

# ELMORE COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SURVEY RESULTS

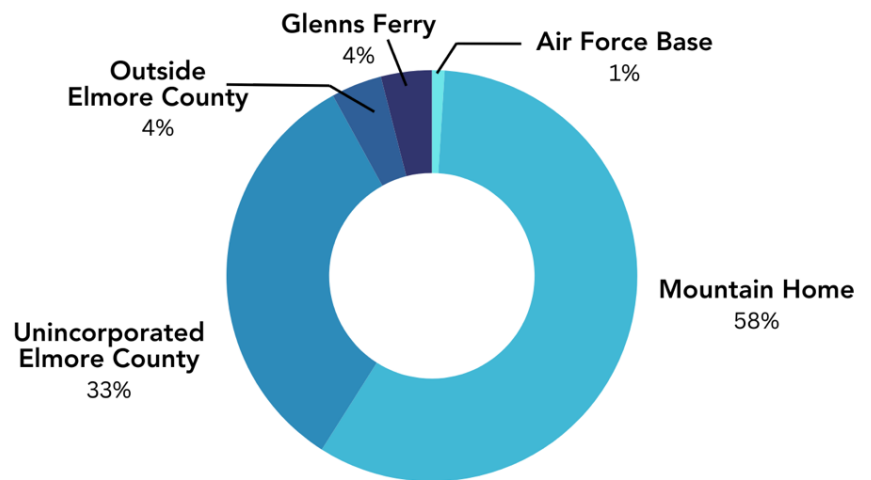
Elmore County is facing a groundwater problem. The aquifer that supplies drinking water to the entire Mountain Home area has been declining for the past 60 years and now, the community is consuming more water than can be naturally replenished.

Elmore County Commissioners have been working to identify potential solutions to this problem for the past several years. In 2023, they launched an online survey to understand community members' awareness of the problem and gauge support for options moving forward.

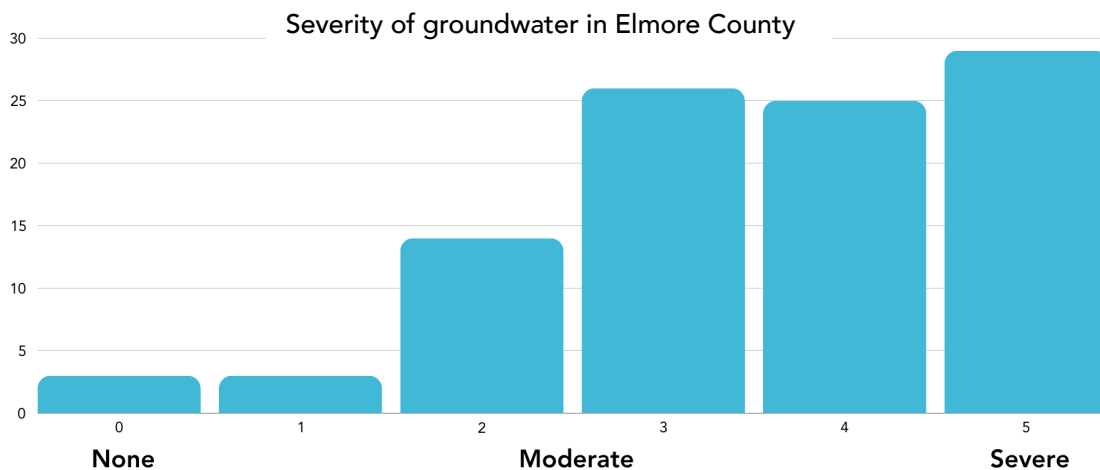
The data below was collected from March through December of 2023.

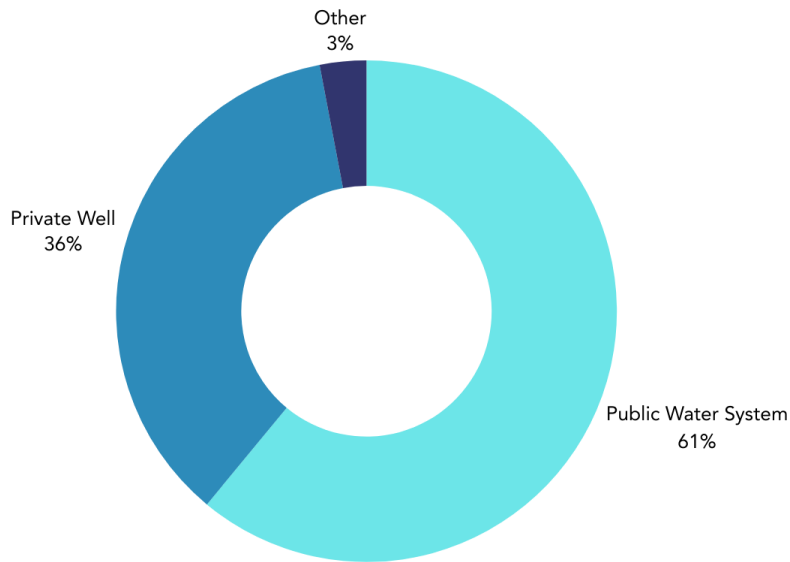
In total, 1,145 people completed the survey. Close to 60% of the participants were from Mountain Home.

The survey results show there is already a high level of awareness around the groundwater problems facing Elmore County. Just over 80% of those surveyed reported knowing more water is being pumped out of the aquifer than back in.



Respondents were asked how severe the groundwater issue is in Elmore County, with zero being not a problem and five being severe. The average ranking was 3.6.





Almost two-thirds of those surveyed reported relying on public water systems for their households, while a third rely on private wells. Twenty-three percent of the people who rely on wells say they've experienced a water shortage and 14% have had to deepen their wells.

