

August 2015 – Article 1 of 5 in a series of interesting and informative articles introducing you to the people working to provide private well owners with the knowledge and tools they need to care for their water wells.

The People Behind the Program – Senior Water Administration Technologists

The provincial Working Well program provides information, resources and hands-on workshops to Alberta's private well owners. Meet the real people who are helping to deliver it.

Laura Partridge was about six years old when she learned there was good well water and better well water. Her family went camping at a rural campground that had a bored water well onsite for campground use. About 10 minutes away was a second water source which was an artesian well, which provided better quality drinking water. "I saw both kinds of wells when I was little," Partridge says. "And I knew that we went out of our way to get the best quality water possible."

Every aquifer is unique and some types of wells are safer than others. Partridge knows that better than anyone. For the past seven years, she has worked as a Water Administration Technologist with Alberta Environment and Parks where she is responsible for reviewing applications under the *Water Act* for licensing and approval. The *Water Act* is focused on managing and protecting Alberta's water and Laura is focused on streamlining administrative procedures to process applications in a timely fashion.

"On a daily basis, I talk to people who have questions regarding their well or a well they would like to drill," explains Partridge. "I think we take water for granted sometimes. Some people don't even realize they need a license to drill a well and use ground water in Alberta. Water is a protected resource that belongs to all Albertans."

There's a lot that goes into processing a new well request and Partridge works with hydrogeologists, drillers, water engineers and others to ensure that new wells are properly constructed and do not impact other water users. When they are not reviewing water applications, senior water administration technologists around the province help at workshops offered by the Working Well program. Partridge has a Bachelor's Degree in Education and water well training from two post-secondary institutions and she enjoys sharing her knowledge with private well owners at these free workshops.

"Working Well Workshops are a great way for well owners to learn the basics of ground water and how to manage their wells," explains Partridge. "There are several presenters that speak on various topics. My presentation usually covers topics like understanding ground water, drawing your well, understanding a water well driller's report and shock chlorination."

Laura Partridge never imagined that an experience she had as a young girl on a camping trip would lay the groundwork for her future career. Her family went out of their way to get water from a better quality well and today Partridge and others working in similar roles go out of their way to ensure that Alberta's well owners get the highest quality water from their wells and that Alberta's water is protected and safe for future generations.



Understand Your Well and Learn How to Manage It

Online resources and free community-based workshops offered by the Working Well program provide well owners with the information and tools they need to properly care for their wells. For more information, visit the Working Well website at:

www.workingwell.alberta.ca

Learn more about the *Water Act* at: <http://esrd.alberta.ca/water/legislation-guidelines/water-act.aspx>