

## **Helpful Definitions**

**acre-foot (acre-ft)**--the volume of water required to cover 1 acre of land (43,560 square feet) to a depth of 1 foot. Equal to 325,851 gallons or 1,233 cubic meters.

**alkaline**--sometimes water or soils contain an amount of alkali (strongly basic) substances sufficient to raise the pH value above 7.0 and be harmful to the growth of crops.

**aquifer**--a geologic formation(s) that is water bearing. A geological formation or structure that stores and/or transmits water, such as to wells and springs. Use of the term is usually restricted to those water-bearing formations capable of yielding water in sufficient quantity to constitute a usable supply for people's uses.

**artificial recharge**--a process where water is put back into groundwater storage from surface-water supplies such as irrigation, or induced infiltration from streams or wells.

**artesian (flowing well/spring)**--a well or spring that taps groundwater under pressure so that water rises without pumping. If the water rises above the surface, it is known as a flowing well.

**depletion**--reduction in the total volume of water | groundwater depletion is a term often defined as long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping.

**duty**--the amount of water in acre-feet per acre that is reasonably required to maximize a particular parcel of land as determined by the State Engineer.

**flood plain**--a strip of relatively flat and normally dry land alongside a stream, river, or lake that is covered by water during a flood.

**groundwater**--(1) water that flows or seeps downward and saturates soil or rock, supplying springs and wells. The upper surface of the saturate zone is called the water table. (2) Water stored underground in rock crevices and in the pores of geologic materials that make up the Earth's crust.

**groundwater recharge**--inflow of water to a groundwater reservoir from the surface. Infiltration of precipitation and its movement to the water table is one form of natural recharge. Also, the volume of water added by this process.

**hardness**--a water-quality indication of the concentration of alkaline salts in water, mainly calcium and magnesium.

**irrigation**--the controlled application of water for agricultural purposes through manmade systems to supply water requirements not satisfied by rainfall.

**municipal water system**--a water system that has at least five service connections or which regularly serves 25 individuals for 60 days; also called a public water system

**percolation**--(1) The movement of water through the openings in rock or soil. (2) the entrance of a portion of the streamflow into the channel materials to contribute to groundwater replenishment.

**permeability**--the ability of a material to allow the passage of a liquid, such as water through rocks. Permeable materials, such as gravel and sand, allow water to move quickly through them, whereas impermeable material, such as clay, don't allow water to flow freely.

**safe yield**-- the amount of water that can be withdrawn from the aquifer without producing an undesired effect, such as subsidence, depletion of reserves, or reduced discharge of groundwater.

**spring**--a water body formed when the side of a hill, a valley bottom or other excavation intersects a flowing body of groundwater at or below the local water table, below which the subsurface material is saturated with water.

**subsidence**--the gradual caving in or sinking of an area of land.

**surface water**--water that is on the Earth's surface, such as in a stream, river, lake, or reservoir.

**water right**--the right to make use of the water from a stream, lake, well, or other water source.

**water right priority**--"first in time, first in right." | prior to 1903 the priority of water right is the date the appropriator placed the water to beneficial use. After 1903, the priority is the date the application for appropriation was filed with the State Engineer.

**water year**--The water year used by the U.S. Geological Survey starts October 1 and ends on September 30, and is designated by the year in which it ends.

**water table**--the top of the water surface in the saturated part of an aquifer.

**watershed**--the land area that drains water to a particular stream, river, or lake. It is a land feature that can be identified by tracing a line along the highest elevations between two areas on a map, often a ridge.

**xeriscaping**--a method of landscaping that uses plants that are well adapted to the local area and are drought-resistant. Xeriscaping is becoming more popular as a way of saving water at home.