

## New Well Construction Guidance

A review of procedures for new well construction resulted in a major clarification to our DWRP Project Plan Preparation Guidance in October 2002. A new section has been added to the guidance (Selected Alternative – IIIC) which provides information to address the interface of new well construction in the DWRP program with our existing state environmental review process. **Careful and timely adherence to these procedures will greatly minimize the chances of project delays and the potential exclusion of project costs from funding.**

For a well project, the activities associated with the drilling may constitute a major part of the disruption anticipated to occur at the site. Consequently, prior to the drilling of the large-diameter test well and observation wells, water suppliers **MUST** obtain reviews and clearances from the following agencies:

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- DNR Michigan Natural Features Inventory (Wildlife Division)
- State Historic Preservation Officer
- DEQ Water Resources Division

An approval to drill a test well from your district engineer does **NOT** address the clearances that are required to verify that the resources regulated by these agencies will not be adversely impacted by the drilling activities. Any drilling activities initiated ahead of obtaining the required clearances will render all costs associated with the test/production well ineligible for funding under the DWRP program.

A DWRP program applicant should plan on 45 days for the reviews to be completed. If there is more than one site being considered, clearances for multiple sites should be requested concurrently. Information regarding environmental reviews can be found in the Project Plan Preparation Guidance in the following attachments:

Attachment A – Applicant Actions Related to Project Planning

Attachment B – Information Needed for a State Historic Preservation Office Project Review

If surveys (wetlands, archeological, biological/botanical) are needed to fully assess the presence of environmentally sensitive areas, special attention should be paid to the time of year the surveys need to be done to correlate the required clearances with the milestone deadlines in the desired funding quarter.

In addition to the time required for environmental clearances, your schedule will also need to include sufficient time to complete the hydrogeological analysis on the test well and to accommodate its review and approval by the Groundwater Section of the Water Resources Division. As the hydrogeological analysis is necessary to confirm the suitability of the site for a production well, its approval must occur prior to our publication of the environmental assessment and approval of the project plan. It is estimated that the well approval process, starting with the initial environmental contacts and culminating in the issuance of an Act 399 permit for the production well, can consume six months. Applicants should plan accordingly so that desired construction start dates can be met.