



**Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network
Omaha Marriott, 10220 Regency Circle, Omaha, Nebraska
Tuesday, October 4, 2011, 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Meeting Notes**

The October Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network meeting took place in conjunction with The Groundwater Foundation Annual Conference. All conference participants were given the option to attend the Network meeting.

Participants: Ryan Chapman - Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), Todd Drefcinski - Kendall County Health Department, Kathryn Elliott - Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Gayle Galbraith - City of Dayton - Water Department, Robert Goodwin - Valmont Industries, Inc., Steve Herdzina - Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD), Russel Iwan - Metropolitan Utilities District, Megan Kolaczyk - Eklhart Environmental Center, Bruce Lakey - Valmont Industries, Inc., Mike Murphy - Lower Elkhorn NRD, Pat O'Brien - Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), Jamie Oltman - The Groundwater Foundation, Ralph Pulte - Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Brian Reetz - The Groundwater Foundation, Ryan Rezac - Lower Platte South NRD, Craig Romary - Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Marcy Schroer - NDEQ, Lois Shelton - Wayne Green Team, Christine Spitzley - Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Charles Thomerson - City of Columbus, Kevin Tobin - Metropolitan Utilities District, Chris Witthuhn - Lower Platte South NRD, Harold Reynolds - Midwest Assistance Program

Welcome and Introduction to the Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network

Jamie Oltman, The Groundwater Foundation, welcomed all participants to the meeting. Oltman gave a short presentation on what the Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network is, who participates in it, and how the Network is organized and the benefits of having the Network in Nebraska.

Nebraska Wellhead Protection Program

Ryan Chapman, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, provided an overview of the Nebraska Wellhead Protection Program. Ryan updated the Network on approved plans the progress made with the redesigned Wellhead Protection signs. The new signs include a graphic of the state of Nebraska with a water drop and the text, "Entering Drinking Water Protection Area." Information about the new signs was distributed to communities in Nebraska with a post card to be returned by the community if they are interested in the new signs. Over 600 letters and post cards were sent out. Ryan has received about 105 post cards from interested communities, with an average request of four signs.

Ryan asked the group, now that sign project is done where the Network sees the subcommittee focused on raising awareness and public outreach going. The group expressed interest in keeping the subcommittee. The subcommittee members present decided to meet again in the coming year to discuss next steps.

Wellhead Protection Network Field Updates

All meeting participants were encouraged to provide information about the work they are doing during related to Wellhead Protection.

Brian Reetz, The Groundwater Foundation - Brain is working with different communities in the state on raising groundwater awareness. He encourage the participants to stop by the booth set up in the

conference exhibit area with more information about the Growing Groundwater Awareness tool kits and information.

Christine Spitzley, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, from Lansing, Michigan - Christine has been working in Wellhead Protection for over 21 years. She will be sharing with the group various Success and Challenges in Michigan later in the meeting.

Mike Murphy, Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (NRD) - Mike has been working with Stanton, Creighton, and Wayne on Wellhead Protection projects. Stanton is looking to increase their Wellhead Protection area, he and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality will be meeting with Creighton in October and Wayne is waiting on approval of their plan. The Lower Elkhorn NRD has received an increase in the amount of irrigated acres application. Two are in Wellhead Protection areas, which is a major point deduction.

Craig Romary, Nebraska Department of Agriculture - Craig works in the pesticide program and does inspections. He works with the NRDs and Department of Environmental Quality - Water Quality on pesticide issues. He has been working on a pesticide database clearinghouse and a guide/policy on pesticides that may be hazardous to water quality. He has also been working Atrazine monitoring and the buffer strip incentive program as well as NPDES permits.

Chuck Thomerson, City of Columbus - Chuck has been at the public works in Columbus since 2001. Since his starting at the public works he has been working with EPA on a superfund site which is impacting a community wellfield. The City of Columbus has a Source Water Protection ordinance to protect the south and north wellfield. He is hoping in the coming year Columbus can start to look at Wellhead Protection planning.

Bruce Lackey and Robert Goodwin, Valmont Industries - Both Bruce and Robert work at Valmont industries. There they have their own wells and drinking water system as well as 21 monitoring wells.

