Where does the groundwater go?

Eventually, groundwater discharges either into rivers, or into the ocean. Submarine groundwater discharge (SGD) into the sea can be a locally important freshwater resource and also a potential pathway for marine pollution. Determining relatively small fractions of groundwater to the ocean presents technical difficulties using conventional techniques because of the very small volumes, and spatial variability.

The IAEA has an ongoing research programme that involves the use of several isotopic tracers to assist with estimation of submarine discharge at a number of sites around the world.

Coastal manifestation of SGD, Sicily, Italy