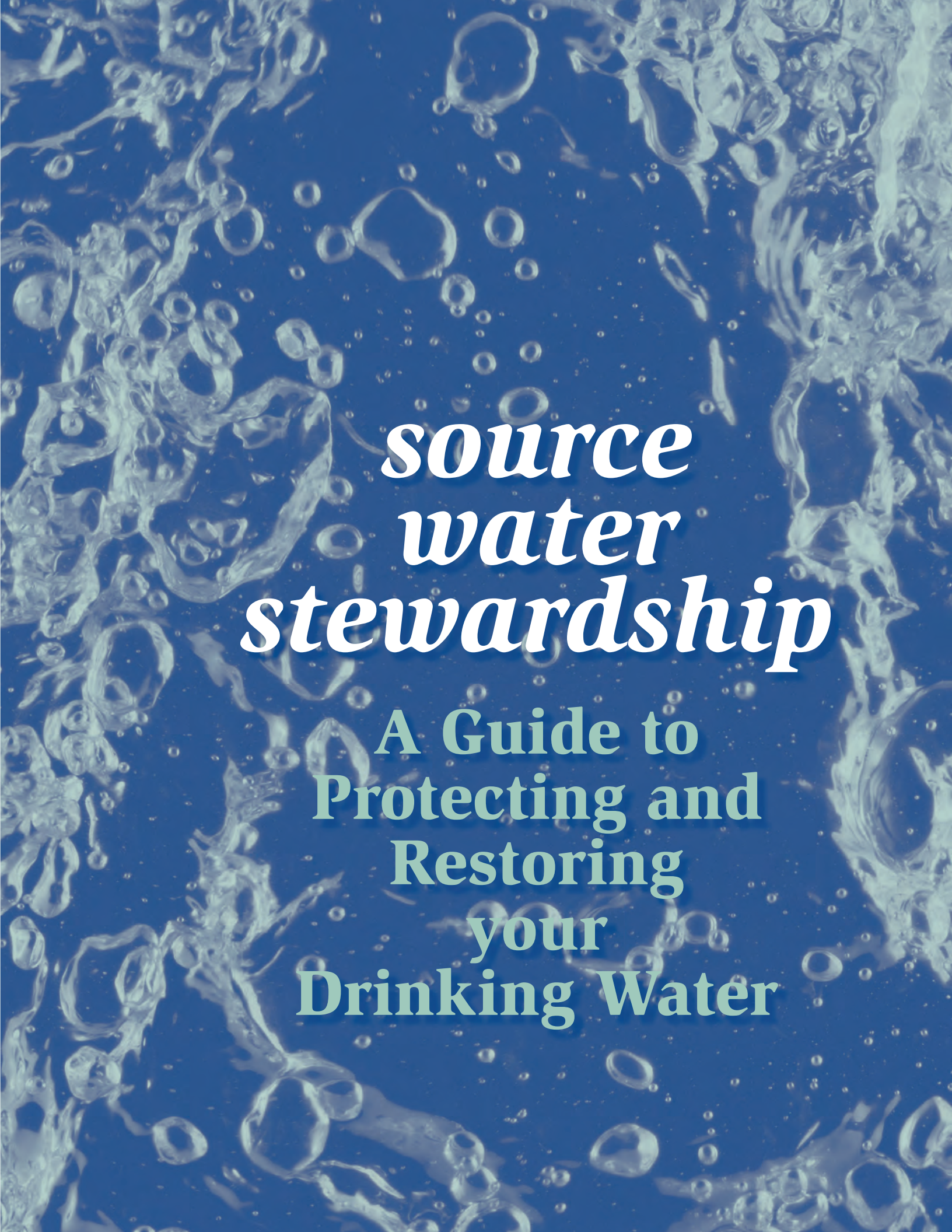

source water stewardship

A Guide to Protecting and Restoring your Drinking Water

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Source Water Protection Initiative

Clean Water Fund · Clean Water Network · Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

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About the Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

The Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water (CSADW) is a nationwide alliance of over 300 environmental, consumer and public health organizations working to educate the public about drinking water improvement and protection of our nation's drinking water sources.
Tel: 202-895-0420 ext. 135 www.safe-drinking-water.org

About Clean Water Fund

Clean Water Fund (CWF) is a national nonprofit research and educational organization with locally staffed environmental and health protection programs serving communities in 20 states. CWF's mission is to develop strong grassroots environmental leadership and to bring together diverse groups and people to work cooperatively for changes that improve their lives—focused on health, consumer, environmental and community problems. CWF's programs build on and complement those of Clean Water Action, a 700,000-member national organization which has helped develop, pass, strengthen and defend the nation's major water and toxics laws such as the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Superfund and others, including local and state laws.
Tel: 202-895-0420 ext. 109 www.cleanwaterfund.org

About the Clean Water Network

The Clean Water Network is an alliance of more than 1,000 organizations that endorse its platform paper, the National Agenda for Clean Water. The Agenda outlines the need for strong clean water safeguards in order to protect public health and the environment. The Clean Water Network includes a variety of organizations representing environmentalists, family farmers, commercial fishermen, recreational anglers, surfers, boaters, faith communities, environmental justice advocates, tribes, labor unions, and civic associations.
Tel: 202-289-2395 www.cwn.org

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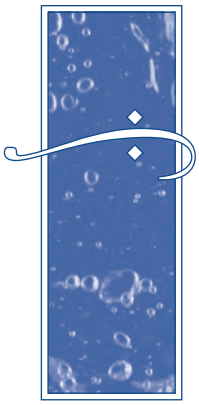
For more information on source water protection, visit www.protectsourcewater.org



Introduction

The 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act contain a new focus on protecting our drinking water sources, in addition to treating drinking water to remove contaminants. To meet the new requirements, states must ensure that each water system has a Source Water Assessment (assessment). An assessment provides information about the source of drinking water in your community, whether it is from ground or surface water. For more information on assessments, see the box on this page and Chapter 1.

But what happens once your drinking water source is assessed? The new Safe Drinking Water Act doesn't have much to say about that. That's where you come in!

Once assessments are completed, state and local governments, water providers, and citizens like you will have to create an action plan to address the problems and risks identified in the assessments. Luckily, even though the Safe Drinking Water Act is silent about how to protect and restore source waters, many regulatory and non-regulatory tools exist to get the job done.

This handbook walks you through a process for understanding your assessment, reaching out to others who are or should be involved in protecting and restoring drinking water quality, and designing an action plan for drinking water protection and restoration.

Source Water Assessment Basics

Source Water Assessments must include four basic elements:

- A delineation (or mapping) of the source water assessment area.
- An inventory of actual and potential sources of contamination in the delineated area.
- An analysis of the susceptibility of the water supply to those contamination sources.
- A mechanism for sharing the results widely with the public.

For more on Source Water Assessments, visit the U.S. EPA's source water page at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/assessment.html. You can also find out more about how your state conducted the assessments by visiting your state source water web sites–find links to the state sites at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html

Quick Start Action List

This Quick Start Action List will help you get involved with protecting and restoring your source water using the assessment process. We're providing 10 basic action ideas here; each identifies support materials to help you dive deeper into the issues. The ideas are not necessarily linear—for example, in some cases you'll want to talk to local officials after you've decided what you think the solutions are, while in other cases you'll want to talk to them before. Alternately, you may only be able to tackle one or two of the action ideas—that's fine, too. Use the Quick Start Action List as a rough and ready guide for action, but let your local situation be your true guide.

❑ **Track down your local Source Water Assessment.**
Your state oversees the development of Source Water Assessments, so start with the state (see http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html for state program contacts). The assessment may be produced by other entities, but the suggested state contact can explain whom you need to get in touch with. For more on what a Source Water Assessment is, how to find your assessment, and advice on what to do if you don't yet have an assessment, see Chapter 1.

