



Anniversary Story

“The Luckiest Person”

By Catherine Chertudi, Boise, Idaho Groundwater Guardian Team and former Groundwater Foundation Board Member

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I might just be the luckiest person ever!

I live in a beautiful city, in an amazing state, and work protecting and conserving the very environments I love. From the mountain peaks above Boise, to the valley below water is a critical element to our community and the state of Idaho.

Groundwater provides over 70% of our drinking water needs. Historic issues and growth threaten the quality of life in our community and our groundwater resources.



Early in college, I had the opportunity to intern with the local health department, working in a mountain community about 75 miles from my home. I found a passion for water resources. The desire to ensure we have clean, safe and adequate water supplies for animals, people and plants continues today.

In 1990, I started working for the city of Boise as the first ever Ground Water Programs Coordinator. The city had learned in the previous year about an area of the community with significant groundwater contamination. Hundreds of homes with private wells were affected and several large public water supply wells were threatened with solvent contamination. The city realized the water supply was far more vulnerable than ever believed. I have had the pleasure of working for elected officials and supervisors that valued the need to clean up, protect and conserve our groundwater supplies.

We launched a program to collect household hazardous wastes and wastes from conditionally exempt small quantity commercial generators that has received several national awards. We removed nearly 70 underground petroleum storage tanks from city properties and cleaned up contamination from dozens of those sites.

We developed education and outreach programs, including Water Awareness Week for 4th – 6th grade students which received a U. S. Department of Interior program award in 1999. And we created the first water education center in Idaho – the Boise WaterShed Environmental Education Center!



In 2009, I was able to travel to Australia to learn more about water management during times of extreme drought. The lessons learned are invaluable to our work in Boise as we continue to experience drought related issues, and future climate change stresses.

Most of all – I was really lucky when Bob Kuzelka came to Boise to meet with the Mayor to recruit the city to be a Groundwater Guardian test community.

I have made wonderful friends, learned so much from other communities, and have been able to build programs to ensure we keep Boise a livable city for now and well into the future– protecting and conserving our groundwater resources!

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