

Highlights
Source Water Protection Workshop
Co-Sponsored by GWPC and the Source Water Collaborative
GWPC Annual Forum
September 16, 2019

Access to power point presentations:

<http://www.gwpc.org/events/gwpc-proceedings/2019-annual-forum>

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Workshop Goals

- Provide key information on actionable source water protection (SWP) opportunities;
- Share participant successes, challenges, and questions; and
- Plan for outcomes – take home actions and follow-up.

**Leveraging Opportunities and Building Partnerships for Source Water Protection:
2018 Farm Bill, Clean Water Act, Key Partners, and Tips for Working with NRCS**

Speakers:

Shellie Chard, Director, Water Quality Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Salvador Salinas, Acting NRCS Regional Conservationist – Central
Gary O’Neill, NRCS State Conservationist - Oklahoma

Panel: *Darcia Routh, Geologist Supervisor and Source Water Protection Manager, Arkansas Department of Health: Partnering to Address Source Water Protection on Agricultural and Forested Lands;*
James McCarty, Water Quality Manager, Beaver Water District, Lowell, Arkansas: Water Utility Perspective on NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program;
Ryan Chapman, Water Quality Assessment Section Supervisor, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy: Clean Water Act (CWA) and NRCS Conservation Programs Including source water in watershed plans to leverage CWA funding and NRCS - conservation projects

Lightning Round Speakers: *Chi Ho Sham, ERG; Kimberly Rigdon, Nevada; Deirdre White, Association of State Drinking Water Administrators; Michelle Audie, EPA Region 3; Ryan Chapman, Nebraska*

Highlights, Tips, and Resources

- **2018 Farm Bill**
 - From 2019-2023, NRCS is required to direct 10% of financial and technical assistance funds available through its conservation programs (except the Conservation Reserve Program) to carry out the Farm Bill source water provision. Conservation programs include:
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
 - Agriculture Lands Easement (ALE)
 - Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE)
 - Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
 - Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

- NRCS State Technical Committees are working with drinking water utilities and state source water programs to identify priority source water areas, and to identify practices for which producers will receive increased cost share. The deadline to identify priority watersheds for source water protection was September 30, 2019. This joint effort begins a conversation about priority source water watersheds that will be refined and continued.
- **Funding opportunities:**
 - USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Deadline: December 3, 2019**
 - Overview and what's new:
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>
 - NRCS 9/26/19 webinar for potential applicants was recorded and is posted here:
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/> (click on "How to Apply"). FAQs are also posted under "How to Apply."
 - Application information, including RCPP contact in each state NRCS office: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=rcpp>
 - In addition, source water protection efforts can benefit from working with NRCS, other agricultural partners, and utilities to leverage other NRCS conservation programs to address water quality and quantity issues in source water protection areas.
- **Reach out to key partners:**

(Note: the Source Water Collaborative can help <https://sourcewatercollaborative.org/connect-with-others/>)

 - State level:
 - Reach out to your **NRCS State Conservationist** (other good contacts include Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Resource Conservationist). To find your state NRCS office: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/states/>
 - **NRCS State Technical Committee:** Plays a key role in identifying priority watersheds for targeting NRCS conservation programs' financial and technical assistance under the 2018 Farm Bill. Ask the NRCS state office to put you on the email list for the State Technical Committee. Meetings are open to the public and a good place to share information about source water protection areas that could benefit from NRCS conservation programs.
 - **Clean Water Act partners** – Including source water concerns in State Clean Water Act program considerations offers multiple opportunities and can lay the foundation for NRCS financial and technical assistance. One key opportunity: watershed plans eligible for 319 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program grants, which can also address groundwater if the state includes groundwater in their 319 NPS Program Strategy. See this infographic for Clean Water Act opportunities: <https://sourcewatercollaborative.org/infographic/>
 - Local level:
 - Water utilities - link to DWMAPS to find drinking water utility partners epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/dwmaps
 - Clean Water Act partners (watershed groups, water quality monitoring efforts)
 - NRCS District Conservationists: have extensive local knowledge, including information about conservation practices popular with local landowners
 - Conservation Districts: strong connections at local level and with State NRCS: often lead NRCS Local Working Group and participate in State Technical Committee
 - NRCS Local Working Group: provides recommendations on priority projects to NRCS State Technical Committee

