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Western North Carolina Private Well Homebuyer

DUE-DILIGENCE GUIDE

A home inspection tells you about the house.

A private well deserves its own due diligence.

Before the due-diligence period ends, understand the well,
the water it produces, and what ownership may require.



1

How is the
well constructed?

2

Can it adequately
supply the home?

3

What is in
the water?

4

What will it cost
to own and maintain?

1

Start Here

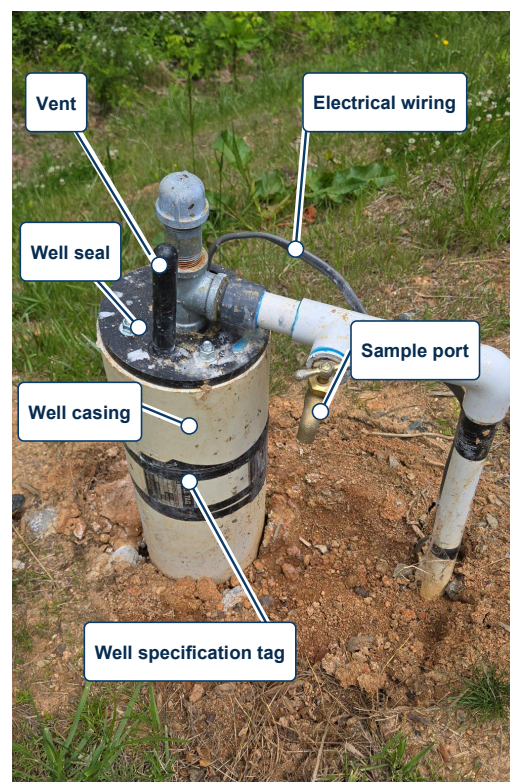
Your Pre-Closing Checklist

- ☐ **Review available well records**
Search county and state records. Understand what is known - and what is not.
- ☐ **Inspect the well and surrounding area**
Look for visible warning signs and confirm the wellhead is accessible and protected from surface water.
- ☐ **Evaluate performance**
Determine static water level when practical, production, recovery and whether the well can meet typical household demand.
- ☐ **Test the raw water**
Use laboratory testing appropriate to the property, local conditions and the decision you are making.
- ☐ **Understand existing treatment**
If equipment exists, determine what it treats, whether it is operating correctly, and how it has been properly maintained.
- ☐ **Estimate future costs**
Understand potential corrective work or needed repairs and ongoing maintenance before you close.
- ☐ **Ask the right questions**
Get clear answers from the seller, broker, inspector, and well/water professionals.

The point is to:

Know what you are buying, what remains unknown, and what could become your responsibility after closing.

Typical Western North Carolina private wellhead



Common wellhead style in Western North Carolina.

2 What Are You Actually Buying?

A private well is part of the property.

1 The Well

- Construction type and age.
- Location and serviceable access.
- Available records
- Condition and protection from pest and weather.

2 Water Supply

- Depth and Static water level
- Production rate and recovery.
- Is it enough for your household needs?

3 Water Quality

- Test for bacteria, metals, minerals and other locally relevant conditions
- Results help identify treatment and ongoing maintenance needs

4 Treatment System

- What is installed?
- Is it functioning and maintained?
- Is it appropriate for the water?
- Are parts available and serviceable?

3 Know the Difference

Not all inspections and tests answer the same questions.

Service / review	What it typically answers	What it does not establish
General home inspection	Visible wellhead conditions; basic plumbing/equipment observations.	Water quality; well yield/recovery; detailed well construction.
Well-performance evaluation	Static water level when practical; production/recovery. Pump and pressure-system operation.	Detailed laboratory water quality.
Raw-water analysis	Bacteria, pH, hardness, metals/minerals and other selected parameters.	Well yield, recovery or mechanical performance.
Treatment-system review	Condition, maintenance and suitability of existing treatment for current water.	Well construction or long-term well yield.

4 Visible Red Flags

These conditions deserve a closer look.

- Missing or damaged well tags / identification plate.
- Missing or damaged well cap, seal, vent or other wellhead components.
- Mud, debris, over-wash, poor drainage or standing water around the wellhead.
- Well unusually close to a creek, stream, pond or other surface water.
- Well close to a septic tank, drainfield or another potential contamination source.
- No usable raw-water sampling tap or test port.
- Unknown construction, depth, yield or recovery; no available records.
- Low flow or pressure, frequent pump cycling or other performance concerns.

5 Buncombe County Records & Pre-2005 Wells

What to know - and how to look up records.

Buncombe County did not require a permit to drill a private well until January 1, 2005 !

For an older property, the absence of a county well permit is expected, because the county private-well permitting process did not exist prior to 2005. That is not proof the well is satisfactory.

Older wells deserve a more in-depth inspection and thorough performance evaluation.



How to search Buncombe County well records:

- 1 Open the Buncombe County permit portal.
- 2 Search current PIN; retry historical. PINs if needed.
- 3 Look for WEL / older WLS records and attachments.
- 4 Contact Environmental Health with questions.



Well & Septic Records



Environmental Health

6 Already Closed?

You still have options.

- Have the well inspected and evaluated.
- Test the raw water.
- Address water-quality or production issues.
- Evaluate or install appropriate treatment.
- Plan for ongoing maintenance and periodic testing.

Helpful public resources

- Buncombe County Environmental Health
- NC DEQ Well Construction Standards
- NC DHHS Private Well Information
- NC Real Estate Commission
- NC Home Inspector Standards