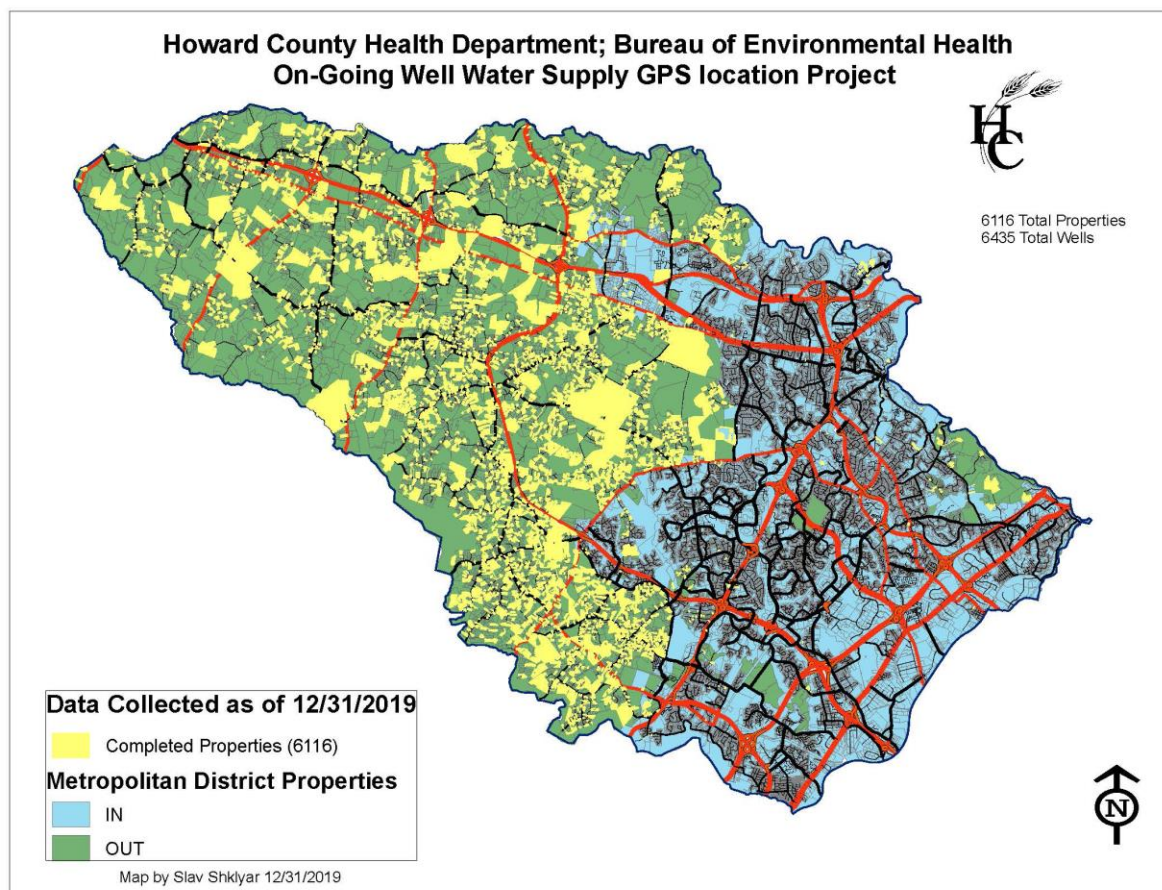
With permission, staff visit each property identified as having a well and spend 3 to 5 minutes at each well location to collect its precise GPS coordinates. In addition, a visual observation of the well's condition will be noted and shared with the property owner /resident. Any observations and/or recommendations given are strictly informative and not a reflection of any well requirements that shall be imposed onto the property owner. The well head will not be opened or affected in any way during this process. HCHD staff will be moving quickly from property to property (similar to a meter reader). All HCHD staff will be carrying credentials and will be clearly identified. The Howard County Police Department has been advised of this project.

This mapping project will allow creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database that will enable the Health Department to quickly and precisely identify groundwater wells that could be affected by on-site construction activities, septic system installations, contamination incidents such as spills, etc. Ultimately, this GIS-enhanced ability will help the Health Department provide improved service and better protect county residents who derive their drinking water from a private well.

By 2019, the total number of private wells mapped by GPS reached 6,435 wells (450 more wells than 2018, at an average of 38 well/month). As of Dec. 2019, the estimated number of private wells in Howard County reached 16885* wells (140 more than 2018). Therefore, 140 new and 310 existing private wells were added to the Well Mapping Project by new community builders and existing homeowners continuing to support and participate in this ongoing initiative.

(* = estimated number of private wells installed, Bureau of Environmental Health, Howard Co. Health Dept, Dec 2019)

GPS Map of Well Locations 12/31/2019



Please contact the Community Hygiene Program at (410)-313-1773 with questions about this project.