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June 19, 2009

Matthew Palmquist
Oakley Service Center NRCS
1015 W. 2nd Street
Oakley, Kansas 67748-1267

RE: Source Water Protection Plan

Dear Mr. Palmquist:

On behalf of the City of Winona and their Water System Operator Mike Margheim, I'd like to inform you of the City's decision to develop a Source Water Protection Plan and invite you to help them implement some water quality protection activities.

While the drinking water quality of the City is very good, it has become a goal of the City to insure that the quality is not impacted by preventable activities. One of the ways to do this is to educate and encourage the owners of the land in the immediate vicinity of their water wells to participate in one or more of the available conservation practices available through your office. I am aware of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) and its eligibility for cultivated land within 2,000 feet of public water supply wells. I have also heard that changes to this program are being considered, but I do not know what those changes might be. I am not very familiar with the other programs that may be available.

One of the issues that may affect this plan is that the wells are less than 100 feet from the boundary between Logan and Thomas Counties. Please let us know if it is necessary to invite the Thomas County District Conservationist to our planning process, or whether you can be the primary contact for both counties with this plan.

If the source water protection planning committee decides it is worthwhile to include it in the plan, I'd like to include a statement that the City has set a goal to schedule a meeting with the landowners and their tenants to explain the planning process and the options they have to participate with the City to protect the groundwater near the water wells. I'm hopeful that we can be creative and offer some incentives that will make them reluctant to miss the meeting, too.

I have visited the well sites and made note of the activities near the wells. My next step will be to write a rough draft of the plan for the committee to review and revise. I anticipate that any meeting of the nearby landowners will be scheduled after the plan is adopted. I'm sure the City will provide you with a copy of the plan after its adoption.

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Thank you for all of the support you can offer to us in the implementation of the Source Water Protection Plan. If you have any questions or comments, you can reach me by telephone at 785/640-4701, by e-mail at dhelmke@krwa.net or by writing to 6847 SE 29th Street, Tecumseh, Kansas 66542-9571.

Sincerely,

Douglas S. Helmke, L.G.
Water Rights / Source Water Specialist
Kansas Rural Water Association

DSH

c: KRWA
Mike Margheim, City of Winona