❑ **Read the assessment and investigate how it matches what you know.**
Some Source Water Assessments are "first cuts;" citizens have an important role to play in determining if the assessments match what they know. As you read your Source Water Assessment, ask yourself how closely it matches reality. Are known or potential pollution sources missing? Are the locations accurate? Do you know of water quality monitoring data not considered? Are protection measures already in place for some of the sources? See Chapter 2 for questions to ask as you read the assessment and action ideas for follow-up.

❑ **Discuss the assessment with the responsible agency.**
Now that you've explored your Source Water Assessment, it's a good idea to check in with the agency responsible for implementing it. Bring any questions from your read-through of the assessment. Most importantly, ask the agency if they have or will implement any restoration or protection activities as a result of the assessment's findings. For more ideas about questions to ask the agency and how to discuss next steps, see Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also includes a brief summary of the source water protection responsibilities of different levels of government and agencies.

❑ **Talk with others in your community about what you've discovered.**
If you haven't already reached out to others in your community, now is the time! Consider sharing your findings with others concerned with drinking water quality—health care providers, consumer advocates, watershed groups, land trusts, conservationists, and others. Protecting and restoring your drinking water source is a big job, so the more allies you can find, the better. For ideas on who to reach out to and how to share your findings, see Chapter 4.

❑ **Talk with local elected officials and your drinking water provider.**
Two other important potential allies deserve special consideration—local elected officials and your drinking water provider. Both should care deeply about the quality of local drinking water, but special attention may be required to get them on board. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of strategies for connecting with local officials and your drinking water provider.

❑ **Identify the actions needed to protect and restore your drinking water sources.**
This is where things get exciting—turning assessment to action! If you've done your research and outreach well, identifying source water solutions will be a satisfying step. Whether you are participating in the agency's implementation plan or tackling a specific restoration activity yourself, understanding the tactics and programs available to help is crucial. See Chapter 6 for ideas about how to create the best action plan, as well as a link to our on-line Source Water

Toolkit, which will help connect you with the resources you need to move from problem to solution.

❑ **Identify the funding to make things happen.**
The big question is always: How will we pay for this? It is important to have an answer. If you've developed a great relationship with local officials or the local water utility, they will likely be well versed in the worlds of federal grants, loans, bonds, and levies. If they don't have answers, you aren't totally lost. Creative thinking on funding for drinking water protection abounds—tap into it! See Chapter 7 for ideas about funding the activities you want to tackle.

❑ **Share your thoughts with the media.**
By this point, you have a good grasp of the threats and potential threats to your community's drinking water supply and have identified solutions that could protect the public. This is news! See Chapter 8 for a diverse range of ideas and sample materials to pique media interest in source water protection.

❑ **Make it happen.**
Remember, creating a source water plan is not an end in itself. Follow-up is critical. Consider tackling certain protection or restoration projects yourself. Report on restoration or protection progress (or the lack thereof) in the media. Work with local officials to ensure funding continues. Press for water quality monitoring to measure success and evaluate the need for additional work. The options are endless. See Chapter 9 for ideas and examples.

I've only got a few minutes to spare, what should I do?

If you have 5 minutes . . . Read your drinking water Consumer Confidence Report.

Each year you should receive in the mail a short report (Consumer Confidence Report or CCR) from your water supplier that tells where your water comes from and what pollutants were found in it. Among other information, your CCR will provide details about the likely source of contaminants in the supply. In 5 short minutes, you will learn what types of pollutants you may need to be concerned about and where (generally) they are coming from. Your CCR may be available online at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm

If you have 15 minutes . . . Review U.S. EPA's "Pocket Guide to Source Water Protection"

This short guide provides a good overview of the Source Water Assessment program and suggests resource and action steps to protect source water. After reading the guide, you'll have a good understanding of how source water protection works and a start on identifying possible action items. Find the guide at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/swpocket.html

If you have 30 minutes . . . Track down your Source Water Assessment.

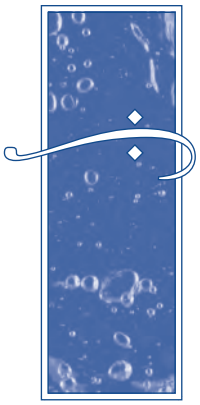
Each public water system should have a Source Water Assessment. An assessment provides information about where your drinking water comes from and what kinds of threats the water supply faces. After spending 30 minutes with your assessment, you'll know exactly where your drinking water comes from, what pollution sources threaten the quality of your drinking water, and how vulnerable your source water is to those threats. For information on how to find your assessment, see Chapter 2. For advice on how to read through your assessment, see Chapter 3.

If you have 45 minutes . . . Write a letter to the editor.

If you are concerned about what you find in your Consumer Confidence Report or your Source Water Assessment, chances are your neighbors will be too. A letter to the editor is a great way to get the word out to real people. Briefly summarize the threats to your drinking water source and suggest an action or actions the community can take to make a difference. The actions might be something an individual can do, such as reducing pesticide use, or something the community must work together on, such as passing a new ordinance to protect riparian areas. When your letter appears in the paper, you will have educated hundreds or thousands of people about the need to protect source water. See Chapter 9 for advice and a sample letter to the editor.

If you have an hour . . . Talk with others in your community.

If you have the luxury of an entire hour, why not spend that hour sharing what you've learned and finding out what others know? An hour spent talking with others can result in days or weeks worth of activity in your community as you generate interest in source water protection. Call local health care providers, land trusts, conservationists, or elected officials. Ask them what they know about the quality of your community's drinking water. Ask them if they are already working on drinking water protection or if they might be interested in doing so. Consider having a community meeting to discuss the findings of your Source Water Assessment and to design an action plan for protecting your source water. See Chapters 5 and 6 for ideas on how to reach out to others in your community.



Chapter 1
Source Water Assessments

What are they, how are they useful, and where can you find them?

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 contained a new focus on protecting our drinking water sources, in addition to treating drinking water. As part of the new focus, the Act required the states to ensure each water system has a Source Water Assessment (assessment). An assessment provides information about the water used to provide drinking water to your community, whether the source is ground or surface water.

Assessments provide important information

Your assessment will tell you both where your drinking water comes from and what kinds of threats the water supply faces. The assessment should identify the area of land that contributes the raw water used for drinking water—whether that is a watershed for a river or reservoir or the land area where water percolates into your groundwater source. Assessments are also supposed to identify the specific potential and actual sources of contamination to drinking water supplies. This information is used to determine how susceptible the water system is to contamination and to make recommendations for protecting it.

Assessments are based on existing, readily available data. The quality of Source Water Assessments varies widely. In many cases, mass "data-dumps" of information from databases which track pollution sources form the basis of the assessment. While the data is a good start, some of it may be out-dated, based on a snapshot in time, or just plain wrong. Citizen involvement in ground-truthing assessments is key to improving the quality of assessments.

Each assessment is unique. However, all assessments must include four basic elements:

- A delineation (or mapping) of the source water assessment area
- An inventory of actual and potential sources of contamination in the delineated area
- An analysis of the susceptibility of the water supply to those contamination sources
- A mechanism for sharing the results widely with the public.

For more on Source Water Assessments, visit the U.S. EPA's source water page at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/assessment.html. You can also find out more about how your state conducted the assessments by visiting your state source water web sites—find links to the state sites at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html.

Assessments are useful tools

The assessment may be one of your most useful tools in protecting your drinking water. The source water delineation and the related inventory of pollution sources can help you identify the action tools you need to protect and/or restore your drinking water source (if you don't know what problems are out there, it will be hard to fix them!). The analysis of susceptibility may help you prioritize action—the more high risk a problem, the more critical action is.

In a nutshell, the assessment should identify potential problems and summarize your drinking water source's degree of susceptibility to different problems. But remember, the assessment is just the first step. It provides you with the structure for an action plan, but you need to make sure action results.

