Supplemental Guide I- Protection Team

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Organizing a Source Water Protection Team

A public water utility should make every effort to inform and engage the public, local emergency planning commissions, the local health department, and local government officials, and affected residents at all levels of the development of the source water protection plan. A SWAP program without input from people possibly affected can divide a community and lead to failure of the effort. The WVBPH recommends including representatives from these stakeholder groups to serve on a Source Water Protection Team. The water utility will often have 1-2 members represented on the team, including the administrative contact (or representative) and the chief operator.

In addition to the stakeholders mentioned above, additional members of the community may serve on the protection team. These include facility owners, land owners, emergency response personnel, local planners, and other citizens. The number of participants will vary and often is determined by the size of the water system and community served.

Valuable team members may also include local citizens, who are members of groups such as West Virginia Rural Water Systems, West Virginia Water Resources Organization, League of Women Voters, Alternative Energy Resource Organization, West Virginia Water Well Drillers Association, West Virginia Environmental Health Association, West Virginia Chapter of the American Water Resources Association, and the American Water Works Association service organizations, senior citizen groups, youth groups, and school personnel.
Team Responsibilities

The role of the protection team members will be to contribute information to the development of the source water protection plan, review draft plans and make recommendations to ensure accuracy and completeness, and when possible contribute to implementation and maintenance of the protection plan. The protection team members are chosen as trusted representatives of the community served by the water utility and may be designated to access confidential data available for the source water and potential sources of significant contamination. The input of the protection team will be carefully considered by the water utility when making final decisions relative to the documentation and implementation of the source water protection plan.

The team should review the delineation of a source water protection area, complete an inventory of potential contaminant sources, make management recommendations, and evaluate contingency plans to address emergencies, including plans for replacement wells or alternative sources of water. Specific duties may include coordinating protection program projects, setting public meeting times and places, advising local officials, and coordinating with state and local agencies.

Recruiting a Team

1. Invite Stakeholders

Public water utilities should contact representatives of the local health department, local emergency planning commission, affected citizens, and local government in writing to request their participation on the protection team. The utility should document the reasons why representatives are unable to serve on the protection team and provide that information to the WVBPH.

2. Schedule a Public Meeting.

In addition to the stakeholders listed above, the public water utility may consider a public meeting to request volunteer participation and to obtain local knowledge and concerns about source water. This meeting may be held during a regularly scheduled board meeting or town council meeting open to the public, or scheduled at a time totally dedicated to the source water protection. The following sections suggest how to publicize and conduct a public meetings.

3. Publicize the Meeting.

- A public water utility may choose to mail a meeting notice to
Citizens who have expressed interest or have qualifications with water supply issues. You may be able to use an existing citizen group that will greatly simplify the process.


Local planning office and local community or business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce or service groups such as Kiwanis, Lions, or Rotary clubs.

Local water well drillers and consulting engineers.

- Follow up each mailing with a phone call to confirm receipt and encourage participation. Recruiting solely by letter is not productive.
- Post a meeting notice at the post office, city hall, courthouse, public library, senior center, state/federal agency buildings, and any other public bulletin boards.
- Place public notice in the local daily or weekly newspaper. The local print media may write a brief article based on the Public Service Announcement or actually place a public notice in the classified section.
- Issue a public service announcement to the local radio and TV stations.

4. Hold the Meeting.

Be well prepared. A poorly organized and executed meeting may dissuade potential volunteers from wanting to participate. Be sure to have handouts available so potential volunteers can learn more about SWAP at their own pace. A “Source Water Assessment and Protection Fact Sheet” is included for your use and may be reproduced and distributed.

It will also be helpful to display general information about water sources, maps, source water assessment reports, and source water protection plans (if available) so potential volunteers can ascertain just what might be expected of them. You can contact the WV Bureau for Public Health, Office of Environmental Health Services, Source Water Assessment and Protection (WV SWAP) Program personnel at (304)558-2981 to participate in the meeting or provide display materials.

