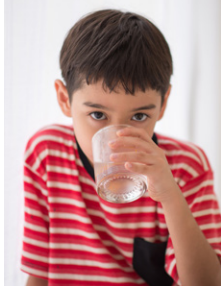


Guide to Getting Engaged to Protect Your Drinking Water Source



Clean Water Action believes everyone has a right to safe and affordable drinking water. Recent disruptions of drinking water service and contamination of our drinking water sources have drawn attention to the importance of protecting your source of drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) mandates Source Water Assessments (SWA) and Source Water Protection Plans (SWPP); however, for these assessments to be useful there needs to be engagement within communities from concerned people, resulting in action from local governments to address the problems and risks to our drinking water identified by the assessments.

Here are some ways to help get you started in your community for any amount of time you are able to invest:

5 minutes: Read your Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) from your water provider to learn where your water comes from and what risks it faces. You can find your community's report at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) website:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/com/ccr.html>

15 minutes: Learn more about SWAs in your area and determine how well they reflect reality. Are potential pollution sources unaccounted for? Is there any data missing? Often these plans come up short on details and do not reflect on-the-ground reality. Learn more at the MDH website:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/swp/swa.html>

30 Minutes: Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Share the problems with your community water supply and suggest action to educate fellow community members.

45 Minutes: Talk to your local representatives and/or community leaders about the importance of source water protection and possible solutions that motivate you to act.

1 hour: Read the EPA's "Pocket Guide to Protecting Your Drinking Water" for steps you can take in your community to enact a comprehensive Source Water Protection Plan. Read it here:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-04/documents/drinking-water-pocket-guide.pdf>



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Taking the Next Steps to Ensure Clean, Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

After learning about your source water and plans to protect it (or lack thereof) you may be motivated to do more in your community to make sure your drinking water and your family's health is protected.

- Identify action steps to protect source water from polluters and make sure they are added to your community's plan. Take action and connect with your family, friends, and neighbors to share the solutions and protections you or your team have come up with.
- At the next city council or county commission meeting, bring your concerns to your elected officials. Also share them with your state representatives and drinking water provider.
- Build a network of allies: Share your concerns and ideas about protecting your water with friends, family, neighbors, and local environmental or health non-profits such as Clean Water Action.
- With the help of your network and community leaders, identify ways that you can fund source water protection.
- Follow through! Make sure restoration and protection plans are put into action, and keep your community and local officials engaged.

Easy Action at Home to Protect Source Water: The “Dos and Don'ts”

DO:

- Pick up after pets. By cleaning up after animals, the risk of *e. coli* contamination is diminished.
- Check up and provide regular updates and maintenance to septic tanks and home sanitation systems.
- Wash your car at home, in the lawn, with biodegradable soaps. Or choose a carwash that uses a water-recycling program (will be advertised) and avoids phosphate cleaners.
- If you can afford it, upgrade your appliances to Energy Star and water-efficient models to save energy and water.
- Pick up your trash! Litter can contaminate source water through runoff and clogging storm drains.



DON'T:

- Don't use too much fertilizer on your lawns, especially around or near wells or storm drains that will more directly contaminate our drinking water sources.
- Don't throw old chemicals, batteries, petroleum products and other hazardous waste in the garbage. Counties in Minnesota will have disposal sites where you can drop them off. You can find yours here: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/find-your-household-hazardous-waste-collection-site>.
- Don't leave lawn waste and other debris on your driveway or street gutter. It can add nutrient and sediment pollution to our lakes, rivers, and source water. A quick sweep away makes a world a difference.

Want to get more involved or have questions? Please feel free to contact our Water Program Coordinator, Steve Schultz, at sschultz@cleanwater.org or call 612-623-3666.

For a more comprehensive guide, check out Clean Water Action's Source Water Stewardship Guide at: <https://www.cleanwateraction.org/publications/source-water-stewardship>