Tracking down your assessment

There is no national compilation of Source Water Assessments. Your state oversees the development of assessments, so start with your state's drinking water program (see http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html and click on your state for state contact information). Ask to speak to someone who works on assessments. That contact should be able to connect you with information about your assessment. The assessment may be produced or maintained by other entities, such as the public water system or local health department, but the state contact can explain who to contact.

Ask your contact for a copy of the assessment. If the assessment is not yet produced, ask when it is scheduled for completion and what opportunities there are for public involvement. Ask them (ideally in writing) to notify you of any drafts, meetings, or other opportunities. Due to security concerns, some states have placed restrictions on the release of assessments, maps, or other related information. Respect the need for caution, but request as much information as you can.

Gathering information when your assessment is not done

In many cases, Assessments will not be completed until 2003 or later. Check with your state—some states are releasing individual assessments as they are completed while other states will release them upon completion of all the systems.

But delay doesn't have to mean inaction! Much information is available to help concerned citizens identify sources of drinking water contaminants. If you don't yet have a final assessment, try some of the following leads to get you started assessing the source:

◆ Consumer Confidence Reports (also known as CCRs or Right to Know Reports)

Each year by July 1 you should receive in the mail a short report (Consumer Confidence Report or CCR, often referred to as Right to Know or Annual Water Quality reports) from your water supplier that tells where your water comes from and what's in it. Among other information, your CCR should provide details about the likely source of contaminants in the supply. The identified source may be quite general, but it's a good place to start. If your CCR is available online, you

can search for it at www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm. If your CCR isn't available online, call your water utility—check your water bill for their phone number. If you are a water bill payer, you have a right to obtain this report! If your assessment is final, the CCR should explain how to access it. For more information on CCRs and how to read them, visit http:// www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm.

Total Maximum Daily Loads

The Clean Water Act requires that states identify impaired waters (on a list known as the 303(d) list) and create a cleanup plan for those waters (known as a Total Maximum Daily Load). General information about some pollutants and their sources is provided on the state's 303(d) list; each TMDL cleanup plan should include quite specific source assessment information. To find your state's 303(d) list of waters, visit www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/ and click on your state. This page will also provide a link directly to your state's TMDL program, allowing you to find completed TMDL cleanup plans for your water.

National Water Quality Inventories

States are required to report to U.S. EPA every two years on the quality of their waters. The reports are known as 305(b) reports and include information on sources of pollution. The state reports are compiled into a National Water Quality Inventory. For a summary of the 305(b) information, visit www.epa.gov/305b/2000report/ (the appendices contain the most useful information on sources of pollution). For water-body specific information, find your state's 305(b) report on the state agency's website or call the agency.

Sanitary surveys

A sanitary survey is "an on-site review of the water source, facilities, equipment, operation, and maintenance of the public water system for the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of such source, facilities, equipment, operation, and maintenance for producing and distributing safe drinking water." [40 CFR 141.2] Each water system is required to complete a sanitary survey every three to five years, depending on system type. The depth and content of sanitary surveys vary, but some will contain useful information. To access your local water system's most recent survey, call your water provider (check your water bill for a phone number) or state drinking water program (see http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html for state program contacts) and request a copy.

USGS studies

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) produces wonderful water quality studies and reports. If you're lucky, USGS has studied your watershed or aquifer; as some of the local USGS experts can be extremely helpful. To find out more, contact your local USGS office (find a list of offices and contact information at water.usgs.gov/local_offices.html). Alternatively, explore the USGS website at water.usgs.gov/. From this site you can investigate the National Water Quality Assessment program, search the publications database for studies specific to your area (there are many study areas!), and more.

Local watershed groups, citizen monitoring groups, and other organizations

You may find that other citizens are already working in your watershed. They may be the best contacts for information about sources and causes of pollution problems. To connect with local watershed groups, try U.S. EPA's Watershed Information Network, which includes a catalog of watershed groups at www.epa.gov/win/active.html or River Network's Watershed Organization Directory at www.rivernetwork.org.

Water quality monitoring organizations may have even more information to share. These groups of volunteers are out in the lakes and streams collecting data, so many have intimate knowledge of problems. Looking for monitoring groups? Try EPA's searchable database at http://yosemite.epa.gov/water/volmon.nsf or Kentucky Water Watch's listing (which is national in scope) at http://water.nr.state.ky.us/ww/vm.htm.

Land trusts may also be working to protect resources in the area. To find local land trusts, visit the Land Trust Alliance at www.lta.org or the Trust for Public Lands at www.tpl.org.

The National Rural Water Association is working with local teams in 48 states to develop and implement source water or wellhead protection plans. Contact your drinking water provider to find out if your community is located within a rural water project area and, if so, what you can do to get involved with the local project team.

Make your own local Watershed Pollution Threat Map without leaving your chair!

EPA has created an amazing website that enables you to easily create a map of your watershed and identify local potential polluters by name! Check out http://maps.epa.gov/enviromapper/. Click on your state and zoom in to your locale; the more you zoom in, the more detailed the information becomes. If you check the boxes for water bodies, streams, water discharges, hazardous waste sites, etc., you'll get a map of them all for your watershed! Click on the dots on the map and you'll even get information on each potential source of pollution. Try it!

If you are unsure exactly where your water comes from, first check your CCR for the name(s) of your source waters, and then check for the exact name and location of that source water on EPA's site at http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm. From there you can go back and draw a map.

Other leads

U.S. EPA has compiled a collection of data sources that may help with your search for sources of contamination. From Abandoned Mine Lands Inventory to Superfund's CERCLIS data collection system, you can find it all at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/feddata/inventory.html

In addition, throughout our online Source Water Protection Toolkit you'll find advice on locating specific types of sources and assessing their effect on source waters. Find the toolkit at http://www.protectsourcewater.org

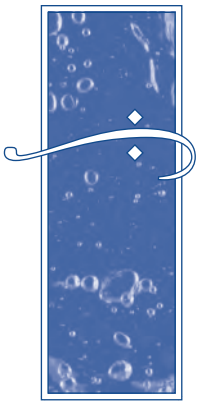
An assessment is a valuable tool for protecting and restoring the source of your drinking water. The assessment should tell you both where your drinking water comes from and what kinds of threats the water supply faces. If your drinking water source does not yet have an assessment,

you don't have to just wait for it—information already exists to help you get a handle on potential sources of contamination. But remember, identifying the sources or potential sources of your drinking water problems is only the first step—you need to make sure action results from your findings.

The rest of this guidebook is designed to help you move from identifying sources or potential sources of pollution to protecting and restoring your drinking water source.

What does it all mean!?

Confused about terms in this handbook? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has created an extensive online drinking water glossary at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/glossary.htm. Alternatively, visit http://www.protectsourcewater.org for a growing glossary associated with the online version of this guide.



Chapter 2
Read and ground truth the assessment

The quality of Source Water Assessments varies widely. With approximately 160,000 public water systems in the country that need to develop assessments, agencies sometimes simply conduct mass "data-dumps" of information from databases which track known and potential pollution sources. While the data is a good start, much may be old or incomplete. Ground-truthing of the information is an important step that may be overlooked due to time and budget constraints.

