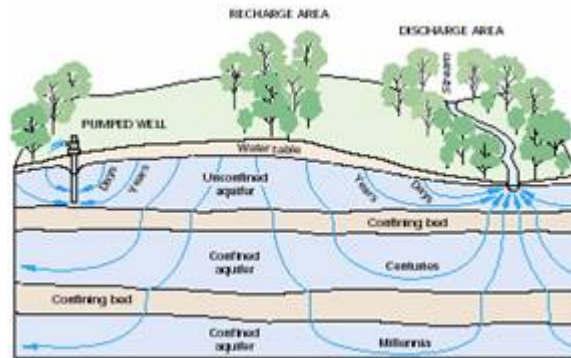


Snohomish County Groundwater Management

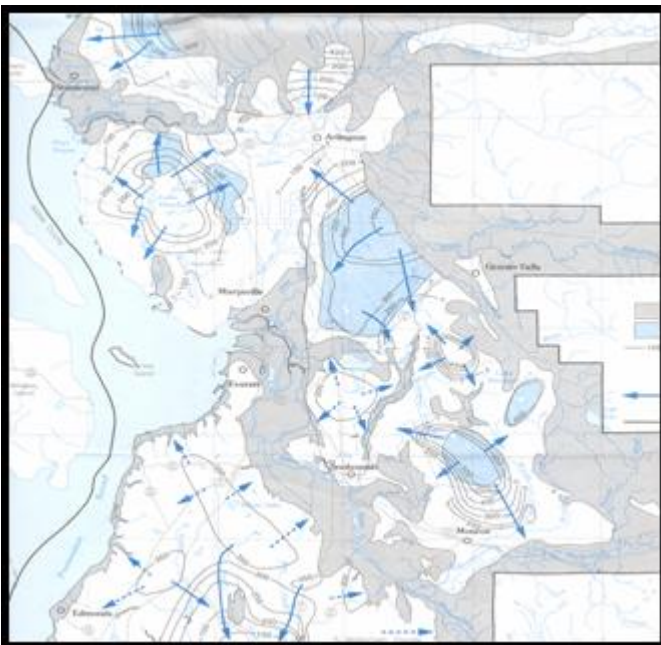
What is an Aquifer?



An aquifer is the layer of rock or soil that holds the groundwater we drill a well into for drinking water. Most layers of rock and soil in Snohomish County are saturated, but only a few of these layers are able to yield enough water for us to drink and therefore be considered true aquifers.

There are two important types of aquifers, the unconfined or water table aquifer, and the confined aquifer. The unconfined aquifer has a water table and a water pressure equal to atmospheric pressure.

The confined aquifer is "confined" by layers of rock or soil that do not readily yield water to wells or springs. Water in a confined aquifer is under pressures greater than atmospheric pressure. All artesian wells are confined aquifers.



The light blue regions above show the most common areas of confined aquifers in Western Snohomish County. The white regions above show the most common areas of unconfined aquifers in Western Snohomish County. The blue arrows indicate the direction of groundwater flow (after Thomas et al 1997).