In 1837, the Legislature established a geological survey “to investigate and report on Michigan’s geological resources.” The Office of Geological Survey (OGS) continues to develop and disseminate maps, publications, and data on oil, gas, mineral, and groundwater resources for industry and public use. The responsibilities of today’s OGS have expanded to include the conservation and orderly development of Michigan’s geological resources, while protecting other natural resources, the environment, and public health and safety.

Geologic Mapping and Information
The OGS develops and disseminates information on oil and gas, minerals, groundwater, and other earth resources for use in resource development, environmental protection, and public information. This information includes: topographical maps; geologic maps; publications on Michigan geology; oil and gas well records; mine records; and an electronic database of oil and gas locations, and details of well construction, status, and geologic data.

Mineral Wells Program
The OGS regulates the location, drilling, operation, and closure of mineral wells, which include wells for waste disposal, brine production, solution mining, storage, and mineral exploration. Staff evaluate applications, issue permits, carry out inspections, and enforce requirements for construction and operation of mineral wells and associated facilities. There are approximately 150 active mineral wells in Michigan, with an average of 15 to 20 new wells drilled per year.

Mining and Minerals Program
The OGS regulates mining in designated coastal sand dune areas. Staff review sand dune mining applications and issue permits, evaluate mining and regulation plans, determine financial responsibility requirements, conduct inspections, and enforce regulatory requirements. Approximately two million tons of dune sand are mined in Michigan each year, providing 30 percent of the nation’s foundry sand. The OGS also regulates mining and reclamation at metallic mineral mines. Of the hundreds of metallic mines that once operated in Michigan, only two iron mines located in the Upper Peninsula remain in production. Staff conduct permitting, inspection, and enforcement of reclamation requirements at these operations. Operators of nonmetallic open pit mines are required to submit annual mining and reclamation plans. These plans are used to evaluate the reclamation and final closure of mining sites. The OGS also cooperates with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, to mitigate or correct abandoned coal mine problems including filling or closing mine shafts.

Oil and Gas Program
The OGS regulates locating, spacing, drilling, operating, plugging, and restoring oil and gas wells and the operation of associated storage and disposal facilities. Staff review applications and issue permits to drill and operate; conduct inspections; and enforce well construction, spill prevention, and cleanup requirements. The division also regulates production rates for wells to prevent the waste of oil and gas. There are over 14,500 active oil and gas wells and over 3,100 gas storage wells in Michigan and another 34,000 wells that have been plugged as nonproductive. Complete records are maintained for all wells in the OGS Office in Lansing.
Orphan Wells Program
Utilizing funds from a tax on the oil and gas industry, the OGS plugs oil and gas wells and restores sites where there is no viable owner or an environmental emergency is declared. The OGS prioritizes orphan wells for plugging according to severity of threat to the environment or public health and safety.

Where To Go For Assistance
OGS staff located in field offices administer the regulatory aspects of several of the programs described above; respond to complaints; conduct compliance activities; issue many of the OGS permits; and provide local contact points with regulated industries, local government, and citizens. Field staff are located throughout the state:

- Cadillac District Office .................. 231-775-3960
- Gaylord Field Office ..................... 989-731-4920
- Kalamazoo District Office ............. 269-567-3500
- Lansing District Office ................. 517-335-6010
- Saginaw Bay District Office ........... 989-686-8025
- Southeast Michigan District Office .... 586-753-3700
- Upper Peninsula District Office ....... 906-346-8300

Various publications and copies of the laws and rules for the programs identified above are available by contacting the division at 517-241-1515 or can be downloaded from our website at www.michigan.gov/deq.