Read through the assessment with a critical eye. As you read, look for holes in the information or data and think through any recommendations in the document. Questions to ask as you read include:

- **What data or information was used?** Can you tell what information the agency used to create the assessment? If not, it will be hard to tell if the assessment is sound. Is the information recent or have there been changes in the watershed or wellhead area?
- **What data or information is missing?** Do you know of information the agency didn't include? Are there obvious gaps in the assessment's coverage (e.g. geographic areas with little data or specific sources not included)?
- **How is your source water ranked for susceptibility to pollution problems?** Usually this will be a low, medium or high ranking. Is the ranking explained? Is it well justified? Are there factors the agency didn't consider that would cause a higher or lower ranking? If the susceptibility is low, are you still concerned? Is there a need to protect the area to make sure the susceptibility ranking doesn't creep up?
- **Which potential pollution sources or activities are identified as significant threats?** Do the assessment's findings match your own understanding of the problems in your watershed? Does the assessment explain how the threats are ranked? Do you agree with the factors used to rank the threats? Are the top threats something you could help address? If not, are there others who could address the problems? Are potential future problems identified (e.g. an increase in impervious surfaces as a result of predicted growth in the area)?
- **Are actions identified that will result in restoration or protection of your source water?** Many assessments include "recommendations" for action. Does your assessment identify action steps? If it does identify action steps, is there enough detail to ensure action will happen? If the assessment doesn't provide some basic information, a recommendation

Helpful resources to have on hand

- A map of the watershed or wellhead protection area. Some states provide maps along with the assessment. If your assessment does not include a map, ask the agency to provide one or use a local topographic map.
- The most recent Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) from your drinking water provider. It may be useful to cross-reference the CCR and the assessment. The information should be consistent. The water supplier can also use the CCR to discuss protection measures needed and/or underway. Does yours?
- Information on your state's Source Water Assessment Program. You can also find out more about how your state conducted the assessments by visiting your state source water web sites—find links to the state sites at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/source/contacts.html. In many states the program regulations and/or guidance documents are quite long and complicated—don't let this intimidate you! The state agency staff should be able to explain the program to you in plain language, but it is still helpful to have the written description as background.

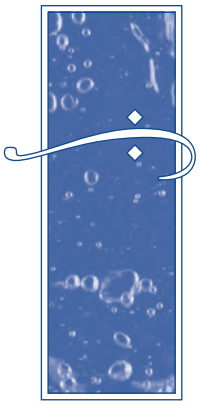
may never turn into an action. Does the assessment identify who is responsible for each action? Does it identify the funding to make sure the action happens? Is there a timeline?

Action ideas

Not sure your assessment is telling the whole story? You can do some digging to identify potential sources of pollution in your watershed. Ideas for identifying potential sources of pollution include:

- **Making your own polluter map.** EPA has created a website that enables you to easily create a map of your local watershed and to identify potential polluters by name. Check out http://maps.epa.gov/enviromapper/. Ask your state agency contact about any identified polluters from the map that did not show up in the assessment.
- **Reviewing local maps or aerial photos.** Good maps and aerial photos exist for many parts of the country. Check with your local library or your state environmental agency.
- **Conducting a survey of local residents**—who knows the area better? Mailing a survey out or going door to door in your neighborhood may uncover more information than is found in any database! Also consider talking with local historians about old land uses or industries that may still be sources of pollution.
- **Doing a drive-by survey.** Often called a "windshield survey," this low-budget approach can actually turn up a lot of information. Be sure to take very good notes about the location of potential contamination sites (cross streets, etc.) and proximity to water sources. This survey can be especially helpful in updating old information from the agency's "data dumps"—for example, you might identify new gas stations or dry cleaners in a rapidly growing area. Remember to respect private property and trespass restrictions.

- **Floating or walking the watershed (or wellhead area).** Why not have some fun? Organize a "watershed reconnaissance day" or just gather a group of your friends. Remember to respect private property and trespass restrictions. Walk or boat the watershed and record what you see. Strange pipes? Eroded stream banks? Leaking tanks?
- **Checking up on the compliance records of identified sources of pollution.** If polluters are discharging above their allowed limits, their contribution to the problem may be larger than the assessment states. The enforcement and compliance division at your state agency should be able to help you find the discharge data for polluters in your watershed. Alternatively, you can search for Clean Water Act permitees in the U.S. EPA Permit Compliance System at: http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/pcs/pcs_query_java.html.
- **Reaching out to others**. If a volunteer watershed monitoring group is active in your area, find out what they've found through their monitoring. Visit U.S. EPA's searchable database of monitoring groups at http://yosemite.epa.gov/water/volmon.nsf. Or contact your local university or college and ask if any research has been done on your watershed or wellhead area. See Chapter 4 for more ideas on reaching out to others about source water protection.



Chapter 3
Discuss the assessment with the responsible agency

Believe it or not, you are now an expert on your drinking water source. If you have read through your assessment with a critical eye and come up with a list of questions, you know as much as or more about the quality of and threats to your drinking water than almost anyone in your area. What to do with your newfound wisdom? Share what you've learned with the agency that developed the assessment and ask the questions you came up with while reading.

Call or set up a meeting with the agency or drinking water utility staff who developed your Source Water Assessment. To set up the discussion, contact the person who provided you with the assessment. Ask them to connect you with the staff person actually responsible for the assessment if at all possible. The assessment author will be most likely to be able to talk about the specifics of your source water rather than falling back on policy generalities. However, it may be helpful to have someone higher up take part in any meeting as well—if your contact is someone who is placed higher on the bureaucratic food chain, consider inviting him or her to participate.

If your time is limited or you live far from the agency's office, a phone conversation will be a fine venue for this discussion. If you have a little more time, a face-to-face meeting can be very productive. Few citizens will actually go into the agency and chat with staff about assessments. Your very presence will make an impression.

Questions to ask

Start by letting the agency staff know you are interested in the quality of your drinking water and have read the assessment. A review of this checklist should help in the dialogue that follows.

- Be sure to ask any questions you came up with while reading the assessment. If the agency can't answer some questions, ask if they can help you find the answers.
- Don't hesitate to ask about missing background information. For example, if the assessment doesn't explain what information was used to identify potential pollution sources, how can you know if the source inventory is complete?
- Ask the agency what they are doing as a result of the assessment's findings. Is there a comprehensive source water protection plan or is one under development? If so, how will they involve the community? If not, does the agency plan to address specific pollution threats or problems on a case-by-case basis? How? When? Are other governmental agencies,

If you provide new data, photos, or other information to the agency, it is a good idea to follow up by sending your information to the agency in writing.

community groups, or others invited to help develop a protection plan or to work on specific problems? See Chapter 6 for ideas on what to do with the answers to these questions.

- Ask the agency if funding is available to address any of the pollution threats or problems. Have they done any research into funding? Could you help identify funding? See Chapter 7 for ideas on what to do with the answers to these questions.

- Make sure to ask how you can be kept up-to-date on source water protection activities. Ask that the agency let you know about any meetings, updates to the assessment, source water projects, or other activities. U.S. EPA encouraged states to establish or use existing Citizen Advisory Committees or Technical Committees during the assessment process. Some states will disband the committees once the assessments are completed, but others will keep the committees to help with implementation. Encourage your state to retain the committee(s) and ask to be involved so that you can voice your opinions about action.

Share what you've learned

While the main thrust of the meeting will likely be to gather more information (see "Questions to ask"), you may also want to share what you've learned. Let the agency staff know you've read the assessment and ground-truthed it against reality. If you've identified information they failed to include in the assessment, respectfully provide it here. Data on specific pollutants, photos of sources they missed, aerial photos, or maps will all help give your thoughts credibility. Be sure to ask what the agency will do with the information you provided. If the staff can't tell you, ask them to let you know by letter by a certain date.

Who does what in the bureaucracy of drinking source water protection?

Drinking water provider

- Treats (e.g. filters and/or disinfects) raw water to ensure it meets drinking water standards. Responsible for the quality of your drinking water when it arrives at your home.
- Reports on drinking water quality (e.g. Consumer Confidence Reports)
- Monitors for drinking water quality (e.g. after treatment) and often monitors untreated source water.
- May produce or be involved in the production of Source Water Assessments.
- May be part of associations (e.g. Rural Water Association, Groundwater Association) that provide information and technical assistance.
- May have initiated or be considering source water protection activities.
- May own all or parts of the source area and may have "watershed" staff.

