



Ohio Source Water Protection Program

Contact: Craig Smith • Craig.Smith@epa.ohio.gov • (614) 644-3144

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Ohio EPA's SFY'19-21 SWAP Strategic Plan focuses on: 1) increasing implementation of protective strategies by public water systems and local governments; 2) developing/ strengthening state-wide protective strategies and inter-program partnerships; 3) increasing awareness of source water as a critical asset; 4) improving the source water assessment process; and 5) creating a program-wide culture of teamwork.

Our goal is that, by 2025, 90% of the municipal public water systems and 80% of the non-municipal public water systems are actively engaged in implementing their source water protection plans and participating in regional and multi-municipal source water protection strategies

1) Increasing Implementation of Protective Strategies

As Ohio's program is voluntary, we will continue to develop means to help ensure that implementation is not neglected, including providing effective guidance, targeted outreach and technical support, and maximizing use of available funding sources, including SRF, AWIA, H2Ohio, 319, CWA SRF loans, and USDA grants. We have also incorporated protection planning into rules, including:

- **New Well Approval:** Many community public water systems serving a municipal corporation are required to develop or update a Protection Plan as a condition of new well approval.
- **Total Coliform:** Systems qualify for reduced monitoring if they have a protected source, and we recognize completed Source Protection Checklists for satisfying this provision.
- **Harmful Algal Blooms:** Source water protection is promoted as a long-term strategy to reduce the impact of cyanobacteria blooms by reducing the net nutrient loading to source waters.

2) Developing / Strengthening State-wide Protective Strategies and Partnerships

Over the past 25 years, we have worked with other state agencies to incorporate source water protection provisions into rules. We are now emphasizing building non-regulatory partnerships, including:

- **NRCS Farm Bill Funding:** Ohio EPA and NRCS staff are coordinating to determine areas for Source Water-focused funding for conservation practices. We have suggested source water protection areas based on HABs and cryptosporidium impacts, PWS interest in source water protection, and state and federal priorities. Both agencies are looking toward leveraging funds from other sources as a springboard for initiating new Regional Conservation Partnership Projects.
- **Ohio Section AWWA Source Water Subcommittee:** Several of Ohio's largest water systems will be participating in a statewide SWAP subcommittee, along with Ohio EPA.
- **TMDL-SWAP Program Coordination:** We are working to coordinate our work when drinking water impairments have been documented, including a better link between water quality and drinking water criteria and including SWAP staff as part of TMDL teams. The TMDL Program is piloting public water system-specific outreach meetings to encourage involvement in the TMDL public participation process.

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3) Increasing Awareness of Source Water as a Critical Asset

To promote source water protection by systems and communities, we hope to raise the profile and awareness of Ohio's program through new and updated promotional materials, presentations, roundtable meetings with public water systems, and asset management rules. Ohio EPA's new rules incorporate key elements of source water protection into asset management plans:

- Each public water system has a Drinking Water Source Assessment report and systems are now responsible for reviewing their reports annually and evaluating whether an update is needed every five years
- Systems that have developed a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan or checklist are now required to review it at the frequency stated in the plan and revise it as necessary.

Success Story: Ohio EPA recently learned that the Ohio Dept. of Transportation reviews its projects to identify intersections with source water protection areas. Contractors are made aware of the areas and directed to exclude refueling and equipment / fuel storage. ODOT initiated this process on its own.

4) Improving Source Water Assessment Process

Revised Source Water Assessments: Ohio EPA has continued to produce Drinking Water Source Assessment reports as new systems have been created and new wellfields developed. We have also worked with systems to update their Drinking Water Source Assessment report as new wells are installed.

Ohio rules requiring or encouraging a public water system to develop a Protection Plan often require an updated Assessment if needed. In anticipation of Ohio's Asset Management requirements, staff are updating reports that have not been updated since our initial efforts were completed.

5) Creating a Program-wide Culture of Teamwork

Project-specific Teams: As Ohio EPA improves its Source Water Protection Program, staff from other programs are being asked to participate. Current efforts focus on updating the materials and guidance provided to PWSs developing and implementing source water protection programs and what constitutes substantial implementation of protective strategies.

Contact

For more information, visit our website - <https://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/swap> - or contact Craig Smith at Craig.Smith@epa.ohio.gov or (614) 644-3144.