

Source water protection requires teamwork

Previous issues of *The Kansas Lifeline* have introduced the Source Water Protection Program that was established last June by KRWA. I assumed the position of source water tech last fall as Matt Steele returned to work on a multi-year program evaluating livestock waste lagoon performance. I'm personally excited about the Source Water Protection Program; I'm convinced it can help many public water suppliers maintain and better protect their source water. Working together, we can and will make a difference.

*Jim Jackson
Source Water Tech*



The KRWA Source Water Protection Program is funded through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. KRWA is one of 13 Associations selected for the program which is funded through a contract with National Rural Water Association (NRWA). The program has oversight and assistance by the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). As a technician for KRWA, I will work with FSA state executive directors, FSA county executive directors, and state conservation specialists within USDA's NRCS to create operating plans that identify priority areas where local pollution prevention efforts are needed most. I will also work in coordination with the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) as the

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agency recommends. We have begun reviewing the KDHE Source Water Assessments for systems with the highest scores of susceptibility of contamination. We will prioritize the systems and help make source water protection a common practice in these communities.

Protecting public water supply wells from contamination involves the cooperation of public water suppliers, state and local agencies, property owners, farmers, businesses, and the general public. In order to have a practical and effective plan, cooperation and involvement from all of these groups is important.

Wellhead, SWAP and now Source Water Protection

It's easy for local water system staff and boards/councils to become confused between Wellhead Protection, Source Water Assessments and this newer Source Water Protection Program. Allow me to explain.

First, Wellhead Protection activities prevent well contamination. Second, a Source Water Assessment is **not** a Wellhead Protection Plan.

A "Source Water Assessment" and a "Wellhead Protection Plan" are different documents, with separate and distinct purposes. However, the source water assessment can aid a



The city of Caney's source of water is the Little Caney River. The city has been contacted about developing a Source Water Protection Plan with Copan, Ok. Source water concerns aren't stopped by a state line.

water system in its wellhead protection planning process. It also provides an update of the system's progress in source water protection. In Kansas, the source water assessments were nearly all produced by KDHE, while the Wellhead Protection Plan is developed by the water system and its wellhead protection planning team.



Assistant City Clerk Alice Coomes and Mayor Robert Jacquinot review the city of St. Paul's Source Water Assessment Report. KRWA is assisting the city on the review and future work conducting inventories.

teams comprised of citizens with diverse backgrounds from federal, state, local, and private entities. These teams will collaborate in the development of the Source Water Protection Plans that promote clean ground water. My job is to assist the teams in gathering local data and facilitate planning workshops as needed.

Rural Source Water Protection

Plans will outline voluntary measures that farmers, ranchers, and other producers can install on their lands to prevent source water pollution. Voluntary measures may range from producers storing herbicides, pesticides, or other substances in more secure containers to relocating waste lagoons. Additionally, the plans will establish steering committees to evaluate voluntary practices implemented by local producers. FSA will monitor the overall performance of the program.

Source water protection planning can provide public health protection, economic and environmental benefits, and public confidence. Source Water

Wellhead protection is designed to protect public water supply wells. States are required to have wellhead protection programs under the provisions of the 1986 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. A capture zone for the well (called the wellhead protection area) is designated and a plan is developed and implemented for managing potential contamination sources within the wellhead protection area.

Source Water Assessments are reports that provide a concise description of the water source – such as a well, lake, or river – used by a public water system and discuss how susceptible that source may be to contamination.

The 1996 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act require states to produce source water assessments for all their public water systems and to make the results of those assessments available to the public. KDHE completed assessments for all the public water systems in Kansas in 2004.

Source Water Protection Plans

A Source Water Protection Plan requires the creation of local

Steps needed to implement a plan

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Watershed Management Section has established the steps needed to implement a successful source water protection plan. They are:

1. Inform and involve the public. This step will play an important role in the implementation of a successful source water protection plan. Many of the source water protection measures are voluntary and will require local support.
2. Establish a source water protection committee. It is encouraged that water suppliers work closely with public organizations, regulatory agencies, Government/ public service organizations, and private organizations.
3. Review the Source Water Assessment Report. Much of the committees' review will focus on the susceptibility scores of contamination for the area.
4. Verify the pollutant source inventory. A thorough field inventory should be conducted in the assessment area to help conform to the existing inventory data.
5. Select water quality protection measures. It is recommended that committees work closely with local, State, and Federal agencies to identify and implement appropriate water quality protection measures.
6. Implementation planning. The local committee should create an implementation plan for all water quality protection measures identified during this process.
7. Emergency water supply planning. The Source Water Protection Plan should include actions to be taken during water emergencies.



This photo shows the Neosho River looking upstream from the city of St. Paul's point of diversion. The city Council has discussed the importance of source water protection and has undertaken development of a protection plan.

Plan. We will provide assistance and support in source water protection planning, by providing assistance with community involvement. Each plan will help protect, public health, drinking water source for generations, and avoid possible expensive clean-up costs.

It will take the teamwork of those agencies and individuals in a

Protection Plans are similar to Wellhead Protection Plans in that they are developed on a local level. However, Source Water Protection Plans cover a much larger area than Wellhead Protection Plans, encompassing both city and county areas and in some instances multiple counties and municipalities. Kansas Rural Water Association will assist in the development and implementation of the Source Water Protection

Jon Showalter and Bill Hadl look over one of four wells that make up the water source for the city of Eudora. The city has taken steps to begin developing a Source Water Protection Plan.



Each plan will include:

- A map outlining the source water protection area.
- Source water inventories.
- Potential contaminant source inventories.
- A definition of each entity's area of responsibility/ authority in relation to potential sources from contamination.
- Preventative measures that may be initiated by each entity.
- A contingency plan that will consist of a strategy for supply safe water to the consumer in the event of contamination or disruption of service.
- A Steering Committee to review and update the plan and follow through on preventative measure commitments from each entity.

community to make the source water protection plan successful. The USDA, FSA, NRCS, and KRWA want to help each city or RWD water system have a workable and successful plan. We are ready to team-up with systems to make Kansas' source water the best in the nation.

I encourage you to attend the KRWA March Conference and Exhibition to learn more about Source Water Protection Plans. Rod Winkler, a program specialist in the Conservation and Emergency Program Division with the Kansas Farm Service Agency, based in Manhattan, Kan., will present this topic and take your questions at the session at 2:45 p.m. in Room 210A on Wednesday, March 30. Make sure someone from your city or RWD attends.