



## **Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network**

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

10:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Burkley Family Center, Fairbury Nebraska

### **Present:**

Lindsey Phillips – Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), Courtney Widup – Upper Big Blue NRD, David Miesbach – NDEQ, Russel Iwan – Metropolitan Utilities District, Daryl Andersen – Little Blue NRD, Dick Ehrman – Lower Platte South NRD (LPSNRD), Sam Capps – NDEQ, Chris Fangmeier – City of Hebron, Quenton Pulliam – City of Hebron, Colleen Cassada – Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Howard P. Isaacs – DHHS, Jon Mohr – LakeTech Consulting, Jason Ripa – City of Wilber, M Jane Ford Witthoff – Public Health Solutions District Health Department (PHS), Cindy Kreifels – The Groundwater Foundation (TGF), Anthony Lowndes – TGF

Anthony Lowndes (The Groundwater Foundation) – Called the meeting to order, welcomed those present and went over the agenda.

### **Presentation: City of Wilber Groundwater Quality Implementation Plan**

**Jason Ripa – City of Wilber, Water Operator**

**Jonathan Mohr – LakeTech Consulting**

Wilber Groundwater Quality Implementation Plan – creates a tool for the city to evaluate the land use cover trends and nitrate levels in soil and groundwater.

- The City of Wilber's well head protection area falls within the bounds of Lower Big Blue NRD
- Covers 2,800 acres with four active wells serving 1,855 residents

Efforts began in 2003 with a Source Water Protection (SWP) Grant

Wilber/Clatonia FFA chapter conducted water testing and outreach

Ag soil sampling, flow meter and ET gauges, soil moisture probes and vadose sampling

Second SWP Grant in 2008

Further assistance with nutrient and irrigation management

Contaminant source mapping

Have now focused on data collection, analysis and reporting as well as community workshops and on-the-ground activity with landowner involvement

Land use has changed significantly over the study period – mostly different crops and irrigation methods

Detailed data reports will help determine appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to limit the nitrate leaching to vadose zone

Next step in the plan is to conduct a Detailed Vulnerability Assessment based on techniques used by a Minnesota environmental assessment group.

The full presentation can be found [here](#)

### **Nebraska Wellhead Protection Network Updates:**

Russ Iwan (MUD): Trouble getting information on land use changes within WHP areas. MUD has no zoning or jurisdictional authority. Working with planning commissions and counties to get notification of developments that may impact the plans. Only looking for notification not looking for authority.

Jason Ripa (Wilber): Stressed the importance of making sure the message is crafted so he can sell the ideas and practices for the long term cooperation of ag producers.

Lindsey Phillips (NDEQ): Received several Source Water Protection Grant applications before April 27<sup>th</sup>. Fewer than expected possibly due to changes in qualifying projects because of DHHS Security Grants.

Sam Capps (NDEQ): Approved three additional Wellhead Protection plans, now has a total of 107 approved plans. When updating plans, the complete or whole plan must be sent in again not just the updated sections.

Jane Ford (PHS): Located in Crete NE, working with communities in 5 counties (Fillmore County/Geneva, Gage County/Beatrice, Jefferson County/Fairbury, Saline County/Wilber, Thayer County/Hebron)

Daryl Andersen (LBNRD): Carlton has now gotten their WHP plan approved. A livestock unit increase was denied because it was within the WHP area boundary of Endicott. Watershed plan is on track to be completed within the next six months.

Courtney Widup (UBBNRD): Water levels for Polk County have been finished. York stakeholders committee decided to do 50 year time of travel modeling boundary which include several surrounding counties. Vadose sampling for nitrates in Hastings continues.

Dick Ehrman (LPSNRD): Working in 35 WHP areas, 8-10 are in nitrate phase II management, conducting rotating vadose zone sampling, and separating by geologic layer as well as depth, in these areas and starting this sampling in non-phase II areas. Concern for arsenic and selenium prompted vadose samples to be tested for these as well. Eastern Nebraska Water Resource Assessment, fly overs are complete and the maps are set to be released late summer 2015.

Quenton and Chris (Hebron): In the same situation as Wilber and came to the meeting looking for solutions and new ideas on how to go about gaining community support.

Howard Isaacs (DHHS): Currently , a state approved WHP plan has been one way that a community on Administrative Order (AO) could return to compliance. However, EPA has determined that since WHP has no end date it cannot be used as a means of compliance. DHHS will be sending out a letter to those communities on AO to inform them of the change. Once the 'letter' goes out 3 systems will have to treat, find a new source, or connect to another system to stay in compliance. Communities need to show progress within WHP areas. Tom Christopherson is working on a new project to decommission wells properly.

Cindy Kreifels (The Groundwater Foundation): The Groundwater Foundation's National conference will be this held in Lincoln, NE October 20-22 this year. TGF will also be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In addition, a new app is being developed to track individual water use and promote lowering usage. It should be released early summer 2015.