



NE WHPN Meeting Notes

**Tuesday, September 25, 2007, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
FirsTier Event Center - Kearney**

Present: Deana Barger, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ); Charles Bausch, Nebraska Rural Water Association (NRWA); Belinda Fowler, NDEQ; Heather Francis, Upper Republican NRD; Russ Gierhart, Upper Big Blue NRD; Randy Gunn, South Central NE RC&D; Bruce Hanson, NDEQ; Rachael Herpel, The Groundwater Foundation; Bill R. Johnson, J-2 Well Service; David Miesbach, NDEQ; Ralph Pulte, Nebraska Health and Human Services (NHHS); Craig Romary, Nebraska Department of Agriculture; Dave Sizer, NHHS; Don Vogel, Nebraska Corn Growers Association.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rachael Herpel welcomed participants to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Herpel had not sent out a formal agenda ahead of the meeting, so she proposed that the following topics be covered – Member Update; NDEQ WHP Program Status Report; and Future WHPN Meetings. The group decided to begin with the status report.

II. Nebraska Wellhead Protection Program Status Report

Dave Miesbach gave an overview of the wellhead protection plans that have been approved by NDEQ. A total of 75 wellhead protection plans have now been approved; four since the last NE WHPN meeting in March 2007. He handed out a list of the plans. The four new plans are from Marquette, Byron, Kenesaw, and Curtis. A wellhead protection plan from Chadron is currently being reviewed. Nineteen public water supplies need new maps drawn for their wellhead protection area; Belinda Fowler will help draw these maps.

There was some question as to who is available to assist communities as they develop state-approved wellhead protection plans. The group concluded that no one person is available to provide this assistance, but that a number of resources are available to communities interested in developing their own plans. For example, NDEQ staff are available to review and give feedback on draft wellhead protection plans prior to their approval; communities need to contact Bruce Hanson (bruce.hanson@ndeq.state.ne.us) for more information. Also, “one stop shopping” for anyone looking for resources to develop a state-approved wellhead protection plan is available on NDEQ’s website (<http://www.ndeq.state.ne.us/>). The following publications are available for free download; of particular importance is the Wellhead Protection Plan Guidance:

▼ Reports	
Wellhead Protection Plan Guidance	09/2001
Contaminant Source Management Options For Wellhead Protection	09/2002
Contaminant Source Management Options For Wellhead Protection - Appendix A	09/2002
Contaminant Source Management Options For Wellhead Protection - Appendix B	09/2002
Contaminant Source Management Options For Wellhead Protection - Appendix C	09/2002
Contaminant Source Management Options For Wellhead Protection - Appendix D	09/2002
▼ Grant Information	
Protecting Ground Water By Properly Closing Abandoned Wells	08/2006
▼ Guidance Documents	
WHP Newsletter 01 - What, Why, Where, When and Who...	09/1994
WHP Newsletter 02 - Retired, replaced by #9	11/1995
WHP Newsletter 03 - Contaminant Source Inventory	09/1996
WHP Newsletter 04 - Determination of Water Quality Testing Recommendations	04/1997
WHP Newsletter 05 - Ground Water Regulations and Wellhead Protection	05/1997
WHP Newsletter 06 - WHP Opportunities	06/1997
WHP Newsletter 07 - Nonpoint Source Contamination and Wellhead Protection	08/1998
WHP Newsletter 08 - Developing A Local Wellhead Protection Plan	01/2000
WHP Newsletter 09 - Determining the Source of Drinking Water	07/2002
WHP Newsletter 10 - Vulnerability to Drought	03/2003
WHP Newsletter 11 - Drought and Water Conservation	03/2003
WHP Newsletter 12 - Drought and Well Interference	06/2003
WHP Newsletter 13 - Drought: Long-Term Effects on Water Supplies	08/2003
▼ Applications and Forms	
Data Sheet for Delineation of Wellhead Protection Area	04/1999
Tips on Filling Out the "Data Sheet for Delineation of Wellhead Protection Area"	04/1999

NRDs often have staff who are able to provide assistance. This assistance varies with each NRD, so community leaders who are looking for assistance need to contact the NRD in their area. (Boundary maps and a complete list of all Nebraska's NRDs are available on the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts website (<http://www.nrdnet.org>) under links.)

