



Protecting
Ohio's Drinking
Water Sources



Drinking Water Source Protection Update

2006: A Year of Accomplishments

Ohio Public Water Systems Protect Drinking Water Sources

To date, approximately 57 Ohio communities have developed local Drinking Water Source Protection Plans and 66 more are working with staff in Ohio EPA's district offices to complete theirs.

These plans address public education; contingency planning; strategies to protect source water from specific local contaminant sources; and, for some communities, monitoring of ground water before treatment.

While the main purpose of these plans is to protect the public's health and safety, communities with endorsed protection plans also receive higher priority for low-interest loans from Ohio EPA.



The Village of Enon's Protection Plan was endorsed in January 2006.



The City of Athens' Protection Plan was endorsed in February 2006.

In the last year, Ohio EPA endorsed protection plans for the following communities.

- City of Athens.
- City of Bryan.
- City of Ontario.
- City of Wyoming.
- Village of Edgerton.
- Village of Enon.
- Village of Warsaw.
- Village of Spring Valley.
- Belmont County Sanitary District 3.
- Muskingum County Water SE.
- TCMSD-Wilshire Hills.
- Warren County-Franklin area.

Highlights

- ◆ Local Drinking Water Source Protection
- ◆ Ohio SWAP Assessments Complete
- ◆ Project SWEET a Success
- ◆ Technical Assistance and Outreach
- ◆ Secure SWAP Reports on Web
- ◆ Grants Protect Source Waters
- ◆ County-wide Protection Planning
- ◆ Surface Water System Protection Planning Guidance
- ◆ SWAP Areas Addressed in Rule
- ◆ Shadyside Embraces Source Water Protection
- ◆ SWAP Education in Action
- ◆ SWAP Survey Coming in 2007

Ohio's Drinking Water Source Assessments Completed

In 2006, Ohio EPA completed Drinking Water Source Assessments for all 5,400 public water systems in Ohio. The assessments provide information on the land uses and facilities that could contaminate drinking water sources.

The Agency or public water system will complete future assessments as new water systems and wells are placed into operation. Systems who choose to complete their own source water assessments can find helpful guidance online at www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw/pdu/swap_guidance.html.

Project SWEET

In January 2005, Ohio EPA partnered with the Ohio Department of Soil and Water Conservation to initiate a new statewide program of environmental education known as "SWEET" - Source Water Environmental Education Teams.

The county or regional teams use ground water simulator models and other training tools to provide source water education to Ohio's general public. The teams also can assist public water systems with implementation of the educational portion of their Drinking Water Source Protection Plan.

In October 2005, the teams received training through statewide workshops. Since then, the number of participating Ohio counties has expanded from 35 to 47.

To date, more than 13,000 Ohioans have participated in 48 outreach events including workshops, community programs, civic meetings, water festivals and school programs.

Teams continue to benefit from education and networking opportunities available through the SWEET fact sheet, listserv and Web site, located at: www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw/swap/SWEET/.



SWAP Technical Assistance and Outreach

With the completion of the statewide SWAP assessments, the focus of Ohio's Source Water Protection Program staff has shifted to intensive technical assistance and outreach.

Regional Workshops

In the last year, Ohio EPA's district staff held 12 SWAP workshops to discuss protection planning with local organizations, community officials and public water system operators. County-based meetings were held for Stark, Portage, Carroll, Fairfield, Putnam, Marion, Hardin, Wayne, Holmes and Franklin counties.

Map Requests

During 2006, SWAP staff responded to 427 requests for site-specific maps showing locations of SWAP areas near regulated facilities. Average response time was less than two days.

SWAP Web page

The SWAP Web site continues to expand and improve. The most frequently selected topics were: protection plan guidance; status of communities with protection planning; frequently asked questions (FAQs); statewide maps of source water assessment areas; and maps of Ohio's federal sole-source aquifers.

Individual Assistance

Since January 2006, SWAP staff at Ohio EPA's district offices have met individually with about 100 public water system representatives, encouraging them to complete a local protection plan. As a direct result of these meetings, about two-thirds of the systems are developing a plan.

SWAP Reports Now On Secure Web Site

SWAP reports are now available to the public on a secure Web site. The reports completed by Ohio EPA staff can be viewed and printed using Adobe Acrobat.

To register for access to the site, print out and complete the registration form available at www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw/pdu/swap_securelogin.html.

Send the completed form, by mail or fax (614-644-2909), to Ohio EPA. Typically, the form review and password set-up are completed within 24 hours. Some reviews may take longer, but all will be completed within a week. Once approved, the user will be notified by e-mail.

Grants Help Water Systems Protect Their Source Water

Since 2004, numerous public water systems have received Clean Water Act Section 319 grants to help develop and implement drinking water source protection plans.

