

NEBRASKA WELLHEAD PROTECTION NETWORK (WHPN)

Scope: State

Location: Nebraska

SCOPE:

- » Network of individuals, organizations, and agencies in Nebraska that help communities develop and adopt wellhead protection (WHP) programs.
- » The Groundwater Foundation serves as facilitator and record-keeper for the WHPN
- » Meetings include “drop-in” sessions for senators.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- » Initiated by Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality in 2001 and funded by Clean Water Act Section 319 grants.
- » In 2001, organizations supporting WHP programs began to meet in order to discuss their work, identify community needs, and exchange information.
- » Meetings occur quarterly, with WHPN members take turns as host.
- » In 2010, WHPN formed an education subcommittee to improve public outreach and achieved funding for subcommittee activities.

MEMBERS:

Approximately 225 active individuals. Meeting attendance varies by location and topic, but typically includes:

- » Applicable local, state, regional, and federal agencies
- » Nebraska’s 23 Natural Resources Districts
- » Public water systems throughout the state
- » A number of environmental consulting firms

WATER CONCERNS:

Examples of concerns discussed in recent WHPN meetings include

- » Potential for drought, water scarcity
- » Waterborne diseases and drinking water pathogens
- » Wastewater management in wellhead protection areas
- » Proper decommissioning of abandoned wells
- » Controlling runoff, storm water management, rain gardens
- » Impacts of hydraulic fracturing

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STRATEGIES:

- » Networking and collaboration between WHPN members
- » Focus on WHPN member information needs
- » Create consistent WHP messages to public
- » Develop topical themes in consultation with WHP objectives

RESULTS:

- » Education subcommittee redesigned WHP signs, making them easier for the general public to understand.
- » Subcommittee is working to develop a “Why Wellhead Protection?” brochure.