

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROTECTING OUR GROUNDWATER

Soil acts like a sponge and collects rain water. The diagram above illustrates how water percolates through soil deep into the underground layers of sediment and is held in an aquifer.

Half of New Jersey's citizens use groundwater for drinking. It is pumped up from one of the ten main aquifers which are: *Cohansey, Kirkwood, Woodbury, Merchantville, Marshalltown, Navesink, Hornerstown, Potomac-Raritan-Magothy, Farrington and Old Bridge.*

Aquifers collect water in the pore spaces of certain rock formations. Most aquifers are composed of unconsolidated materials such as sand and gravel. Some aquifers may be small and extend only a few miles or some may spread across many states.

Unfortunately, this wonderful process of percolation works for contaminated liquids as well as rain water. Leaking underground oil storage tanks or wastewater which is permitted to move along pathways which allow it to soak into soil can cause groundwater to be contaminated. Bacteria in the soil eat some of the pollutant material, but not all of it.

All of us should be careful about what we pour into the ground. Used motor oil and gasoline should be collected in cans and disposed of at gas stations or other appropriate collection facilities provided by your community. The oil or gasoline will be treated and recycled into other products. Never pour gasoline and oil into the ground.