A timeline of plan development and describe the process for gathering information, including asking meeting participants to voice concerns may be presented. This can be done informally with a small group, but if the meeting is well attended, a sign in sheet may be needed to organize speakers. Any concerns expressed at the meeting should be recorded and addressed by the protection team.
A sign-up sheet may be passed around before closing the meeting to ask if meeting participants would volunteer for the protection team or to implement protection efforts. This will allow potential volunteers to make a positive decision and will identify those persons most committed to the process.

**Engaging and Informing the Public**

In addition to conducting a public meeting, the water utility may be able to employ other education and outreach activities to engage and inform the public. The following provides several recommended education and outreach activities that can help inform and engage the public. The public utility should also be prepared to communicate the progress of the plan development. Once the plan is finalized, a public hearing will be held before the plan can be approved. Successful plan development and ultimately implementation will depend upon public awareness and participation.

Table A-1. Recommended education and outreach activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and Outreach Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brochures, Pamphlets, and Letters</td>
<td>Send a letter and/or brochure providing educational information to residences and businesses. These will alert the recipients of the need for source water protection and conservation. Businesses that use greater-than-household quantities of regulated substances may receive a different letter. See example letters in the following pages.</td>
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<td>Several organizations provide information and resources on the internet, related to source water concerns and PCSs. The utility will consider obtaining these materials when needed, to educate the community. Examples of these resources are described below.</td>
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<td>Due to recent heightened concerns about the effects of pharmaceuticals in surface water bodies, the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) developed a pamphlet regarding pharmaceutical disposal. This pamphlet can be viewed and possibly ordered from: <a href="http://orsanco.org/index.php/brochures">http://orsanco.org/index.php/brochures</a></td>
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<td>The Source Water Collaborative has released an educational brochure building tool to assist with creating custom brochures targeting local decision makers. This tool is available at: <a href="http://www.yourwateryourdecision.org">http://www.yourwateryourdecision.org</a> and may assist in community planning and development.</td>
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<td>USEPA Water Sense Simple Steps to Save Water (EPA-832-F-07-011) presents benefits of conserving water. Focusing not only on the environment, but also on the financial savings associated with conservation. The brochure can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/ws_simplesteps508.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/ws_simplesteps508.pdf</a></td>
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<td>Consumer Confidence Report</td>
<td>The water system publishes a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) annually, as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, which is sent to all water customers. Information concerning the Source Water Assessment is included in the CCR. In the future, the system will include a reference to this source water protection plan and how customers can access a copy. Due to recent heightened concerns about the effects of pharmaceuticals in surface water bodies and the fact that many source water areas are in a karst landscape, the utility should include information about pharmaceuticals and how to properly dispose of them in the CCR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Fair and Festivals</td>
<td>Consider providing information on source water protection for the County Health Department’s booth at the county fair or local festivals, should they have any.</td>
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<td>Drinking Water Protection Signs</td>
<td>Erecting Drinking Water Protection Signs along highways is a common awareness strategy in some states and recommended by the USEPA. Signs are placed to alert the public to the SWPA and about what to do in case of accidental spills. The WV Division of Highways (WVDOH) has not approved the placement of signs along or adjacent to state highway right of ways for the purposes of source water protection, except for specific sensitive areas. If you believe erecting signs along a state highway is imperative to your source water protection, please contact WVDOH Traffic Engineering Division at 304-558-3063. If approved the WVDOH may place and maintain signs along state highways at mutually acceptable locations. In addition, the WVDHHR recommends erecting awareness signs in public areas and along city streets not associated with state highways. If interested in erecting Drinking Water Protection Signs, contact the WVDHHR SWAP program at 304-558-2981. The WVDHHR may distribute standard signs or provide financial support through a Source Water Protection Grant. The water system will be responsible for erecting and maintaining the signs in public areas and along city streets.</td>
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<td>Emergency Planning and Coordination</td>
<td>Participate with local fire departments and County Emergency Services on a regular basis. This will ensure that all the agencies understand the boundaries of the SWPA, are in constant communication with one another, and are prepared in the event of an emergency.</td>
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<td>Media Campaign</td>
<td>Work with local television and radio to develop and regularly post source water and drinking water fact bulletins on local media. Place an advertisement in the local newspaper reminding business and residents to protect their source water. A series of newspaper articles or an educational newspaper column is one way to raise awareness of water issues and expose the community to the efforts of the team.</td>
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<td>To arrange this, a team member</td>
<td>To arrange this, a team member may need to meet with the newspaper editor and discuss a column of approximately 500 words every 2-4 weeks (when meeting with an editor you should be prepared to submit a couple of examples of your articles). If a regular column cannot be arranged, you might want to try for a reporter-written article based on suggested topics or your regular committee meetings. The articles should begin very early in your SWAP process. The articles should be designed to be educational with regard to managing the local water resource and the team's activities. The articles should be relatively short and hit a few main points. The SWP information you present should educate and inform a large portion of the community or newspaper readership, both within the city limits and in the adjacent area.</td>
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<td>Partner with Watershed Association</td>
<td>Partner with local watershed associations or other civic groups. These groups may have similar goals and available volunteers that can integrate source water protection into their efforts.</td>
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<td>Plant Tours</td>
<td>Provide tours of the water plant to interested organizations such as watershed groups, schools, and civic organizations. Tours will be offered as requested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant Tours</td>
<td>Organize a tour with local Emergency Responders to make them familiar with the facilities in the event of an emergency.</td>
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<td>Public Meeting</td>
<td>The water system could hold an informational meeting with local residents about source water protection efforts. The meeting will increase awareness of the connection between land use and drinking water quality. This meeting could be structured as a water fair/public event with drinking water displays and activities. This can be combined with activities of the local watershed associations.</td>
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<td>School Curricula</td>
<td>Work with the school system to incorporate source water activities into the school curricula. One example of school curricula is Project WET. For more information regarding free workshops to educate area teachers on Project WET, visit <a href="http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/WET/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/WET/Pages/default.aspx</a>, or contact the WVDEP at 304-926-0495. In addition, the USEPA offers free educational materials for teachers and students, including classroom lessons, fact sheets, and interactive games and activities, for grades K-12. These materials can be accessed at the following websites. For general source water protection: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/index.html">http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/index.html</a>. For water conservation: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/watersense/resources/educational_materials.html">http://www.epa.gov/watersense/resources/educational_materials.html</a>. Similar protection</td>
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<td>and conservation related resources can be found at the Groundwater Foundation website; <a href="http://www.groundwater.org/kc/kc.html">http://www.groundwater.org/kc/kc.html</a>.</td>
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<td>School Curricula</td>
<td>Visit school or invite students for a plant tour to tie in with school curricula. Ask the school to include message in school newsletter to raise awareness about source water protection and conservation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Watchers Program</td>
<td>Organize a Water Watchers program, a community watch group organized and trained to report suspicious activity in and around local water utilities.</td>
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Example Letters