NRWA's Charles Bausch (Charles@NeRWA.org) is available to provide assistance to those communities who already have state-approved wellhead protection plans and are now interested in developing and implementing specific management strategies in their wellhead protection area. Bausch targets his assistance to those communities on quarterly sampling for nitrates or administrative order for nitrates.

The group discussed how the most successful WHP planning efforts rely on local leadership to be initiated and completed. If the local leadership and willingness is not there, offers of

assistance, even from within a community, will not be utilized. Experience has shown that local leadership is generally facilitated and embodied by the town clerk.

The group discussed the possibility of utilizing assistance from the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to develop wellhead protection plans. Since the meeting, Craig Romary has identified NEMA contacts to better describe the planning assistance available through this agency – stay tuned for more information about this potential resource. Dave Miesbach also pointed out that a recent ASWIPCA report indicated that the federal government recognizes the importance of protecting freshwater supplies and plans to target more resources toward its protection.

Ralph Pulte reported that the list of Nebraska communities with administrative orders for nitrate is down to thirteen. Five of the thirteen are using wellhead protection as a way to stay in compliance with the nitrate standard.

III. Future NE WHPN Meetings

Herpel passed the results of a series of interviews with NE WHPN members conducted in July (see attached). A similar interview series was conducted five years ago. The interviews show that people are generally content with the NE WHPN, with its major strength being that a good cross-section of individuals participate in the group. Weaknesses include overall awareness of the NE WHPN among other Nebraskans and the group's activity in promoting wellhead protection; both could be increased.

The group discussed the possibility of meeting in conjunction with other conferences and came up with the following list of likely events:

- League of Municipalities
- Nebraska Association of County Officials
- Town Clerks – both statewide conference and regional meetings
- Nebraska Rural Water Association Annual Conference
- American Water Works Association
- Future Farmers of America Conference
- NRD Regional Meetings with CEUs (ala March 5, 2007 meeting)
- Project WET Training
- Ag Association Meetings
- Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association Conference

The group identified the Town Clerks meetings and the Nebraska Rural Water Association Annual Conference as the two events they would like to see NE WHPN meetings held in conjunction with; Herpel agreed to make those meeting arrangements.

IV. Member Update

Heather Francis passed out copies of *Know Nebraska's Water* Activity Book, a project of the Upper Republican NRD and Pappio-Missouri NRD. The book is based upon the Texas Water Development Board's book *Know Your Water*. For more information about the book, contact Heather at heatherfrancis@urnrd.org.

Don Vogel commented that the Nebraska Corn Growers Association still promotes the use of buffer strips as part of the Central Basin Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). For more information, visit <http://www.necga.org/>.

Randy Gunn commented that he was meeting with his counterparts from across the state tomorrow and that he would take any extra handouts from today's meeting to pass on to them.

Ralph Pulte commented that a oil pipeline is being installed across eastern Nebraska, posing a potential threat to at least ten wellhead protection areas. The NE WHPN should consider learning more about this project and be prepared to advise communities on what to do.

Russ Gierhart commented that he still has a waiting list of communities interested in developing a state-approved wellhead protection plan.

Bruce Hanson commented that he was enthused about holding future NE WHPN meetings in conjunction with other conferences. He agreed that offering CEUs would help attract attendees to the meetings.

Charles Bausch commented that he was working with communities to develop wellhead area management plans and secure seed money to implement plan activities.

Deana Barger informed the group that eight Nebraska Source Water Protection Program grants were awarded for 2007 and that grants funds should be available again in 2008. Deana is also administering the stormwater program grants and various 319 nonpoint source projects.

David Miesbach passed out copies of Section Four of the Groundwater Protection Council's *Ground Water Report to the Nation...A Call to Action*.

Rachael Herpel informed the group that the complete *Protecting Our Water: A Primer for Preventing Pathogenic Contamination of Drinking Water Sources* is now available for free electronic download and for purchase in print via The Groundwater Foundation's website (www.groundwater.org). Herpel also shared a copy of the Source Water Collaborative's "Your Water, Your Decision" promotional materials, Groundwater Guardian Green Sites applications (see www.groundwater.org for a copy), and a timeline featured in the Wellhead Protection Area Management Manual, which is currently under development.

IV. Closing Remarks

Herpel thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.