

DIVINING FOR WATER

Those who have been in the water industry are probably familiar with the term “water dowsing” or “water divining.” This refers to the age-old practice of searching for underground water by using devices such as a forked piece of wood, wire, or even a coat hanger. With the tip of the device pointed out in front, the water dowser walks across an area of ground where water is suspected to be located.

As the dowser is walking, it is said the pointed end of the rod will move or bend down toward the supply of underground water. Ford Meter Box personnel have witnessed this practice, though to our knowledge, no scientific evidence exists to explain why some seem to have a talent to locate water in this way.

According to research by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), 6,000 to 8,000-year-old cave paintings in Africa are believed to show depictions of water dowsing. However, while its exact origin is unknown, water dowsing appears to have been introduced in Europe as early as 1556. The practice has been a controversial one, as 17th century dowsers explained it to be a result of attraction between water and the rod, and those in opposition to dowsing deemed it “superstitious.”

Some dowsers today claim the practice can work for anyone, while others believe it to be a precise skill or art. Either way, if it were widely accepted and scientifically proven, it would save much time and energy in finding underground water supplies. Until



The photo, taken in the early 1990s, shows a contractor using dowsing rods to locate a buried service line. This took place across the street from the Ford Meter Box front office, and the contractor found the service line's exact location in about three minutes.

then, water dowsing remains a debatable practice, defended by those who claim it spares the water industry the inconvenience of random digging.