Example Letter to Business for SURFACE WATER

Month/Day/Year

Local Business Owner
Address
City, West Virginia Zip Code

Dear Local Business Owner,

This letter is to make you aware that you own or regulate properties and/or resources within or near the Source Water Protection Area for our community’s drinking water. This protection area was developed for the [INSERT UTILITY NAME] public water system by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and provided in a source water assessment report and protection plan.

Our drinking water is supplied from a surface water source. Chemicals used in industrial processes, highway maintenance, agricultural and municipal land uses can contaminate surface water. Water used in these processes and draining from sites can carry contaminants to surface water. These substances can enter the surface water through improper management or accidental incidents. Our water system can be protected from any contamination that enters the surface water if alerted to an incident immediately. Once alerted, the operators can shut down the intake. If not shut down, a contaminant could be drawn into the water system, possibly endangering public health and resulting in a costly cleanup.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] is asking all businesses, landowners, utilities, and agencies located, owning, or regulating properties within the protection area to follow all regulations as required by state and federal laws, report any spills to appropriate officials, and implement best management practices within operations to prevent the improper management of any materials that could contaminate the surface water resources.
[INSERT UTILITY NAME] thanks you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have any questions or would like to review the drinking water source assessment report or protection plan please contact [INSERT UTILITY CONTACT NAME/NUMBER].