Local government

- Creates many local source water protections (e.g. local ordinances, zoning, building codes).
- May fund source water efforts (e.g. passing bonds, levies).
- Sets rates for public water systems.
- May own or be the water supplier. If the local government is not itself the water supplier, it usually has oversight responsibility to make sure the drinking water provider is doing its job.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

State agencies—may include environmental, natural resources, public health or other agencies

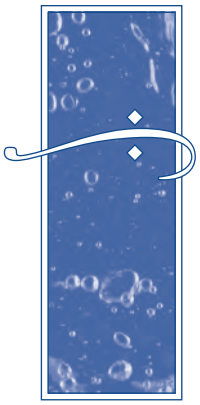
- Regulate drinking water providers to ensure compliance with drinking water standards (except in Wyoming and Washington, D.C., where EPA is the lead drinking water regulator).
- Establish water quality standards under the Clean Water Act; may establish drinking water standards that are more stringent than federal standards.
- Manage the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund, which can be used to fund source water protection projects.
- Manage other state and federal loan and grant programs that may be used to fund source water protection projects.
- Monitor ambient water quality.
- Oversee Source Water Assessment development and may actually produce Source Water Assessments.
- Usually regulate individual dischargers of pollution; enforce laws.
- Control water quantity (as opposed to water quality). This power may not be vested in the state "environmental" agency, but is a state power rather than a federal or local one.
- Where private water utilities exist, the state Public Utility Commission sets water rates and certain regulatory requirements.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Creates federal drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act and sets recommended Clean Water Act water quality criteria. Oversees state adoption, implementation, and enforcement of standards and criteria.
- Gives guidance on producing Source Water Assessments and protecting source water.
- Provides limited funding to the states and to other organizations for Source Water Assessment and protection activities.
- Manages federal databases on drinking water quality and a variety of potential pollution sources such as Superfund sites or Clean Water Act permitted dischargers.
- Creates regulations that control many pollution sources (implementation and enforcement of those regulations are often delegated to the states).
- Retains oversight of state drinking water and clean water programs.

Others

- The Bureau of Reclamation and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manage the operations of many reservoirs that serve as drinking water sources.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture directs important Farm Bill programs that provide the funding and technical support for many source water protection activities related to agricultural and forestry sources of pollution.
- Several federal land agencies (e.g. the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management) manage activities that may affect source waters on federal lands.
- Other agencies have special programs that can affect drinking water protection, such as the Housing and Urban Development Rural Utility Service and the Rural Community Assistance Program.
- Many non-governmental organizations (e.g. National Rural Water Association, Trust for Public Lands) provide technical assistance to help communities develop and implement source water protection plans.



Chapter 4
Talk with others in your community

If you haven't already reached out to others in your community, now is the time! Consider sharing your findings about drinking water quality. Polls, experiences, and common sense show that people care about drinking water. This fact makes outreach about source water protection a unique opportunity to bring together a diverse group of community members to work on an issue of joint concern.

Why bother with the work of outreach? Protecting and restoring your source water is a big job, so the more allies you can find, the better. Given the wide range of potential pollution sources in most watersheds or aquifer protection areas, you will need to bring many people to the table if you hope to address any significant percentage of the problems. And given the fact that many source water protection activities will be voluntary and/or expensive, having the community behind you is vitally important.

Who to talk to

Who cares about safe and affordable drinking water? Just about everyone. Consider reaching out to health care providers, consumer advocates, conservationists, watershed organizations, open-space or smart growth advocates, environmental justice advocates, and anyone concerned about "vulnerable populations" such as parent groups or support groups for individuals with health problems that might be made worse by polluted drinking water. Again, source water protection is a great issue to build coalitions around. For ideas on where to start, see the accompanying box.

What's a "vulnerable population"?

"Vulnerable populations" sometimes are not completely protected by current drinking water standards. People with severely compromised immune systems, such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people on steroids, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, the frail elderly, pregnant women, and some infants can be particularly at risk from waterborne infections. In addition, young children, pregnant women, and some others may be more susceptible to the poisonous effects of some toxic chemicals, ranging from lead to pesticides to the byproducts of chlorine used for water disinfection.

Reach out to those individuals and organizations that are responsible for the land and/or facilities that could be potential sources of contamination to the drinking water supply. They may not be aware that they can play a stewardship role.

What to say

The specifics of what you say to potential allies will of course depend on who they are and whatissues are pertinent to your watershed or aquifer. However, a few general guidelines do apply:

- **Think about the interests of the people you are talking to.** You may come at source water protection with an environmentalist's heart, but your audience may care about public health, open space, maintaining property values, or their image in the community. Start where they are. For ideas, see our online materials on the top five reasons different interest groups care about source water protection at www.protectsourcewater.org.
- **Share what you've found.** Provide a summary of what you found in the assessment or other research you've done. Explain why you are concerned and be sure to propose some solutions—hope is important to engagement. Be brief and clear.
- **Ask them what they think.** Make it clear that you want to learn from them, not lecture them. This gets down to basic human nature—we all want to feel like we have something to offer and are being heard. Plus, you will gather a lot more power if you are open to the ideas of others.
- **Suggest something specific they can do.** This also gets back to human nature—we need to feel like we can make a difference. And (a flip side to human nature), if you walk away without garnering some commitment to action, even the best intentions may never turn into action. Solution? Provide an easy first step. You might ask them to commit to coming to a meeting, to writing a letter to the editor (see Chapter 8 for samples), or to talking to others in the community.
- **Follow up.** The hardest part of any task! Let your contact know you will follow up with them. Then do it. People are often pleasantly surprised when you *promise* to follow up, and then actually *do it!* You can check in to see if they have any new questions, if they've taken action, or if they want to come along to a meeting you have planned with the drinking water provider (see Chapter 5). The important thing is to draw people in for the long haul.

Don't know where to start?

Your best contacts will be local. But if you don't know who to call in your community, try the resources listed here. These national organizations and databases may be able to put you in touch with concerned people in your area.

Consumer Federation of America

The Consumer Federation of America has state and local member groups that may be interested in your work. To find local contacts, go to http://www.consumerfed.org/backpage/statelocal_main.cfm. If you click on "members by issue" you can even search for those who identified themselves as interested in drinking water.

Environmental justice advocates

One helpful place to start is the Environmental Research Foundation, which keeps an extensive list of organizations concerned with toxic pollution. You can search their database by topic, including "environmental justice," at: http://www.rachel.org/orgList/index.cfm?St=3&s=topic.

Land Trusts

Local land trusts can be great partners—especially when it comes to planning and funding protection. Search for local land trusts at http://www.lta.org.

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Physicians for Social Responsibility has a network of about 40 local chapters and nearly 50 student chapters at schools of medicine and public health across the country. To find chapters near you, visit http://www.psr.org/home.cfm?id=chapters

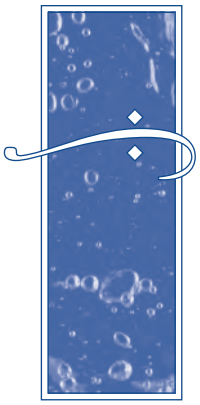
Watershed groups

Good sources of information include:

- EPA's Watershed Information Network, which has a catalog of watershed groups. Find it at: http://www.epa.gov/win/active.html
- Clean Water Network, which has nearly 1,000 member groups around the country that work on water quality. You can find links to the membership at http://www.cwn.org or call 202-289-2395.
- River Network, which has an online Watershed Organization Directory of over 3,600 river and watershed groups, as well as national organizations and agencies, at http://www.rivernetwork.org

Drinking water activist groups

- Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water is an alliance of over 300 organizations working to protect drinking water. Find them at http://www.safe-drinking-water.org/
- Clean Water Fund focuses on safe drinking water and has offices in many states. Find out more at http://www.cleanwaterfund.org/



Chapter 5
Talk with local elected officials and your drinking water provider

Two important decision-makers, and potential allies, deserve special consideration—local elected officials and your drinking water provider. Both of these groups should care deeply about the quality of local drinking water, but may require some special attention.

