



DOWSING, FACT OR FICTION?

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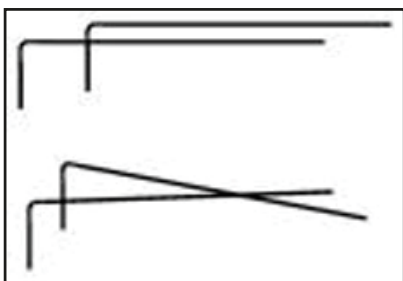
Wikipedia describes dowsing as a type of “Divination employed in an attempt to locate items without the use of “scientific apparatus”. It is considered a “pseudoscience” and there is no scientific evidence that it is any more effective than random chance. The motion of dowsing rods is nowadays generally attributed to the ideomotor effect, where a thought or mental image brings about the reaction.”



Dowsing rods come in many shapes and forms. From a forked stick (*pictured at left*) to the modern-day pistol grip telescoping type. Different people have different reactions. As a wee lad, I remember our local well driller/water witcher. His tool of choice was a pendulum on a spring. This pendulum would bounce when over a water source. I never heard of him having a dry hole. A friend's father used two devices, a forked stick and

a long metal bar held between his fingers. Said bar would circle over a water source where the forked stick would point to the ground. I have seen them all work. For years, the rods did not work for me till it was suggested that I point one of them towards the ground. I have had results ever since. Just the other day a skeptic insisted that I had 9V batteries in my pockets. Supposedly, if the dowsing rods do not work try a battery in each of your front pockets. I do not need this and have never tried.

Last month I received a call from a small system to help them trace a water main. A truck had driven over a curb box and broke the pipe at the curb stop. When I arrived, I asked if they had an idea where the water main was and what size it was. They said, we think it is somewhere around the center line and is either 4 or 6-inch cast iron. To shut down the street involved shutting down



multiple valves and stopping water flow to half of the Village. I started my preliminary trace with two brass rods with swivels built into the handles, my dowsing rods. Pictured at left are

rods like the ones presented to me by my superintendent as a retirement gift. They have a special spot assigned to them in my work vehicle because they are used so frequently. The operator had placed a blue line in the road where he thought the water main was located. Using my rods, I found a spot about 4 ft. away from their mark. Finding this spot I stopped, and while counting stomped with my right foot. After 5 stomps the brass rod changed directions. I told the operator, it is here, about 5 ft. down. As stated before, this was my preliminary trace. At this point I proceeded to connect my Heath Sure Lock to a known point and do an actual trace. The brass rods were dead on. The corp. was located and shut off saving the need to put half of their system out of water.

Unless you have good as-built maps, or an up to date mapping system, information can be, and hopefully is, passed down from operator to operator. Too many times I have heard, “Joe knew where that was, he kept it to himself for job security”. If your system upgrades involve PVC it is so important to document locations and to have a working tested trace wire before signing off on a project. There is nothing harder to locate than a PVC service or main without documentation and a good working trace wire. The same goes with our friend from the 60's, ACP. Without proper documentation, how do you trace that? Ground penetrating radar? Just how many small or large systems have that capability without calling in a professional?

Call it what you may, dowsing, divining, water witching, doodle bugging, there is no proven science behind it. I have seen it work and do trust the results. Maybe someday there will be a scientific answer. Is it because an excavation changes the polarity of the soil? I do not have the answer. I just know that for me they work. I just do not stop there. I back up my results with the sophisticated electronic device that many small systems cannot afford. On my next visit to your system ask me and I will let you give my Dowsing Rods a try.

I hope to see you soon, keep our water safe and flowing. Quality on Tap! 💧💧