

# Drinking Water Source Awareness

**MEDIA  
CAMPAIGN  
GUIDELINES**



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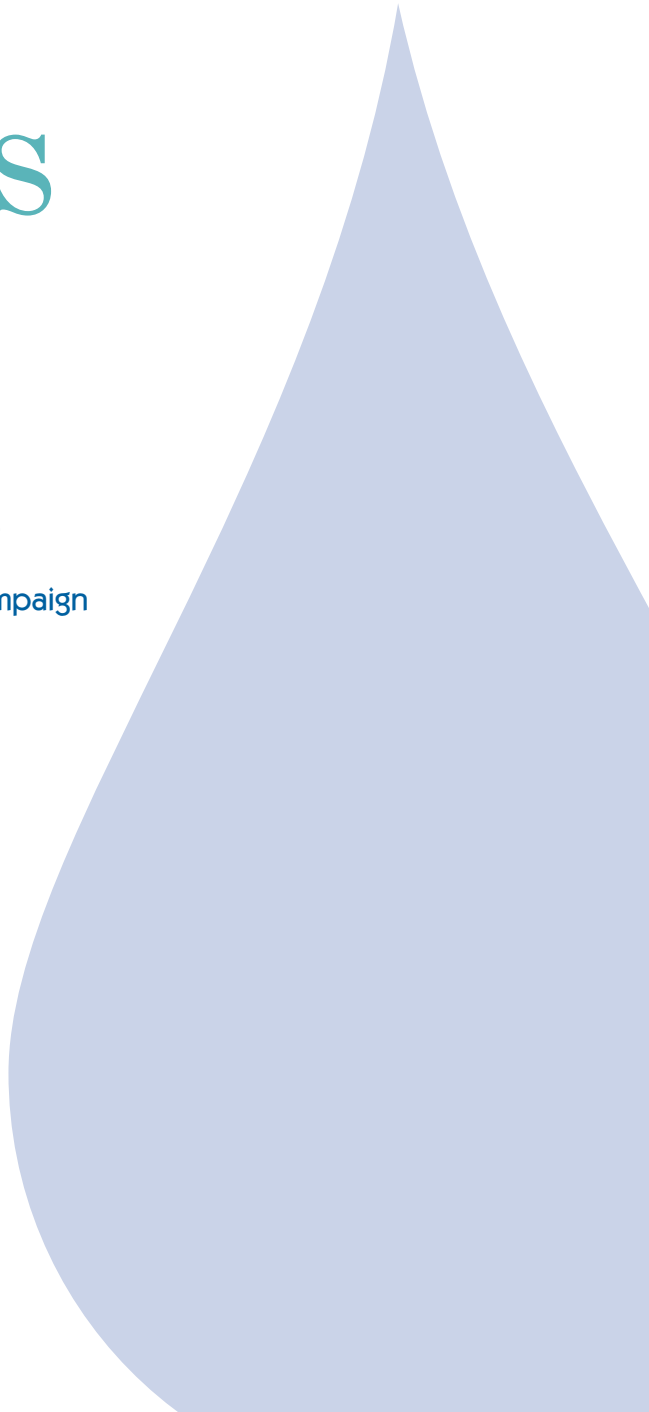
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# About This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to assist small rural communities with developing a media campaign strategy that will increase the awareness of drinking water source protection within their community. Traditionally, small rural communities have been at the short end of receiving the multitude of information available on drinking water source protection from various resources, including the federal government, non-governmental organizations, and other technical assistance providers.

The methodology outlined in this guide is based on results obtained from conducting a source water awareness media campaign in a small, rural pilot community of Lincoln Parish, Louisiana. It is hoped that other communities can use similar methods for increasing awareness about their drinking water sources and ways of protecting them. Included with this guide

are sample promotional materials that were successfully used in Lincoln parish to raise awareness. These materials include a campaign logo, brochures, fact sheets, public service announcements, press releases, and sample posters, and other items.

Electronic texts and graphic files of the promotional materials are also included so that users can customize their own promotional materials using the samples provided as a guide. The electronic text files can be viewed using Microsoft Word, the graphic files are PDFs and can be viewed with Acrobat Reader, and the logo art is in Photoshop Tiff.

# Introduction

## **What is source water protection?**

Before discussing the methodologies for increasing source water awareness through a media campaign, it is useful to explain what is meant by source water protection.