Reaching out to local officials

There are endless reasons to reach out to your elected officials. Locally elected officials often control the purse strings, they often oversee the drinking water provider directly, and they are usually respected spokespeople with the public. In addition, elected officials can be very helpful in getting answers to tough questions—if you can't get the local water utility or the state agency to answer your questions, ask the elected official to ask on your behalf. You'll see a response then!

Just who you should talk to will vary. In some towns and cities, the mayor's office will be your best bet. In other jurisdictions, county commissioners, city councils, or other boards might be in charge. Not sure who to talk to? Consider contacting your state representative and asking for help identifying who is in charge. Alternatively, call your drinking water provider directly and ask who oversees their work.

It is a good idea to reach out to your state legislative representatives, and in some cases to your U.S. members of Congress. Let them know you are concerned about your drinking water source and ask for their help with any specific campaigns you take on.

Reaching out to your water provider

Your drinking water provider—usually known as a drinking water utility—is a natural ally, right? In reality, drinking water utilities vary widely in their acceptance of source water protection as a strategy. Utilities are heavily invested in water treatment and some have a hard time broadening their focus to include protecting drinking water at its source.

But don't write off your drinking water utility! It is important to connect with them and share your concerns and ideas for solutions, but remember to talk to them in ways that relate to their concerns. Talk to your drinking water utility about source water protection as another layer of protection in the "multi-barrier approach" to providing safe, clean drinking water. Discuss with them the financial benefits of protecting and restoring source water now, before it becomes more expensive to clean up or treat. This idea is commonly summarized as: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

What's the "multi-barrier approach" to drinking water treatment?

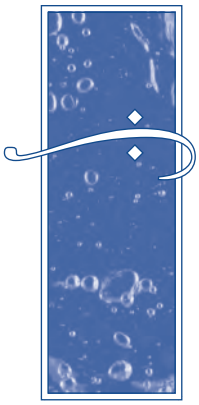
The "multi-barrier approach" creates several layers of protections to ensure drinking water is safe for consumers. Pollution prevention and source water protection prevent or reduce the amount of pollutants reaching our drinking water supply in the first place. Different types of treatment (filtration, disinfection, etc.) at the drinking water plant provide additional barriers between pollution and consumers. Effective operation and maintenance of their pipes and distribution system are also key components of the multiple barriers to contamination. Monitoring and enforcement activities and community right-to-know efforts create the last barriers. All of these pieces need to be in place to ensure public health protection for all consumers.

You can find your drinking water utility by calling your local government offices (such as the mayor's office or the township clerk) or by checking the white pages (check the government pages for listings under water, the public works division, or public health or visit http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm). Before you meet with your utility, it's strongly advised that you get their annual Consumer Confidence Report to familiarize yourself with their source water, contaminants in their water, and other relevant facts. (See page 8 for more on Consumer Confidence Reports and where to find them.)

Action ideas

- **Attend a public meeting of the local water utility.** Utility meetings may be open to the public and can be a good place to learn more about who to talk to. Your Consumer Confidence Report should contain information about upcoming meetings, or you can call the utility directly. Alternatively, call the utility and ask to speak with the person in charge of source water protection. Either way, ask the utility about their plans to use the Source Water Assessment to develop a source water protection plan and/or take action on identified problems. Also ask if they will develop a timeline for implementation activities.
- **Meet with your local officials.** Meeting with your mayor, city council member, or other officials is much easier than you might think. Find their office phone number in the government section of your phone book and set up a meeting. Bring along what you've found in your assessment reading and any questions you have. Ask for help in finding answers.
- **Ask your utility and/or local officials to sign a Watershed Stewardship Pledge.** Ask these leaders to join the community in becoming a Watershed Steward by taking the Watershed Stewardship Pledge (in the case of groundwater sources, change the title accordingly). You can write the pledge to include specific local actions that will protect and restore your source water. Signing the Pledge is a good-will gesture to show they take the assessment seriously and are willing to do their part to reduce pollution risks or problems. The Pledge provides you with a tangible commitment from the leaders and it may also be a way to garner press coverage—whether the leaders sign the Pledge or not. You may want to broaden the Pledge base and ask businesses, landowners, and others in the watershed to sign on. Again, this is a good organizing and media tool.

- **Get them out in the watershed or wellhead protection area!** Even better, get them on the water! You can provide a tour of your source water and highlight pollution problems and, if you can identify a "good actor," possible solutions such as buffer strips or other beneficial practices. Consider inviting reporters along for the ride as well. This creates both a good opportunity for elected officials (they love press!) and an accountability measure (the reporters should ask the officials or utilities what they will do to fix the problem).



Chapter 6
Moving from assessment to action

By this point, you've identified actual and potential pollution sources that may contaminate your drinking water supply, you've learned about the relative threat of those sources, and you've discussed source water protection with a wide range of allies. What's next? It's time to design an action plan for protecting and restoring your source water.

Before you dive in, pause to think about a few questions. The answers to these questions will summarize what you've learned in the previous chapters and set you up for action.

- What is the responsible agency already doing to protect source water? Do they have a comprehensive plan? Are they approaching protection piecemeal? If so, which problems are they tackling?
- What is your local water utility already doing to protect your source water?
- What is local government already doing to protect your source water?
- What are other organizations such as land trusts or conservation groups already doing?
- Is there an aquifer advisory committee or a surface water supply protection committee already in the area? Do they address the problems identified in the assessment?
- What is your niche? Do you want to focus on a particular problem, pollution source, or area that concerns you? Do you want to push the responsible agencies to create a comprehensive protection plan?

Again, hopefully the responsible agency or your water provider has the bull by the horns and has already created a full-scale source water protection plan. If they do have a plan, don't let it run out of steam—find out what you can do to help keep implementation moving. Sometimes it can be a simple as starting an email list for meetings or calling a key decision maker for regular check-ins on progress.

If there is no implementation plan, bring together a group of your allies to build one—this is where the outreach strategies described earlier can really pay off! See the related box for an outline of the key components in any successful plan. Alternatively, it may make sense for you to focus your efforts on an area or specific pollution problem that especially concerns you.

But whether someone else is creating the source water protection plan or you are, you can help move protection forward by identifying specific tactics or programs for reducing pollution problems. How do you move from assessment to action?

Threats to drinking source waters are so diverse that no single answer will work here. However, our Source Water Protection Toolkit can help you make the link between assessment and action. This Toolkit is designed to get you started in the right direction, whatever your drinking source water concern. We've profiled programs and tools that will help you solve on-the-ground problems with technical support, financial aid, or other resources.

The Toolkit is a searchable, online compilation. It is an extensive list of resources, how-to guides, reports, and databases organized by general categories of pollution sources, covering everything from the Clean Water Act to Farm Bill programs, state laws to local ordinances, easements to education, and much more. The Toolkit will connect you with the ideas, programs, and resources you need to protect and restore your drinking source water.