Congratulations to the Villages of Enon, Fort Loramie, Spring Valley, West Liberty, and Wilkshire Hills for receiving first-round grants and Ohio EPA endorsement of their completed drinking water source protection plans!

In support of source water protection, the Village of Wilkshire Hills also received an \$18,250 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to seal an abandoned oil and gas well located within the water supply wells' one-year time-of-travel area.

The second round of 319 grants is helping to finance development of protection plans for 20 additional water systems. These protection plans should be submitted to Ohio EPA for endorsement by July 2007.

In 2006, a group of water systems with elevated nitrates located in the Mad River aquifer in Champaign County received the first drinking water protection implementation grant.



Nitrates will be reduced by implementing a suite of urban and agricultural nutrient best management practices and purchasing conservation easements that restrict the application of nutrients. The local watershed coordinator is facilitating project implementation.

Over the past four years, approximately \$560,000 in Clean Water Act grant funds have been awarded to public water systems for protection planning and implementation. U.S. EPA is currently reviewing the results of the drinking water grant projects and will decide if additional funds will be available for future protection planning and implementation activities.

County-wide Protection Planning Looks Promising

Fairfield County Utilities received a \$51,000 Section 319 grant to develop a regional drinking water source protection plan covering SWAP areas for 10 municipal/township water systems.

The planning team includes water system representatives, the Fairfield County General Health District, Regional Planning Commission, Soil & Water Conservation District, and a local watershed group.

It is hoped that this county-wide protection plan will serve as a model for multi-jurisdictional drinking water source protection in Ohio.

Protection Planning Guidance for Surface Water Systems

Ohio EPA recently released a new protection planning guidance document for public water systems that use surface water (rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc.).

The guidance emphasizes coordination of protective strategies with active watershed groups in the area. It also recognizes the importance of focusing activities on portions of the watershed with known water quality impacts.

The guidance is available online at www.epa.state.oh.us/ddagw/Documents/SWAP_SW_protplan_FINAL.pdf.

SWAP Areas Addressed in Various Environmental Rules

In recognition of the need for source water protection, three Ohio EPA divisions, along with three other state agencies (Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce/BUSTR), have revised their rules to reflect a higher level of protection required around drinking water sources.

Currently there are rules in place addressing:

- various types of sanitary landfills;
- concentrated animal feeding operations;
- motor vehicle waste disposal wells;
- underground storage tanks;
- sewage sludge; and
- brownfield sites.

Rules for household sewage treatment systems and land application of septage will become effective January 1, 2007. Rules also have been proposed requiring wastewater land application systems to observe setbacks from public wells.

Shadyside Embraces Source Water Protection

The Village of Shadyside, located along the Ohio River, became one of southeast Ohio's source water protection leaders in 2006.

In September, Shadyside's drinking water source protection plan was the first from Belmont County to be endorsed by Ohio EPA. During plan development, staff from Ohio EPA's Southeast District Office completed a video about the village's source water protection efforts. The video is now available on DVD for training.

Shadyside's protection plan emphasizes outreach and education. The school district's teachers are incorporating source water protection information into their curriculum.

A SWEET team is actively involved with the village's educational efforts. In order to best focus their educational efforts, the team distributed a survey to parents of local school children. Here are some of the more interesting survey results.

- Almost 94 percent of the respondents did not know the source of Shadyside's public drinking water.
- Most respondents considered industrial pollutants and illegal disposal of motor oil, paint, and antifreeze the biggest threats to the source water.

- Most respondents selected television, local newspaper, and newsletters as the most effective ways to educate the general public about source water protection. Other choices included radio, posters and meetings.

SWAP Education In Action

The City of Lancaster has always been a leader in source water protection. When city officials learned that the Ohio Department of Transportation had designed the Route 33-Lancaster bypass to end at Hornsmill Road, the site of the city's south wellfield, they knew they must take action.

Freeway intersections are often the sites of accidents, and if a truck carrying toxic materials had an accident next to the wellfield, the toxic contents could quickly seep into the ground and end up in the City's drinking water supply.

To address this concern, the city successfully petitioned to have the bypass end at Tarkiln Road, about a half mile north of the wellfield. This is a great example of the payoff that can result from source water protection education efforts.

SWAP Survey Coming in 2007

As 2006 comes to an end, the Source Water Protection program will be sending out a SWAP planning and implementation status survey to operators of Ohio's municipal public water systems. Information obtained from survey responses will provide a baseline to measure progress in local SWAP implementation.

The survey will be available in hard copy and possibly in an online version for those who prefer to reply electronically. Our goal is to receive a 100 percent response rate, so SWAP staff will be calling public water suppliers who do not respond within 30 days.