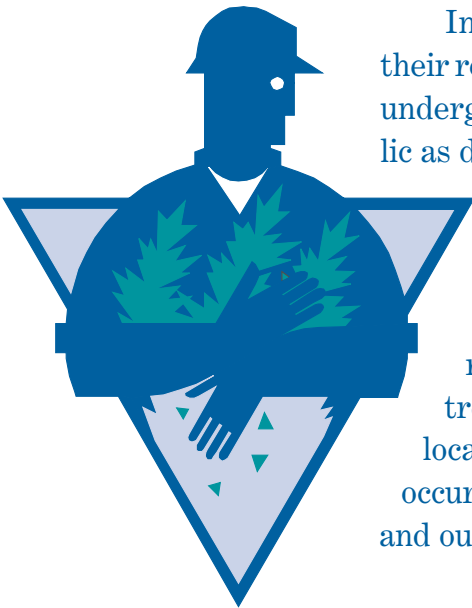
Source water protection is a common sense approach to guarding public health by protecting drinking water supplies. Source water protection has a simple objective: to prevent the pollution of lakes, rivers, streams, springs, and ground water that serve as sources for drinking water. It is part of the growing proactive effort to protect drinking water sources before they become contaminated. Wellhead protection, for example, seeks to prevent the contamination of ground water that supplies public drinking water wells. Many states have successful wellhead

protection programs in operation. Local governments promote source water protection of surface water through sound land management around a reservoir, using local land use planning and zoning authority as the key. Most source water protection programs address both surface water and ground water issues.

Ground water protection, particularly in rural areas, is essential to preserve health and safety and to sustain the local economy. Half of all Americans, and more than 95 percent of the country's rural population, depend on underground sources for their household water supplies. Ground water provides about half of all agricultural irrigation and a third of the water needs for industry.

For generations, water quality has been taken for granted. The passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972 initiated the first concerted federal effort to recognize and address water quality issues. Since then, the nation has made much progress and learned a lot about where pollution comes from and how it may be controlled.

In the past, water suppliers have used most of their resources to treat water from rivers, lakes, and underground sources before supplying it to the public as drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) amendments of 1996 extended our understanding of drinking water issues, and focused our attention on preventing contamination, rather than simply removing it when detected. But moving from treatment to prevention will be challenging for local governments. Except when contamination occurs, drinking water has largely been out of sight and out of mind.



Local governments promote  
source water protection of  
surface water through sound  
land management

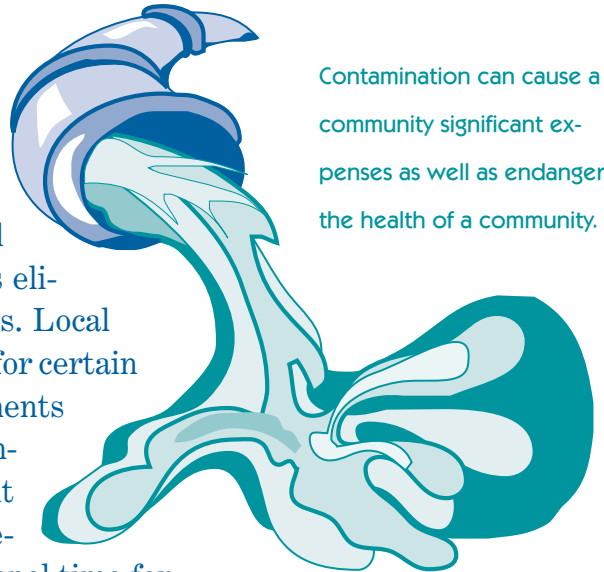
## Why protect sources of drinking water?

If the drinking water source is not protected, contamination can cause a community significant expense as well as endanger the health of a community. Cleaning up a drinking water contamination incident is a complicated, costly, and sometimes an impossible process. A source water protection (SWP) program can protect both ground water and surface water supplies of drinking water.

Every community depends on safe drinking water, and protecting drinking water supplies should be a local priority. Like all prevention efforts, the program is successful if contamination is prevented. Developing a SWP program allows you and your community to be proactive rather than taking a reactionary approach to protecting public health.

The costs of preventing contamination are very small compared to the costs of cleaning up after a contamination incident. Installing treatment facilities, locating new drinking water sources, constructing new systems (i.e., new wells or intakes), and cleaning up contamination sites are all expensive, and sometimes even impossible. Other costs could include decreased property values, loss of tax base, and loss of citizen's confidence in their drinking water, public utilities, and community leaders.

