



▲ Groundwater Foundation Program Manager Sara Brock with Nebraska Environmental Trust Executive Director Mark Brohman.

## Groundwater Foundation Receives Funding from Nebraska Environmental Trust

The Groundwater Foundation was awarded \$31,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for year three of its the “Recharging Groundwater Education: Tools for Community Action and Engagement” project. The Trust Board announced funding for the project this spring. The project is one of the 117 projects receiving \$19,501,444 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year. Of these, 85 were new applications and 32 are carry-over projects.

The project’s goal is to help the next generation understand groundwater and its unique connection to all of us and become effective water managers, stewards, and leaders in the future.

Over the project’s first two years, the Groundwater Foundation trained educators, both classroom and nontraditional, throughout the state to use proven educational tools such as the Awesome Aquifer Kit and Hydrgeology computer modeling activity in their classrooms, resulting in thousands of students involved in problem-solving

and critical thinking around groundwater and potential threats to their local water supply.

Feedback from educators and students has been positive. As one participant said, “Until this activity I did not understand why or how water moved underground in aquifers. I now comprehend what drives the movement and I feel as though I could teach someone else.”

Beyond educator training, students are offered mentorships with private and public sector groundwater industry professionals, including scientists, water managers, consultants, and more to learn about careers in the water industry. Students see and hear firsthand from these experts. Funding from the Trust has also provided updates to various educational tools, including free mobile apps, activity guides, and more.

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over \$305 million in grants to over 2,200 projects across the state to citizens, organizations, communities, farmers and businesses to protect habitat, improve water quality and establish recycling programs in Nebraska. The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations. ♦

## Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network Learns About Cover Crops on Wellfields

The Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network (WHPN) met on Thursday, June 27 at the Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District offices in York, Nebraska.

Much of the meeting focused on Upper Big Blue NRD’s Project GROW (Growing Rotational crops On Wellfields). Upper Big Blue Water Conservationist Dan Leininger and Site Manager/Farmer Scott Gonnerman talked about the method of planting and harvesting cover crops as well as the soil and water health benefits they have seen as a result. Notably, they have increased water infiltration rates from 0.5 inches/hour to over 6 inches/hour, significantly reducing runoff. They have also been able to decrease their need for applied nitrogen, saving themselves money and protecting water quality at the same time.

Department Manager Marie Krausnick briefly touched on a Source Water Grant and collaboration with the City of York that makes Project GROW possible.

The meeting concluded with a tour of the Project GROW site, which is located on the City of York’s wellfield.



▲ Cover crops provide many purposes on the wellfield—soil and water health benefits, increased water infiltration, and a decreased need for nitrogen application.

▶ The tour group visits York’s wellfield to see the application of cover crops for wellhead protection.

Visiting the soybean field, WHPN members saw leafy rows peaking out that had been shielded from the previous night's hail by the triticale stalks that covered the field.

The pollinator habitat, opposite the soybeans, looked grassy and healthy. At two years old, it's still filtering out some of the chemicals that have been added to the soil over the years, but it will grow bigger and have more blooms as the soil health is restored.

The tour ended at the community garden, a space that is open to members of the public to grow their own fresh produce. Using what they've learned from the Upper Big Blue NRD staff and Project GROW, York residents are growing tomatoes, zucchini, and more. The NRD also put in a couple rows of fruit trees and bushes that, in a few years, will be open to harvest by the public.

Attendees represented several state and local organizations such as the Nebraska Departments of Environmental Quality and Health and Human Services, several Natural Resources Districts, and local utilities.

A number of organizations and agencies in Nebraska work to support communities as they develop and adopt wellhead protection programs. The Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network began in 2001 to provide an opportunity for these organizations and agencies to meet, discuss their work and identify community needs. Meetings are also an opportunity for the group to get information about hot topics related to their field. The Groundwater Foundation serves as facilitator and record-keeper for the WHPN, which is funded by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. Visit [www.groundwater.org/whpn](http://www.groundwater.org/whpn) to learn more.💧



▲ *National Ground Water Association Board President Scott King poses with Mike Ekberg, Miami Conservancy District; Claudia Dawson, Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium; Jim Shoemaker, Dayton Multi-Jurisdictional Source Water Protection Program; Karen Beason, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; NGWA CEO Terry Morse; and Tim McLelland, Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium.*



## Ohio Groundwater Guardians Recognized

The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) hosted a conference June 19-20 in Westerville, Ohio focused on the hot topic of PFAS contamination. The PFAS Management, Mitigation, and Remediation Conference focused on approaches for the management, mitigation, and remediation of sites contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Several Groundwater Guardians located in Ohio were in attendance, and received special recognition at the conference. NGWA CEO Terry S. Morse, CAE, CIC and Board President Scott King, PG, P.Ge., LHG thanked

the Groundwater Guardian teams for their continued work and passion in groundwater education and protection efforts in their communities.

Teams and their representatives in attendance were Mike Ekberg, Miami Conservancy District, located in Dayton; Claudia Dawson and Tim McLelland, Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium, located in Fairfield; Jim Shoemaker, Dayton Multi-Jurisdictional Source Water Protection Program; and Karen Beason, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Now is a great time to get your community involved as a Groundwater Guardian! Visit [www.groundwater.org/groundwaterguardian](http://www.groundwater.org/groundwaterguardian) to learn more or call 1-800-858-4844.💧

**JOIN OR RENEW! [WWW.GROUNDWATER.ORG/MEMBER](http://WWW.GROUNDWATER.ORG/MEMBER)**

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