- **Examples and Resources (see handouts for more information):**
 - Arkansas updated source water assessments, and prioritized watersheds. Key players include USGS (GIS model for source water area delineation), NRCS, and the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative <https://arforestsandwater.com>
 - Nebraska is using source water protection grants under its Drinking Water State Revolving Fund 15% Local Assistance set-aside to develop groundwater-focused plans to help community water systems address nonpoint sources of pollution. Once completed, the plans become eligible for Clean Water Act section 319 funds for implementation. Two plans have been used to leverage NRCS National Water Quality Initiative projects, making over \$500,000 available annually for landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices.
 - Tips:
 - To establish eligibility for CWA 319 funds for source water protection in your state, develop an alternative to the 9-point watershed management plan – to include groundwater and drinking water source management. For more information, ask your state nonpoint (NPS) source coordinator, who is also invited to talk with the Nebraska NPS coordinator
 - In Nebraska, the same person is responsible for source water protection and Clean Water Act implementation
 - Nebraska also has liaisons who have built partnerships, e.g. with Nebraska Natural Resource Districts
 - American Water Works Association (AWWA): AWWA was instrumental in the 2018 Farm Bill source water provision, and has tools to help utilities work with NRCS www.awwa.org/resources-tools/resources-topics/source-water-protection
 - Planning a New England workshop with utilities and NRCS to identify effective partnerships
 - Nevada: Leverages Clean Water Act 319 funds; helps communities develop community source water protection plans (county-wide)
 - Challenge: develop SWP plan to help leverage NRCS funding.
 - Solution: states can use Drinking Water State Revolving Fund set-asides to provide assistance in developing plans, as well as updating source water assessments

New Opportunities & Incentives to Advance Source Water Protection

Panel Presentations:

Kara Goodwin, US EPA: Leveraging the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Set-Asides

Erica Pauken, Source Water Protection State Lead, West Virginia American Water: Using EPA's [Drinking Water Mapping Application to Protect Source Waters](#) (DWMAPS) to Update Source Water Assessments

Lightning Round Speakers: *Steve Smailer, Delaware; Amy Klei, Ohio; Brian Austin, Wisconsin; Brandon Kernen, New Hampshire; Michelle Audie, EPA Region 3; Raven Jarvis, Virginia*

Highlights, Tips, and Resources

America's Water Infrastructure Act Created New Funding Opportunities

- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) – source water assessment updates and protection activities for all public drinking water sources are newly eligible under the 15% set-aside for local assistance and other state programs

Eligible Activities

o Loans to PWS for SWP land acquisition/easements, voluntary, incentive-based SWP measures, and source water petition programs

o Delineation, assessment, and *updates to assessments for SWP areas (new)*

o Establishment and implementation of wellhead protection programs and *implementation of efforts to protect source water (new)*

- Sample eligible activities
 - o Developing Source Water Protection Plans
 - o Small grant programs
 - o Technical Assistance through 3rd parties
 - o Implementation of BMPs
 - o Updating Source Water Assessments with GIS
 - o Development of local ordinances
 - o Public outreach and education
- Challenges
 - o SWP plans can be expensive
 - o Competing state priorities for DWSRF set-asides
 - o Need a system to keep source water assessments updated and usable
 - o Program coordination
 - o Emerging contaminants
 - o Harmful algal blooms
 - o Above ground storage tanks
- Tips
 - o Think long term
 - o Account for multiple benefits
 - o Look for opportunities to leverage funding outside source water programs, including USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs, Clean Water Act nonpoint source (section 319)
 - o Consider including source water protection in utility asset management
 - o Engage partners and stakeholders
 - o Energize state staff
 - o One water framework: engage nearby utilities
 - o New GIS tools and models, including the Drinking Water Mapping Application to Protect Source Waters (DWMAPS) to identify and prioritize potential sources of contamination and develop a management plan – see West Virginia presentation
 - o SWAP information is good for utility Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs)
 - o USGS has more data sets, tools, and models to provide support to SWP efforts
 - o Both the 15% DWSRF set-aside and the Clean Water Act State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) can purchase land

Workshop Wrap-up:

- Participants were interested in learning more about innovative approaches, renewing efforts to collaborate with NRCS, and using tools and resources like DWMAPS and DWSRF set-asides.
- A participant asked whether identifying/sharing innovative approaches to SWP is something that the Source Water Collaborative could compile and share so this information would be more readily available.
- GWPC has made Workshop and other Forum presentations available on its website.