Organizing a SWP program can empower your community and may make your local water systems eligible for money saving opportunities. Local water systems may receive waivers for certain water testing or treatment requirements and thus avoid some potentially expensive chemical sampling or treatment of its water supply— which would result in savings of money and personnel time for water systems. Developing and implementing a good source water protection program is an opportunity for your community to take an active role and work together in protecting public health and the environment.



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# Guidelines for conducting a media campaign

The goal of any media campaign is to effectively disseminate relevant information to a desired audience. It is important to first identify your target audience and then craft your message in such a way that it reaches that target audience. Following are some suggestions on strategies for conducting a successful media campaign.

## **Establish an advisory committee**

Prior to developing a campaign strategy, it can be useful to establish an advisory committee, with members that are both knowledgeable about source water issues and about the community to be addressed. The committee would be central to all strategizing and decision-making for the campaign. Through conference calls and meetings, the advisory committee members would communicate and plan the campaign. Each member would assume the responsibility of carrying out a specific task toward the implementation of the campaign.

## **Form partnerships**

Forming partnerships will increase collaboration for the campaign within the community. To begin, bring to the table community leaders, public health officials, businesses, water utilities, schools, local government, and the agricultural community to help steer the campaign to success. Each entity will provide their unique contribution. For example, community leaders have credibility within the community and can help rally citizens to receive the message. Schools will help to reach the younger student population, and students will in turn take the message home.

## **Assess community knowledge**

Before embarking on your media campaign, it is useful to assess what the community knows about drinking water issues and what their perceptions are, whether real or perceived. This information will help to determine what type of message the campaign should carry and the level of intensity of the message. An initial assessment can also be used as a means of evaluating the success of your campaign, by comparing the community's knowledge of drinking water issues before and after the campaign has been launched.

An example of an assessment instrument for determining the community's knowledge involves developing a questionnaire and soliciting responses from the public by mail or through telephone interviews. If soliciting responses through the mail, you would want to reach as much of the population as possible. If conducting telephone interviews, a random sampling of individuals in the community would be targeted and interviewed prior to launching the campaign. Participants for the assessment can be found by reviewing voter regis-

tration lists or telephone directories. A sample telephone questionnaire is included in the media kit for reference.

A second assessment conducted after the campaign message has resonated in the community for several months can be used in conjunction with the original baseline assessment to determine whether the community's awareness of drinking water issues has increased as a result of the media campaign.

## Involve the community

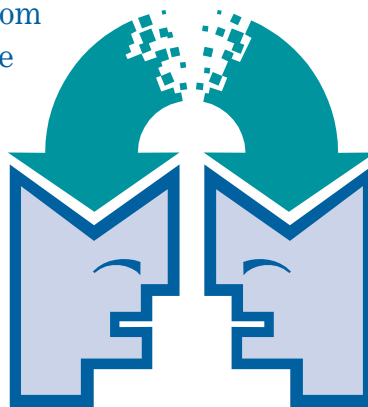
The community can be a vital resource in providing input to the campaign. After all, who better than the recipients themselves to help you determine the format and materials that would be most useful to them.

You can gather community input and kick off the momentum for an awareness campaign by conducting forums, neighborhood meetings, and other modes of establishing dialog among citizens. Citizens could be asked to state examples of the best ways for them to receive information. For example, some citizens may indicate the local paper while others may prefer television or radio. This information will help you target specific media for relaying your messages.

## Develop a campaign strategy

Develop a theme and logo that will catch the attention and sustain the interest of the public. The theme used in this kit is "Protect Your Drinking Water, Protect the Source". The logo is that of a river's meandering journey on land, over an underlying aquifer, as it makes its way into the sea. You can design your own logo or use the electronic format provided in the kit.

Use the input received from the community to help craft the desired message and to help develop various promotional materials. The content of the promotional materials should be short, easy to understand, and audience specific. For example, if the audience to receive the message are



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homeowners, mention behaviors that can be practiced at home to prevent contamination of drinking water. If the audience are farmers, then you will want to emphasize the proper use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Promotional materials could be in the form of news releases, news articles, flyers, fact sheets, and public service announcements for television and radio. Samples of promotional materials that you could use in your media campaign are included in this media kit, and below are descriptions of how each can be used.

### **Camera -Ready Logo**

An electronic campaign logo is provided in this media kit. The logo is a full-color, full-size printable image. The source water awareness logo can be used on newsletters, brochures, or stationary used in your campaign.