Find the Source Water Protection Toolkit online at: www.protectsourcewater.org

Toolkit source categories:

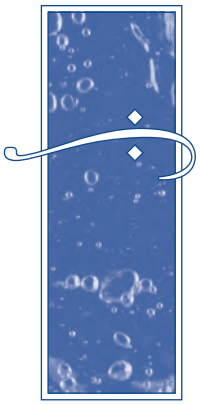
- Agricultural and grazing land sources (private land ownership)
- Cross-cutting, nonpoint sources (tools, tactics and programs that are applicable to a wide range of nonpoint sources)
- Cross-cutting, all sources (tools, tactics and programs that are applicable to a wide range of sources—whether point or nonpoint)
- Federal lands, all sources
- Hazardous waste sources (e.g. landfills, storage tanks, etc.)
- Industrial and sewage treatment discharges
- Logging and other timber management activities (private land ownership)
- Mining discharges
- Miscellaneous
- Residential sources
- Solid waste sources
- Urban wet weather sources

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also developed an online training module that describes numerous source water protection measures for 15 frequently identified potential sources of contamination, from above ground storage tanks to septic systems. You can find the module—Source Water Protection Best Management Practices and Other Measures for Protecting Drinking Water Supplies—at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwa/electronic/ematerials.html#SWP

A Strong Source Water Protection Plan

A good source water protection plan creates a clear, firm call to action. While the details of each plan will vary based on local factors, any good plan should include the following components:

- A list of specific actions to be taken to protect and/or restore the source water. The actions must be described as to-do tasks, not general recommendations or "shoulds" and "coulds." (Be sure and include both "quick and dirty actions" as well as more complex ones. There's nothing like a few small positive accomplishments to make people feel needed, involved and invested.)
- A detailed description of who is responsible for the listed actions.
- A timeline with milestones to measure progress.
- A plan for tracking implementation actions to make sure action items are accomplished.
- A water quality monitoring plan to track changes in ambient water quality as a result of the protection plan.
- An accountability system that reviews progress and provides for review and revision of the plan if progress does not occur.
- Identification of funding needs and a plan for bringing in the funds.



Chapter 7
Identify the funding to make things happen!

The perfect source water protection plan will get you nowhere without the funding to back it up. This is a classic chicken-and-egg situation: You need a good plan in order to identify funding, but you need to know about funding in order to develop a realistic plan. In reality, source water protection plan development and funding investigations will need to occur concurrently.

If you've developed a great relationship with local officials or the local water utility (see Chapter 3), they may be well-versed in the worlds of federal grants, loans, bonds, and levies. Local governments and utilities have access to a different range of funding opportunities than citizens or watershed groups, so having government or a utility in a leadership role can be a real asset. However, you can still help. For example, you can offer to write letters of support for their grant or loan requests, or to help organize volunteer help or donations for any required matching funds (many grants require this!).

If your local government or water utility will not step up to the plate, you are not totally lost. Individual citizens and citizen organizations such as watershed groups or community groups can bring home the bacon. Realistically, this approach may mean that you need to carefully prioritize source water protection activities and choose only the most crucial ones. However, your work can still make a huge difference.

Wondering where you'd even start your funding search? Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Use our Source Water Protection Toolkit to find funding solutions.** The Toolkit identifies many programs and tools that provide funding opportunities. Find the toolkit at: http://www.protectsourcewater.org
2. **Use U.S. EPA's newly updated "Catalog of Federal Funding Sources."** This online tool includes a search function that allows you to search specifically for federal funding programs that support source water protection and restoration. The Catalog also allows you to sort by eligibility—narrowing the returns to only those programs that can help you. Find it at: http://www.epa.gov/watershedfunding
3. **Remember that most states also have their own funding programs for a variety of water quality related issues.** These programs may be even more useful to you than the federal programs. To learn more about your state's programs, ask the Source Water Assessment contact you identified earlier or visit your state's website and explore (research at least the environmental, agricultural, and public health agencies).

4. **Investigate foundation grants.** Citizen groups have a great resource that most local governments and utilities can't access—foundations. Foundations grant funds to support work that matches their mission. Drinking water protection is a wonderful opportunity for grant writing, since it touches on everything from public health to environmental protection and community development. To learn more about foundations that might want to support your source water protection project, visit the Foundation Center website at: http://www.foundationcenter.org

5. **Read the *Action Guide for Source Water Funding: small town and rural county strategies for protecting critical water supplies.*** Although a little dated, this guide provides an overview of strategies for funding small-town source water protection activities. Contact the National Center for Small Communities at 202-624-3550.

A brief selection of source water funding basics

Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

The Safe Drinking Water Act created a Loan Fund that is used by the states to finance drinking water projects. U.S. EPA encourages states to set aside portions of their funding for source water protection activities. To learn more about using the Loan Fund for source water protection, read U.S. EPA's fact sheet at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/source.pdf.

Clean Water Act Revolving Loan Fund

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) programs provided an average of $3.8 billion over the past five years to fund water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, and watershed and estuary management. CWSRF funds are available for a variety of Source Water Assessment and protection activities. For U.S. EPA's fact sheet on the CWSRF and source water protection, see http://www.epa.gov/owm/cwfinance/cwsrf/factsheets.htm#Drinking.

Clean Water Act nonpoint source control grant program

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act requires each state to create a nonpoint source management program to control polluted runoff. Each year, U.S. EPA grants dollars to the states to run their programs. Most states pass a large portion of the funds on to local governments, citizen organizations or other entities for nonpoint source restoration protections. To find out more, visit www.cwn.org and click on polluted runoff.

Farm Bill funding programs

The Farm Bill contains many programs that provide grants, cost-share, and technical support for restoration projects to address agricultural water quality problems. Many Farm Bill programs are very well-funded. For more information, visit our Source Water Protection Toolkit at www.protectsourcewater.org or visit Environmental Defense at http://www.privatelandstewardship.org (click on Farm Conservation Toolkit link).

Community Development Block Grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development

These grants go to drinking water improvements, among many other eligible priorities, in low-income neighborhoods. To learn more, visit http://cfpub.epa.gov/fedfund/search2.cfm?prog_num=16

Rural Utility Service

The Rural Utility Service provides loans, grants and loan guarantees for drinking water projects (as well as waste water and stormwater projects) in rural and low-income areas. For more, visit http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/index.htm

Chapter 8
Share your thoughts with the media

People care about their drinking water. Concern about the safety of drinking water is consistently a top-ranked worry in polls across the country. You can use the media to connect with people who are concerned about safe drinking water.

Don't be intimidated by the idea of sharing your findings with the media. You don't have to be an "expert." Opportunities for spreading the word through the media range from the simple to the complex, so you can choose the tactics you feel comfortable with. For example, a simple letter to the editor can take just a half hour to draft and submit to your local paper, but it will reach a large number of people. On the other hand, organizing a large press event can take a considerable investment of time, but may lead to coverage in daily papers that reach an even larger audience.

The main thing to remember about working with the media is that no matter what approach you choose, you will reach a relatively large number of people who you might never have reached with other tactics.

What's news?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines news, in part, as ". . . newly received or noteworthy information about matters of personal, local, etc. interest . . ." What's important in this definition if our goal is to get coverage in the media?

News needs to be personal and local. Fortunately, drinking water quality and source water protection are wonderfully personal and local issues. Safe drinking water is a personal concern due to the health and financial repercussions. Most drinking water systems are, by their nature, local, and source water protection requires local involvement and action.

In addition to the need for personal and local angles on stories, members of the media like stories involving real people, public health issues, and creative solutions. And, as we've all seen, the media are often interested in stories involving conflict—but remember, don't cry wolf in the hopes of getting media coverage. Clearly distinguish current problems from potential problems and avoid creating health scares about drinking water quality.

The local media angles and hooks will vary, but here are several ideas for spreading the word:

1. **Write a letter to the editor.** The power of letters to the editor cannot be overstated! Especially in small papers, you are nearly guaranteed a spot on the letters page. See the accompanying sample letter to get you started. Remember, though, to make your letter

Spokespeople: finding the best people to speak to the press

No matter who you are, your voice should be heard. However, the media and the public pay particular attention to messages from certain types of people. When talking about safe drinking water, particularly good spokespeople include health care providers such as doctors and nurses, people affected by drinking water pollution such as parents of young children, and consumer advocates when cost issues are under discussion. Other effective spokespeople may include local elected officials or your drinking water provider. Professors from local universities who are experts on public health or water quality issues can also be respected spokespeople.

local and personal and offer a way for people to get involved.

