



Abandoned Groundwater Wells



Abandoned groundwater wells are a *threat to well water, the aquifer, and public health and safety*. Abandoned wells are a direct conduit for contaminants to pollute the aquifer. Some of these contaminants can be chemical such as dumping oil, paint, or other trash into the well. Other contaminants can be bacteriological such as decaying organic matter that can leave the person consuming the water ill.

Abandoned wells threaten the safety of humans and animals leaving them at risk of falling into an unplugged well and can suffer injury or death. Usually, small children are the ones that fall victim to these neglected wells. By Texas Regulation, *landowners are responsible for plugging abandoned wells and liable for any water contamination or injury*.

In Rusk County it is commonly found for a large diameter well to be abandoned and also deteriorated. They are usually found with no lid, a broken lid, holes in the side walls allowing insects and animals to enter into the well, located too close to a septic system, located too close to hazardous material, under the influence of surface runoff, and intrusion of tree roots. All of these things make the aquifer and well water a threat to health and safety.

Most large diameter wells in Rusk County are at least 30 inches in diameter. The **Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District (District)** *has a variance from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation allowing 30 inch wells in diameter or larger to be filled with clean clay or caliche fill*. Once plugged a State Well Plugging Report is to be filed with the State and the District.

The **Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District** *provides guidance and financial assistance in plugging groundwater wells*. "The District may contribute up to 50% of the cost of the capping or plugging of the open or uncovered, deteriorated, or abandoned well, not to exceed \$300 contribution by the District per well, on a first come, first served basis, as long as money remains in the budget for that purpose." The District wants to assist Rusk County Citizens by providing this Plugging Program and offer any solutions to clean-up and continue to utilize their well for the health and safety of our groundwater resources and the public.

For more information: (903)657-1900, Located at 500 N. High St., Henderson, TX 75652

Author & Photos by: Amanda Maloukis, General Manager, Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District

