

**Wellhead Protection Partnership Meeting Notes  
June 22, 2001**

**Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District  
109 South Lincoln York, Nebraska**

Russ Gierhart of the Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District hosted the meeting.

Meeting attendees included: Chuck Wingert, Nemaha NRD; Hope Wise, NE Rural Water Association; McKenzie Barry, Lower Platte North NRD; William Lukash, NE Rural Water Association; Richard Beran, Lower Loup NRD; Stephanie Vap Morrow NDEQ; Elbert Traylor; NDEQ; Susan Seacrest, Groundwater Foundation; Todd Falter, NE Health and Human Services R&L; Marty Link, NDEQ; Wayne Madsen; Don Vogel, NE CGA; Bruce Hansen, NDEQ; Bob Peterson, NDEQ; Paul Seeney, NRCS; Rand Gunn, South Central NE RC&D; Gene Siadek, MUD; Mike Onnen; Little Blue NRD.

After a brief introduction and welcome the partnership met in two sub groups. The sub groups included: Wellhead Protection Services and Advocacy; and Community Education and Empowerment. Both groups had excellent discussions and came back to the whole group with five specific recommendations for future action. These recommendations are detailed later in the notes.

Lunch was served and general discussion and networking continued. Special thanks to Russ and his spouse for providing an especially delicious lunch that included fruit and tossed salad and cookies!

Prior to the reporting out of the two sub groups several ideas for further action were discussed. The group decided that it would be a good idea to develop a key WHP theme for each meeting and to ask a speaker to address that theme in a brief presentation. In addition, members of the WHP Partnership could bring materials that they or their program use to help others understand the theme and the part that the various partners play around that particular issue or issues. In addition, it was also decided to continue the practice of asking various groups to host the meeting and to continue to meet approximately every two months.

In this regard, Elbert Traylor of NDEQ announced that DeLynn Hay and Cooperative Extension had agreed to host the next meeting and that the meeting will be held the end of August in Lincoln on East Campus. Again, partnership members will be asked to contribute a nominal amount or will be asked to buy their lunch if the group uses the East Campus Union cafeteria.

The theme for the next meeting will be leadership development. Partnership members are invited to bring materials that relate to community leadership. Please bring enough copies for most of the group. This informal "share fair" will be available prior to and after the meeting. During lunch, a leadership development team from Cooperative Extension will make a brief presentation and discussion will follow.

Meeting participants also decided that they liked the two and a half hour time frame and that it works well for sub groups to meet, followed by lunch and a brief presentation, followed by report out from the sub groups and a plenary discussion. This is the general meeting format that was followed on June 22 and this will be the general format for the August meeting as well.

The Sub Group Recommendations:

**A. Community Education and Empowerment:**

1. In working with communities it is important to frame WHP as “drinking water protection” in order to maximize public understanding and involvement.
2. Target the whole community in a real effort to overcome “urban vs. rural” or “us vs. them.”
3. Access contact with the community through local organizations and agencies
4. Offer leadership training in communities whenever and wherever possible
5. Offer communities who succeed in WHP some form of public recognition for their efforts

**B. Wellhead Protection Services and Advocacy:**

1. Develop a master list of who does what and make the list widely available
2. Foster more effective communication and cooperation between groups working on these issues
3. Get legislators involved in understanding the issues involved in the CRP-200 foot limit on public land is and how it needs to be adapted and/or changed for WHP implementation
4. Explore how WILD NEBRASKA might be adapted to address the CRP issue and provide funding
5. Develop an Environmental Trust Grant to help communities put land into grass and to help the partnership form a more formal coalition to advance WHP across Nebraska

The ideas from both groups will be developed in greater detail at the August meeting.

During the plenary discussion that followed the sub group reports there was support for the idea of the partners each bringing a contribution to the partnership as a whole and for working towards the idea of an Environmental Trust proposal in 2002. In the interim, the Groundwater Foundation will continue to serve as a facilitator and help to administer the activities of the partnership. The Foundation has also offered the day before the Groundwater Festival in Grand Island (March 18, 2002) as an opportunity for some additional training and community recognition.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.