

# Groundwater Use in Rhode Island

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

### Total

Groundwater (mgd — fresh, not saline)..... 32.7  
Percentage of total freshwater\* supply for state..... 33.54%

### Public Supply

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 13.8  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 42.20%  
Percentage of total public supply ..... 14.15%

### Individual Household

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 6.57  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 20.09%  
Percentage of total individual household supply ..... 100%

### Irrigation

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 3.8  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 11.62%  
Percentage of total irrigation..... 89.41%

### Livestock/Aquaculture

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 6.83  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 20.89%  
Percentage of total livestock/aquaculture..... 98.56%

### Industrial, Self-Supplied

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 0.54  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 1.65%  
Percentage of total industrial, self-supplied ..... 26.34%

### Mining

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 1.18  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 3.61%  
Percentage of total mining..... 40.41%

### Thermoelectric

Groundwater (mgd) ..... 0  
Percentage of total groundwater..... 0.00%  
Percentage of total thermoelectric..... 0.00%

(mgd = million gallons per day)

\*All totals and ratios are measures of freshwater only.

<sup>1</sup> US Geological Survey, Estimated Use of Water in the United States in 2015, released 2018.

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau 2013 American Housing Survey.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau 2013 American Community Survey.

<sup>4</sup> US Geological Survey, Estimated Use of Water in the United States in 2015, released 2018.

<sup>5</sup> US EPA Federal Safe Drinking Water Information System Data for 2019.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Census of Agriculture 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey.

## Groundwater's Role in Rhode Island's Economic Vitality

- Few states can accurately or confidentially determine how many residential wells are in place. For each region, the American Housing Survey by the U.S. Census provides regional data. Rhode Island is found in the Northeast, along with these other states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The last American Housing Survey Census indicates this region had 3,210,000<sup>2</sup> households served by residential wells, with an average of 2.49<sup>3</sup> persons per household. The USGS estimates the population of self-supplied water supply users in Rhode Island to be 113,000, with 100% of their water supply from groundwater.<sup>4</sup>
- 62 community water systems use groundwater for 160,700 people<sup>5</sup>
- 80 non-community, non-transient water systems use groundwater for 33,100 people<sup>6</sup>
- 307 non-community, transient water systems use groundwater for 51,200 people<sup>7</sup>
- 267 irrigation wells used serving 167 farms and 462 acres<sup>8</sup>



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# Rhode Island's Groundwater Industry Employment

Men and women working to provide and protect Rhode Island's groundwater resources for the benefit of people, business, and our environment.

## Rhode Island's Contracting Employment

Drill and service water wells, install and service pumps, install and service point of use water treatment devices. This portion of the industry is characterized by small firms, many of which are multi-generation family-owned and operated.<sup>9</sup>

- 13 firms employ an estimated 48 people
- Annual estimated sales of \$12.2 million

## Rhode Island's Scientists and Engineers Employment

Geologists, hydrogeologists, engineers, geochemists, geophysicists, microbiologists, regulators.

### Environmental Consulting<sup>10</sup>

NAICS 54162: Establishments primarily engaged in providing advice and assistance on environmental issues, such as the control of environmental contamination from pollutants, toxic substances, and hazardous materials.

- 131 firms employ an estimated 413 people
- Annual estimated sales of \$79.9 million

### Remediation<sup>11</sup>

NAICS 56291: Establishments include those engaged in remediation and cleanup of contaminated buildings, mine sites, soil, or groundwater.

- 20 firms employ an estimated 147 people
- Annual estimated sales of \$34.7 million

### Public Service and Universities, Colleges, and Research Centers

- Many more dedicated individuals



<sup>9</sup> InfoUSA, SIC 1781, June 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Barnes Reports: Environmental Consulting Services Industry (NAICS 54162); C. Barnes & Co., 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Barnes Reports: Remediation Services Industry (NAICS 56291); C. Barnes & Co., 2019.