Ralph Pulte, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services - Ralph works in the Nitrate Program. There are 13 public water systems in Nebraska with nitrates over 10ppm. Six of these communities use Wellhead Protection as a means to return to compliance. In most cases nitrates have lowered through Wellhead Protection action however the Department of Health and Human services along with the Department of Environmental Quality are going to look at communities such as Edgar who have reduced nitrates and are currently have seen a .5 ppm rise but only from 1-1.5 and communities such as Humble that are lowering nitrates but still in the 9-10 range.

Megan Kolaczyk, Elkhart Environmental Center - Megan works in Wellhead Protection youth and public education along with some general public education. Her goal is to reach out to more of the community.

Kathryn Elliot, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality - Kathryn is working to improve public outreach.

Russel Iwan, Metropolitan Utilities District - Russel is the water supply engineer at MUD.

Kevin Tobin, Metropolitan Utilities District - Kevin is working to establish a Wellhead Protection plan for Omaha.

Mary Schroer, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality - Mary works with the Source Water Protection grant program.

Pat O'Brien, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts - Pat is the liaison between the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and the 23 Natural Resources Districts.

Ryan Rezac, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District - Ryan shared information about the work the NRD does with their water well and water metering programs.

Steve Herdzina, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District - Steve shared information about the work the NRD does with cost share for abandon well, soil sampling, and spring application for fertilizers.

Chris Whittuhn, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District - Chris works as a Field/Water Technician at the NRD.

Harold Reynolds, Midwest Assistant Program - Harold is the Nebraska and Iowa field manager for the Midwest Assistant Program. He works with communities on drinking water and water treatment issues.

Lois Shelton, former Mayor of Wayne, Nebraska - Lois, while mayor, worked with Wayne on their Wellhead Protection planning process.

Gayle Galbraith, City of Dayton, Water Department - Gayle has worked in the Source Water Protection program since 1988. The biggest challenge she faces is the 680 business in the SWP area - some are industrial and some are now closed.

Todd Drefcinski, Kendall County Health Department - Todd shared work he is involved with the well septic program, education of homeowners and private well owners.

Successes and Challenges from Michigan

Christine Spitzley, Environmental Programs Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, from Lansing, Michigan gave a presentation about Michigan's Wellhead Protection program and success and challenges from communities in Michigan. Christine stated that about half of Michigan relies on groundwater for drinking and 160 communities have Wellhead Protection Plans.

Teams are required as part of the plan, representing different areas in the community (utilities, elected official, businesses, fire, etc.) Michigan's Wellhead Protection is encouraged to be put into master and comprehensive plans; this ensures that there is a commitment to Wellhead Protection for the long-term.

Christine also shared examples of public outreach and education in Michigan. Michigan has also recently developed a website with resources and outreach ideas, http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3313_3675_3695-117615--,00.html. The idea is to share success with other communities and promote the work being done in Michigan.

Q & A: Guests are encouraged to share, ask questions, and give feedback in a facilitated discussion regarding Wellhead Protection successes and challenges.

One of the main discussion points brought up is finding what can reach a wide audience but is not a mailing. Many participants at the meeting indicated that mass mailings or newsletters are not read.

The question was asked, "How do you get businesses involved?" - Trying to get more social media and electronic media contacts update to hopefully utilize that better.

Some suggested targeting business through community clubs such as the Kiwanis Club or Rotary Club.

Christine Spitzley shared that one of the major factor in the success of Wellhead Protection in Michigan is having someone who can help the community along. Christine explained that a community driven by themselves is not likely, the key is to have someone there to help them through the process, hold their hand.

Others agreed that face time with community members and hand holding can result in the most successful outcomes.

Wrap-up

Regular members of the Network discussed plans for the upcoming meeting. Typically the meeting is held in January or February at the State Capitol Building for Senators and their staff to learn about Wellhead Protection in Nebraska. It was discussed that the Network try something different this year. Oltman took suggestion and will be getting in touch with the Network regarding future meeting plans.

Adjourn

Jamie Oltman closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and encouraged the participants to continue their conversations with each other throughout the conference.