

Karsts can allow pollutants into drinking water

Karsts are cracks in bedrock that form over eons, as limestone dissolves in rain. The rainwater is filtered as it percolates through karsts and collects to form underground waterways.

The process of contamination

Human activity is a major source for pollutants getting into the aquifer, offsetting the natural balance of a potential source of drinking water.

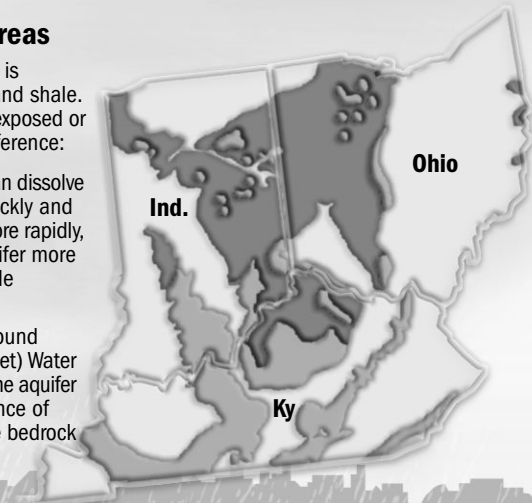
Sinkholes are formed when karsts collapse due to weakened bedrock. They are sometimes used as illegal dumps and the waste seeps into the karst.

In a karst area, **precipitation** sinks into the ground, flows through karsts and feeds underground lakes or rivers called **aquifers**.

Tristate karst areas

The Tristate's bedrock is limestone, dolomite and shale. Karsts, can either be exposed or buried. Here's the difference:

- Exposed: Rainwater can dissolve the bedrock more quickly and get into the aquifer more rapidly, which makes the aquifer more susceptible to possible contamination.
- Buried: (under the ground between 10 to 200 feet) Water takes longer to get to the aquifer and has a better chance of being filtered. The rate bedrock dissolves is slower.



Wells tap directly into the aquifer and provide drinking water to homes and businesses.

Well

Sinkhole

Septic tank

Leaking septic tanks release raw sewage into the karst.

Water in the aquifer feeds wells and springs.