



**Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network
Monday, March 1, 2010, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Holiday Inn – Kearney
110 S Second Ave., Kearney, Nebraska 68847**

Present:

Daryl Andersen – Little Blue Natural Resources District (NRD), Ryan Chapman – Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), Mary Link – NDEQ, Will Myers – NDEQ, Mary Schroer – NDEQ, Craig Romary – Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA), Chuck Wingert – Nemaha NRD, David Miesback – NDEQ, Dustin Wilcox – Lower Big Blue NRD, Russ Gierhart – Upper Big Blue NRD, Harold Reynolds - Midwest Assistance Program (MAP), Ralph Pulte – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Alyssa Smola – Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), Pat O'Brien – NARD, Bill Johnson – J-2 Well Service, Kirk Stocker – City of Kearney, Galen Wittrock – South Platte NRD, Ryan Reisdorff – South Platte NRD, Kyle Liebig – South Platte NRD, Jenny Sidlo – Hastings Utilities, Mike Lucas – Nebraska Rural Water Association (NeRWA), Charles Bausch (NeRWA), Brian Reetz – The Groundwater Foundation, Jamie Oltman – The Groundwater Foundation

CEU credit was offered at for this meeting.

Nebraska Wellhead Protection Program Updates – Round table:

Ryan Chapman from NDEQ passed out Wellhead Protection plan updates. He also discussed how they were updating the newsletter.

Jenny Sidlo of Hastings Utilities discussed how they should have their Wellhead Protection plan approved by the next meeting. She also talked about how they have received two grants for their Wellhead Protection area work and it will allow them to do different activities including public education and sharing best practices as well as nitrates and soil sampling. They are also working with the Hastings Museum on a display that will show source water.

Charles Bausch and Mike Lucas gave updates on NeRWA. Mike is new and has been visiting a lot of towns.

Ralph Pulte with Health and Human Services shared some exciting information about Humboldt. They have nearly seven years of data and it shows that nitrate levels in the soil are down. He says it is a great success story and needs to be shared for their protection efforts.

Harold Reynolds (MAP) talked about working with Greg Hendrickson of Minden. He is also working with Rosalie.

Ryan Reisdorff and Galen Wittstruck of South Platte NRD discussed getting a 319 grant and they are currently forming plans. They are working with Sidney and are working to get with Kimball and Chapman.

Setting Drinking Water Standards – Presentation:

Jack Daniel, Administrator – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services gave a presentation to the group with information on how standards are developed for drinking water. He went through the different types including transient, non-transient and community and the standards for each. He passed out MCL cards to each person in the group. He also handed out a sheet with each of the towns that currently have an administrative order and those with potential water quality issues. In the state of Nebraska, the one that is causing the most grief are nitrates. He also discussed a new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication about nutrient loading and An Urgent Call to Action that can be found on the EPA website. He is willing to make his PowerPoint available as well and we can post it to the Groundwater Foundation site for viewing.

Public Education – Open Group Discussion:

Jamie Oltman of The Groundwater Foundation led a discussion about education messaging as a follow up from the discussion held during the Wellhead Protection Network meeting on December 9, 2009.

All of the education/messaging ideas written down from the December WHPN meeting were posted in the room. Oltman added that as a network we can pull that message together and use it as a group.

Ryan Chapman said that it needs to be user friendly.

Marty Link added that there are different ways to say it...wellhead protection, source water protection...drinking water protection.

Ralph Pulte said that maybe we could target communities with potential nitrate problems instead of just a broad PSA message to the entire state since systems are not jumping up and down to go on wellhead protection.

Daryl Andersen added that they need help with their wellhead protection plans, physical help.

Russ Gierhart agreed with Daryl in that they need their hands held, what to do, guidance. Ralph added that maybe when systems jump over five in nitrates we could target that audience. That way we could narrow it down and show the successes, like Humboldt.

Jenny Sidlo talked about the approach that Hastings has taken, using an advisory committee of farmers, public and others. She added a story that when they sent some information to a news station about wellhead protection the reporter was grateful they had sent it because she thought wellhead protection had to do with mental health like a well head. They had students develop a new logo for their protection efforts so people knew they were protecting their drinking water and that it is everyone's responsibility.

Daryl Andersen added that the message has to be specific to the age group, from grade school to high school to college to older adults. They said social media isn't the answer and that college students said to place posters on campus or at drinking fountains. He added that it also gives us a chance to talk with people one on one about it.

David Miesbach talked about how the third generation removed from farming doesn't know what groundwater is. We need to keep preaching what is groundwater.

Pat O'Brien said that you have to talk about money. That is what matters. It will cost you money!

Harold Reynolds added that wellhead concentrates on nitrates but other problems are coming soon.

Jack Daniel said that treatment is the last thing that we want for small towns in Nebraska.

Dustin Wilcox said that the town of Wilber is dealing with Atrazine and is working on a community based process.

Marty Link comment that we should use what will get people's attention, and included an example such as even puppies need clean water, so protect drinking water.

David Miesbach said that he sent a note and information to Larry the Cable Guy about being a spokesperson but that he hasn't heard anything back.

Recent Gold medalist Curt Tomasevic's name was brought up as well. He is from Shelby that has high nitrates and they are doing something about it according to Russ Gierhart.

Jack Daniel said that maybe communities could get a discount on their insurance if they had a wellhead protection plan in place. Maybe someone could approach the insurance carriers and see and that could be a change in their premiums. Maybe they could get a discount in their water sampling efforts too.

Jenny Sidlo added that there needs to be a way to educate the public; such as a wellhead for dummies type of publication without using the term "dummies."

Marty Link suggested maybe we could just get a smaller group of people together to get a plan together for the next meeting.

Someone suggested that we make the city councils aware of the expenses that other cities have had to deal with instead of just success stories. Like Pat O'Brien said money talks.

Will Myers wondered if there were similar groups in other states and maybe we could see what they were doing. Others said that Nebraska was a leader in this regard.

Jack Daniel suggested that maybe county leaders would be a good group to go to and someone that could help the individual towns since there is county wide zoning. Such as whoever wants to put in a feedlot has to go to the county to get approval first.

Those willing to meet as a small group continuing the education messaging conversation and report back to the Network on their discussions and proposed steps forward were noted and told they would be contacted soon to set up a meeting.

For the next meeting, it was expressed that a meeting further west in Nebraska would be desirable. Mike and Charles are looking at a town out west that we could hold the meeting.