Sincerely,
Example Letter to Resident for SURFACE WATER

Month/Day/Year

Local Resident
Address:

Dear Local Resident,

This letter is to make you aware that your residence is located within or near the [INSERT UTILITY NAME] Drinking Water Source Protection Area. This protection area was developed by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and provided in a drinking water source assessment report and a protection plan.

Our source of drinking water is supplied by surface water that draining from the watershed in which you reside. Liquid substances such as automotive products, fuel oil, cleaning fluids, pharmaceutical, pesticides, fertilizers, and sediments are common water contaminants. These substances can enter the water through improper disposal methods. Improper disposal methods include pouring chemicals on the ground, down a sink or toilet connected to a septic system, or down storm drains. Any contamination that enters the water resources will force the [INSERT UTILITY NAME] to implement additional costly measures in order to assure the water supplied to local customers is safe to drink.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] is asking all residents living within the protection area to report any spills to appropriate officials and prevent the improper disposal of any liquids that could contaminate the water resources. In addition, residents should have private septic systems inspected and maintained regularly.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] thanks you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have any questions or would like to review the water system’s source water assessment report or protection plan, please contact [INSERT UTILITY CONTACT NAME/NUMBER].
Sincerely,
Dear Local Business Owner,

This letter is to make you aware that your business, Business Name, is located within or near the Source Water Protection Area for our community’s drinking water. This protection area was developed for [INSERT UTILITY NAME] by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and provided in a source water assessment report.

Our source of drinking water is supplied by groundwater that is pumped out of the ground. Liquid substances such as automotive products, fuel oil, cleaning fluids, and oil-based paints are common groundwater contaminants. These substances can enter the groundwater through improper disposal methods. Improper disposal methods include pouring chemicals on the ground, down a sink or toilet connected to a septic system, or down a storm drain. Any contamination that enters the groundwater resources will force [INSERT UTILITY NAME] to implement additional costly measures in order to assure the water supplied to local customers is safe to drink.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] is asking all businesses located within the protection area to follow all regulations as required by state and federal laws for their business, implement best management practices within business operations, report any spills to appropriate officials, and prevent the improper disposal of any liquids that could contaminate the water resources.
[INSERT UTILITY NAME] thanks you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have any questions or would like to review the drinking water source assessment report or protection plan please contact [INSERT UTILITY CONTACT NAME/NUMBER].

Sincerely,
Month/Day/Year

Local Resident
Address:

Dear Local Resident,

This letter is to make you aware that your residence is located within or near the [INSERT UTILITY NAME] Drinking Water Source Protection Area. This protection area was developed by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and provided in a drinking water source assessment report and a protection plan.

Our source of drinking water is supplied by groundwater that is pumped out of wells. Liquid substances such as automotive products, fuel oil, cleaning fluids, and oil-based paints are common groundwater contaminants. These substances can enter the groundwater through improper disposal methods. Improper disposal methods include pouring chemicals on the ground, down a sink or toilet connected to a septic system, or down storm drains. Any contamination that enters the groundwater resources will force the [INSERT UTILITY NAME] to implement additional costly measures in order to assure the water supplied to local customers is safe to drink.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] is asking all residents living within the protection area to report any spills to appropriate officials and prevent the improper disposal of any liquids that could contaminate the groundwater resources.

In addition to improper disposal, contaminants can also enter into the groundwater through private water wells. If you own a private well, please perform maintenance to prevent contaminants, including bacteria,
from entering the groundwater source. Please contact [INSERT UTILITY NAME] if you are willing to have your well properly abandoned to protect the system groundwater source. Contact the state or local health department to learn more on how to maintain well and protect your water source.

[INSERT UTILITY NAME] thanks you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have any questions or would like to review the source water assessment report or protection plan, please contact [INSERT UTILITY CONTACT NAME/NUMBER].

Sincerely,