2. **Take your ideas to the editorial board.** Create a summary of the problems you've identified and your proposed solutions. Take it to the newspaper's editors and ask them to editorialize. If you have an alliance with a local official or your water utility, be sure to bring them along; they will make powerful spokespeople.

3. **Release your recommended solutions.** Get your ideas for positive changes out into the community. You may want to release your solutions the same week the Consumer Confidence Reports are mailed to your community or at critical points in the action plan's timeline (assuming there is an action plan). The idea is to share positive ideas for solutions at a time when people will be thinking about their drinking water quality.

4. **Use the measures discussed in "Talk with local elected officials and your drinking water utility about what you've discovered" to generate press coverage.** For example, if you grant an award to an official, let the press know. On the other hand, if your water utility refuses to sign the "Watershed Steward Pledge," let the press know that, too.

5. **Take reporters—and possibly local officials—on a tour of the watershed or wellshed.** If you can make the tour interesting, say by getting reporters into a boat on the river or reservoir, you will be more likely to get good turnout. The tour allows you to show pollution problems and, if you can identify a good actor, point out possible solutions such as buffer strips or other good practices.

Who should I contact?

This is an important question, and the answer varies wildly. Depending on the types of media activities you are undertaking, your resources, and your goals, your media contact list might vary from one local newspaper to a list of 40 papers, TV stations, and radio outlets covering an entire watershed.

Some ideas for contacts include:

- Local weekly papers—often the best outlet for talking about truly local issues.
- Daily newspapers—larger papers that may be a little tougher to get coverage in, but reach a large group of people.
- Radio stations—often forgotten!

- TV stations—may require more effort to get coverage, so think through how to provide good visuals.
- Local newsletters and bulletins.

Sample letter to the editor

Use this sample letter to the editor as a starting point for your own letter. Remember, the more local, personal, and timely you can make your letter, the better. However, keep it short–letters to the editor should generally be 500 words or less. Don't know how to submit your letter? Check the editorial page of your local paper for details or call the paper and ask.

Dear editor:

Do you know where your drinking water comes from? I didn't, until I recently read our drinking water's Source Water Assessment [or, if the assessment is not available, refer to the most recent Consumer Confidence Report from your utility]. According to the assessment, our drinking water comes from INSERT YOUR LOCAL WATER SOURCE(S).

According to the assessment and my conversations with local officials, our drinking water quality is threatened by INSERT POLLUTION SOURCE THREATS. These threats require our community to work together to protect and restore our drinking water. Addressing the problems at the source will better protect our families' health and, in the long run, help keep our water treatment costs down. IF YOU HAVE SOME SOLUTIONS TO OFFER, BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THEM HERE.

Clean, safe drinking water is important to me. If it is important to you, INSERT OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHERS TO GET INVOLVED – A MEETING THEY CAN ATTEND, A PLACE THEY CAN CONTACT YOU FOR MORE INFORMATION, ETC.

Sincerely,
INSERT YOUR NAME

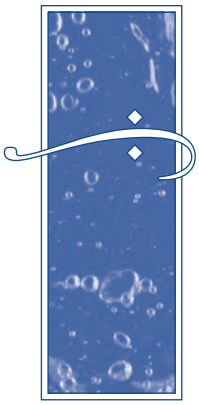
Media!? Eeeek!

The idea of talking to the media, writing a letter to the editor or hosting a press conference can be scary. Don't let it be—learn from all the experience already out there. For example:

- **Media lists.** If you want to reach beyond your hometown paper, consider using media contact lists compiled by others. Ask your local watershed or community group if they will share their list. Or try visiting http://www.nonprofitzone.com/free/medialst.asp. This site provides a localized media list free of charge if you register as a nonprofit organization (as opposed to a business entity).

- **Advice on the basics.** You aren't alone in your fear, so there are plenty of resources out there to help. To get started, visit the Clean Water Network's website at http://www.cwn.org and click on "How-To Center." You'll find links to some of the best media advice on the web.

- **How to do just about anything media-related.** Ready to dive into media work? Check out Environmental Media Service's Green Media Toolshed Training Center at http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/training/index.html. This is a great site full of advice on everything from identifying spokespeople to writing a press release or letter to the editor to "image management." EMS also has a fee-based support site that provides additional materials and even a media contact list database (www.greenmediatoolsheet.org).



Chapter 9
Make it happen!

Remember, creating a source water protection plan is not an end in itself. Follow-up is critical and often the toughest part of any project. Citizens can act as leaders, watchdogs, or team players in the push to keep source water restoration and protection rolling. Consider one or more of the following actions to help ensure the long-term safety of your drinking water source.

- **Take on protection or restoration projects.**
  Can you really take on restoration or protection projects? Sure you can. In fact, on-the-ground work can be the most rewarding task you'll find. It doesn't matter if you're a landowner in a key area—projects can involve public lands or work with willing landowners. You might partner with landowners to provide volunteer labor for a riparian project, or apply for grant funding to restore city property along a reservoir. For case studies of citizen groups who take on restoration projects, see the Clean Water Network website at www.cwn.org

- **Provide progress reports to the public and the media.**
  Keep the public focused on solving your source water problems by providing updates at public forums or in the media. You might consider doing an annual report on progress in protecting your source water. Or highlight stories of volunteer restoration efforts. Or give awards to local leaders who bring home the funding for source water protection. Whatever the focus, keep source water protection in the forefront of your community's mind.

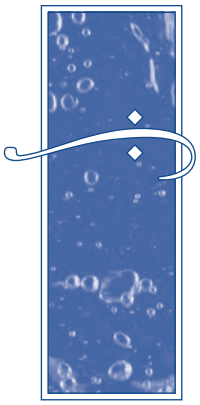
- **Keep the funding flowing.**
  If the only follow-up work you do is to keep the funding flowing, you'll be beloved by everyone! Even if the source water protection plan only called for simple restoration activities, most practices require maintenance. In addition, protecting the gains the community has made will require diligence. Use the tools in Chapter 7 to identify on-going source water protection funding.

- **Work on public education.**
  Again, it is important to keep the need for source water protection front and center in your community's mind. Use the outreach and media skills you polished in Chapters 4 and 8 to continually remind the public about their role in source water protection.

- **Work with other citizens to address the biggest pollution sources in your source water.**
  Often it requires direct and sustained citizen involvement to encourage state and federal authorities to address major polluters in source waters used for drinking water. You can also approach the industrial, municipal, or other polluting facility as part of a coalition to try

to persuade them to clean up their act. Stick with it and organize—it's your community's drinking water. No one has a right to contaminate it or threaten your community's health!

- **Investigate water quality monitoring findings.**
  Monitoring the quality of your source water is the most direct way to measure success. If your state or local agency is conducting water quality monitoring, be sure to follow up on their findings. Alternatively, try working with local volunteer monitoring groups to target their efforts in critical source water areas. You may even want to try your hand at monitoring—this can be a good way to keep the people you met during your initial work engaged and active. . . and it's fun! Wherever your monitoring data comes from, be sure to share the results with others (the annual report suggested in "Provide progress reports to the public and media" would do the trick) and discuss what the monitoring results show. Have the protection efforts been successful? Do the monitoring results show a need for new restoration efforts? Are there problems the original assessment did not identify?



Summary

In summary, the Source Water Assessments provide a unique opportunity for protecting and restoring our drinking source waters. Citizens and citizen organizations such as community groups or watershed coalitions have an important role to play in creating source water protection plans and implementing those plans.

What does this mean for you? If you care about your drinking water, find your assessment, compare it to what you know about your community and watershed, and then share your findings with your neighbors and others. If that is all you do, you'll have done a lot. However, if you can tackle any more of the 10 activities listed in the introduction to this guide, you will have made an even bigger contribution to the health and well-being of your family and your community.

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