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This report cover shows photos of world weather patterns, the shrub-steppe ecosystem as viewed from the Rattlesnake Hills, and sandstone stratification. The images are intended to represent climatology, environmental surveillance, and groundwater monitoring activities conducted on the Hanford Site. The sandstone photo helps illustrate the concept of groundwater, although groundwater on the Hanford Site is found in a cobble/sand strata, not in layered sedimentary rock as shown.

You find groundwater within the pores of sand and gravel or the cracks of fractured rock beneath the Earth's surface. Water enters the ground from many sources. In the Mid-Columbia Basin, where the Hanford Site is located, this might include rainfall and melting snow, water from irrigated lawns and farm fields, or irrigation canals. If the water from these sources does not evaporate or get used up by plants, it seeps into the ground, eventually fills the cracks in the rock or the spaces between the soil particles, and becomes groundwater.