Only 65% of respondents were aware of the work Elmore County is doing to solve the problem. County Commissioners have been

working to identify realistic aquifer recharge opportunities since 2017. Aquifer recharge would allow the County to replenish groundwater levels. Through the Commissioners' work, two options have emerged.

### OPTION 1 | SOUTH FORK BOISE RIVER DIVERSION PROJECT

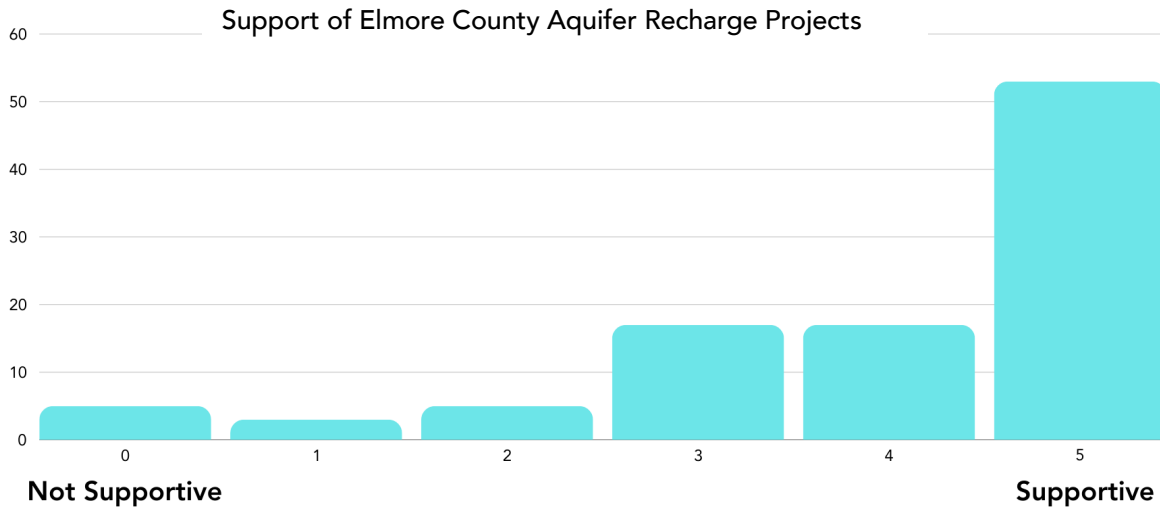
Elmore County secured a water right permit that will allow it to pump water from Anderson Ranch Reservoir to the Mountain Home area. Currently, all the water in Anderson Ranch Reservoir is stored for use in Ada and Canyon Counties. To take advantage of the County's new water right, the Commissioners are designing a pump station and pipeline that will take water from Anderson Ranch Reservoir to Little Camas Reservoir. From Little Camas, the water will flow down the canal system to the existing aquifer recharge pits north of Mountain Home and to irrigators.

### OPTION 2 | SNAKE RIVER AQUIFER RECHARGE

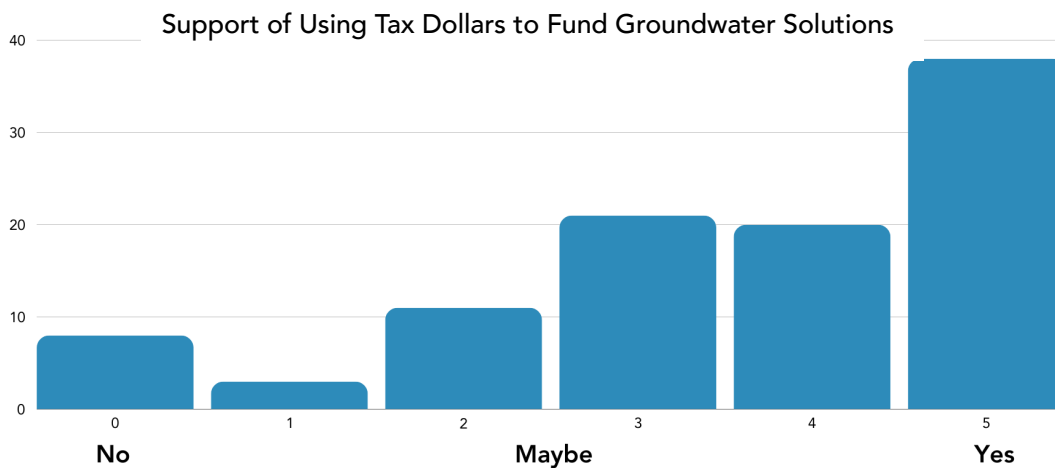
Elmore County has also applied for 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the Snake River for aquifer recharge and other direct uses. The County Commissioners continue to explore options for piping this water for use in the greater Mountain Home area, pending approval of its application from the State.

It is important to note, these projects being pursued by the County Commissioners are separate from the proposal to supply the Mountain Home Air Force Base with surface water from the Snake River. There is no formal connection or affiliation between the Air Force Base project and the County's projects. It is important to note, the County Commissioners are supportive of the water projects taking place at the Mountain Home Air Force Base.

When asked to rate their level of support for the County's aquifer recharge efforts, with zero being not supportive and five being very supportive, 86.4% of respondents indicated a three or higher.



Any aquifer recharge project will require investment from the County. When survey takers were asked if they were supportive of using tax dollars to fund potential solutions 37.5% of participants said yes and 7.5% said no, with everyone else falling in the middle.



Public participation is vital to the planning process. All the data collected through the survey and the comments the public shared are being closely considered by the Elmore County Commissioners and will be used to help guide future decisions.

Community members can find more information about the groundwater challenges facing Elmore County and updates on solutions by visiting [www.sfbdiversion.com](http://www.sfbdiversion.com).