

## Now Is the Time

The protection of groundwater is becoming increasingly important. Expanding development, growing populations, and intensive agricultural practices may increase the need for proactive management strategies.



Whether faced with an existing problem to your water source or seeking ways to prevent contamination, now is the right time to take the first step to ensure your community has clean and safe water for generations to come.

## For More Information

Each topic discussed in this brochure is presented in greater detail on The Groundwater Foundation's website at [http://www.groundwater.org/gi/wellhead\\_protection\\_about.html](http://www.groundwater.org/gi/wellhead_protection_about.html).

For more information about Wellhead Protection please refer to the list of resources below.

- The Groundwater Foundation  
<http://www.groundwater.org>, 1-800-858-4844
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality  
<http://www.deq.state.ne.us>, 402-471-2186
- Nebraska Rural Water Association  
<http://www.nerwa.org>, 1-800-842-8039
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/puh/enh/wwsindex.htm>, 402-471-0598
- US Environmental Protection Agency  
<http://www.epa.gov> or <http://www.epa.gov/cbtpages/waterdrinkingwater.html>, 1-800-223-0425
- Nebraska Association of Resources Districts  
<http://www.nrdnet.org>, 402-471-7670
- Local Natural Resources Districts  
[http://www.nrdnet.org/nrd\\_guide/find\\_nrd.html](http://www.nrdnet.org/nrd_guide/find_nrd.html)
- University of Nebraska Water Center  
<http://water.unl.edu/home>, <http://watercenter.unl.edu>, 402-472-3305
- US Geological Survey (USGS)  
<http://www.usgs.gov>
- USGS Nebraska Water Science Center  
<http://ne.water.usgs.gov>, 402-328-4100
- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
<http://www.dnr.state.ne.us>, 402-471-3939
- NRCS Midwest Assistance Program  
[http://www.map\\_inc.org](http://www.map_inc.org), 402-833-5036



# Keeping Your Water Safe

## Wellhead Protection



## Clean, Safe Drinking Water Is Important to Everyone

We all need clean water to drink, it is vital to our health. Wellhead Protection is a valuable step to ensure your drinking water is clean and safe for you, your family, and community for years to come.

*Groundwater is and will continue to be the major source of drinking water for Nebraskans.*

Groundwater lies in the spaces between rocks and sediments beneath the earth's surface. The majority of groundwater is used for irrigation and for providing water to public and domestic supplies. Approximately 85% of Nebraskans depend on groundwater as their drinking water source.

## Stepping Into Wellhead Protection

Nebraska Wellhead Protection is a voluntary program developed to prevent groundwater contamination from entering public water supply wells. Groundwater contamination can cause your drinking water to be unsafe for consumption and your public water wells unusable.



*Wellhead Protection is a proactive process which engages communities to take steps towards protecting their drinking water.*

The Wellhead Protection process includes identifying the land surrounding the public water supply wells to be protected, identifying potential sources of groundwater contamination within this area, managing the potential contaminant sources, developing emergency and contingency plans for the community water supply, and educating and involving the public.



## Halting Potential Contaminants

Groundwater can be vulnerable to contamination. Various land use, commercial, and industrial activities can affect the quality of groundwater. Landfills; pesticides and fertilizers; above and underground storage tanks containing gasoline; oil; or chemicals, onsite waste and wastewater systems for humans and animals; and hazardous waste dump sites are all examples of potential contaminant sources.

*The easiest way to make certain that groundwater is clean and safe for consumption is to prevent contamination.*

## Taking Action Through Management

An action that prevents or reduces the risk of a potential contaminant reaching your groundwater supply is often referred to as a management practice. These practices can be implemented in commercial, industrial, urban, and rural settings. Examples include installing buffer strips, practicing crop rotation, decommissioning abandoned wells, installing water meters and back flow prevention devices, storing and handling commercial and industrial chemicals properly, cleaning up hazardous waste and junk sites, no-till farming, managing nutrient and irrigation applications in rural and urban areas, and adopting wellhead protection ordinances for your community.



## Doing Your Part

Full potential and success cannot be reached without the support of community members. You can help by being involved in the development of your community's Wellhead Protection Plan.

*Public involvement is a critical part of the Wellhead Protection process.*

Citizens like yourself can implement and encourage management practices within the Wellhead Protection Area, support local ordinances, zoning, and other regulations that protect groundwater, and educate others in your community about wellhead protection and encourage them to get involved.

