

GEOSAM FAQ

1. Why does Iowa have two different well databases (PWTS and GeoSam)?

The databases are designed with different objectives. PWTS, managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, collects and disseminates permitting, construction, abandonment, and water test information about private wells. GeoSam, managed by the Iowa Geological Survey, collects and disseminates geologic information and tracks geologic samples. Information from private wells makes up a large portion of GeoSam. However, GeoSam also has geologic information from public wells, oil and gas wells, roadcuts, and quarries.

2. Why aren't all wells in GeoSam?

The IGS enters all well records it receives into GeoSam. However, the majority of well records are only entered in PWTS and are not sent to the IGS. The IGS is identifying well records in PWTS that have geologic information and adding them to GeoSam. The IGS has uploaded well records for wells drilled before 2018 in 46 counties and will continue adding records until all 99 counties are updated.

The IGS and county health departments also have a collection of historic records. The IGS attempts to add these records as we conduct projects in counties statewide.

3. How much funding does the IGS receive from the well permit fees to maintain GeoSam and the cutting collection?

Nothing. A portion of the annual state appropriation to the Iowa Geological Survey pays for the maintenance of GeoSam and the cutting collection. A conservative estimate puts the IGS' investment at \$100,000 per year (15% of the appropriation) for routine maintenance of GeoSam and the cutting collection. Grants and contracts are required to do non-routine activities.

4. GeoSam shows wells in the middle of fields. Are those locations correct?

Most likely those locations are incorrect, but they should be relatively close. Earlier versions of GeoSam stored locations based on legal descriptions. The current version of GeoSam stores locations based on GPS data, aerial imagery, and assessor information. So, the locations of newer wells are better because we can locate them more precisely. We try to display the most accurate location for all wells and actively correct locations as we discover errors.

5. How can incorrect information in GeoSam be corrected?

The IGS strives to make GeoSam as accurate as possible. Contact the IGS by phone at (319) 335-1575 or by email at iigr-igswellrecords@uiowa.edu with any corrections.

6. Does the IGS want well cuttings from every well?

Unfortunately, the IGS does not have the capacity or the funds to handle well cuttings from every well. To prioritize where cuttings are collected, the IGS has set a minimum depth for well cuttings in every section. An online map (accessible at https://www.iigr.uiowa.edu/igs/geosam/depth_map) shows these depths. The IGS requests cuttings for any well drilled in a section that is deeper than the minimum depth. If you are interested in collecting cuttings, contact the IGS by phone at (319) 335-1575 or by email at iigr-igswellrecords@uiowa.edu. The IGS will provide sample bags.

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