### **Source Water Protection: Plain and Simple**

This is an introductory document that describes the basic components of a State Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) as mandated by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1996. This information is useful for local water utilities and state water quality departments. It is also useful for citizens trying to gain a general understanding of State Source Water Assessment Program.

### **Sample Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA)**

Make a copy of the radio Public Service Announcements (PSA) and mail or fax it (with a copy of the news release) to local radio stations in your community. Follow up with a telephone call or personal visit to ask station managers or program directors if you can count on them to give the PSAs as much airtime as possible.

### **Sample News Release**

This provides a way to inform local media about your drinking water awareness campaign. Fill in the bracketed areas of the news release with information about your company/organization/utility and then mail or fax it to local newspapers, radio and television stations in your area. You may also use the news release as a template for providing the media with specific information about activities being conducted in your community to increase drinking water awareness.

**Sample Poster**

This two-color sample poster design can be blown up to a desired size for distribution. Display the drinking water awareness poster in your community center, on the windows of supermarkets or retail stores, in shopping malls, public libraries, health clubs, schools, utility customer service centers, or any other place where it will grab the attention of a wide audience.

**Q&A Fact Sheet**

This can be folded into a nine and a quarter by four-inch pamphlet, small enough to be used as utility bill stuffers to get the word out in the community. Collaboration with water utilities would make this a possibility. These fact sheets can also be placed in doctor's waiting rooms and reception areas.

**Informational Flyer and Community Checklist**

Use these at community gatherings, public meetings, and distribute them at information centers like libraries, community centers, schools, and supermarkets all over the community.

**Resource List**

Raising awareness will likely lead citizens to seek additional information outside of the scope of the campaign. The resource list is a tool for citizens to obtain more detailed information on protecting drinking water sources. The resource list includes information from federal, state, local and organizational sources, as well as useful publications and websites.

Once campaign promotional materials have been developed, consider your dissemination mechanism. Make sure that material reproduction is ample enough to cover the different types of media used as well as the citizen population. Establish a distribution team, (for example, extension services workers, representatives from community water systems, and other volunteers) which would be responsible for ensuring that the various media materials produced are distributed throughout the community.

## Launching the campaign

Once all promotional materials for the campaign have been developed and the message clearly articulated in them, it is time to spread the word— launch your campaign! For small rural communities the most effective way of conveying information as determined by our assessment, is through the local newspaper, and through local radio and television stations. As such, for the campaign kick off, consider putting out news articles announcing the upcoming campaign venture. This will have the community geared up and anticipating the other materials that will follow, such as posters, bill stuffers, flyers, fact sheets, and other promotional materials.

Be sure to target community water systems, schools, universities, libraries, churches, community centers, supermarkets and other public places to present your information on drinking water source protection. Let the campaign run for several months to allow the message to diffuse within the community. Intermittent radio and television public service announcements will sustain the momentum of the campaign and keep the information fresh in people's minds.

## Evaluating campaign impact

A campaign evaluation provides a means of determining how useful your campaign was in increasing citizen's awareness of issues surrounding their drinking water supply. One evaluation mechanism is to conduct pre and post campaign assessments of citizens' knowledge. The pre-assessment gives the evaluator a base-line estimate of the community's initial knowledge and the post-assessment estimates the knowledge gained as a result of the media campaign. As mentioned earlier in this guide, assessment instruments may include input from community forums, telephone interviews and responses from questionnaire mailings.

Ultimately, the goal of your source water media campaign is to increase your community's efforts to protect its drinking water supply. You should document the role your task force played in leading towards a community source water protection program, so that other communities could benefit from your experiences.

# Conclusion

It is important for us to continue proactive strategies that protect drinking water sources from contamination and depletion. Clean and safe drinking water is essential to every community's health and economic viability. Behavioral practices that help to minimize or eliminate pollution to our rivers, lakes and underground water sources are vital to the process of source water protection.

Educating citizens is key to realizing any change in behavior towards protecting our nation's water supply. There has been a multitude of information published on ways to protect drinking water sources. However, this information does not trickle down to all citizens, enabling them to make a difference. The net effect is a static pool of information that fails to create the desired impact for protecting the nation's drinking water supply.

People receive information best when it is presented in a format that they can relate to. Therefore, there is a need to articulate the same message in many different ways to reach the many different audiences. A well-planned media campaign is an effective way to raise issue awareness in your community because it targets all audiences and ensures that your message reaches the maximum number of citizens from all walks of life.

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