

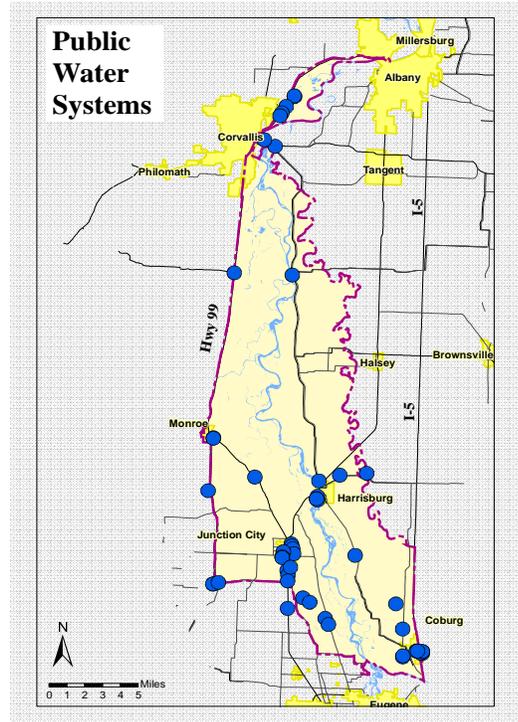
Drinking Water Protection in the Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area

A workshop for people involved with public water system operation and public officials was held on Thursday, February 3rd in Junction City. Over 15 public officials and operators braved the foggy morning weather to attend this introductory event.

Staff from cooperating organizations presented the latest information on the issues facing water systems in the Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA). Nitrate is a known concern in the region, but information was presented on the entire range of potential contaminants. Participants learned about the opportunity to participate in a regional planning effort to protect drinking water sources and reduce operating costs.

Topics included:

- Source Water Assessments: A Valuable Tool
- Nitrate and Other Contaminants
- Groundwater Basics in the Southern Willamette Valley
- The Groundwater Management Area (GWMA)
- Drinking Water Protection Plans
- Developing a Regional Drinking Water Protection Plan
- Benefits and Incentives of Developing a Drinking Water Protection Plan



Towards the end of the workshop, participants were asked to rate broad categories of drinking water protection strategies, such as education and outreach, zoning and health ordinances, technical assistance, and financial incentives. Private industry, municipal public works, golf course operation, state and county health services, a trailer park, and small city administration were all represented during this collaborative process. As this process continues, an even broader range of input will be collected from all the stakeholders in the region.



By separating into groups, the participants were able to review a more specific list of strategies under the broad themes. To close, each small group shared their top three specific strategies with the entire group. The results are listed on the other side of this page.

Please answer the quick survey questions and drop the card in the mail after you look over the protection strategy results. This will help focus the efforts of the GWMA Committee and begin the creation of a core strategy list to distribute to water systems in the Southern Willamette Valley.

Collaborative Prioritization of Drinking Water Protection Strategies

A group of 14 people rated a list of potential strategies on a scale of zero to four (0-4). The top score a category could receive was 56. **Table 1** summarizes the results.

The highest rated specific strategies under the top five broad themes are listed below.

Outreach and Education

- Post “Entering a Drinking Water Protection Area” signs that include spill response contacts
- Provide information at planning/permits department about the protection area
- Encourage groundwater and drinking water educational programs in local schools
- TV/Radio advertisement or Public Service Announcement
- Information booths at community events

Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities

- Coordinate on-farm assessment of irrigation and fertilization practices
- Host workshops for private well owners (taught by OSU Extension Service)
- Annual meetings of water system operators in the area to identify common issues, share information, and stay informed

Establish, Review, and/or Distribute Spill Response Procedures

- Notify emergency response planners in the Drinking Water Protection Areas
- Construct spill containment/diversion structures at wellhead
- Ensure that the public water system is notified in the case of a spill

Recognition Programs

- Use Consumer Confidence Reports as a tool to protect drinking water
- Advertise groundwater monitoring results
- Promote hazardous waste collection programs
- Promote lawn management and landscaping practices that do not pollute drinking water

Regulation and Enforcement

- Request the county or city require businesses to disclose discharge data
- Request the county or city regulate hazardous material transport
- Request the state, county, or city enforce existing regulations (example: Hazardous Waste Reduction Act of 1989)

Table 1: Summary of Results from February 3rd Drinking Water Protection Workshop

| Broad Strategy Theme | Score |
|--|-------|
| Outreach and Education | 56 |
| Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities | 36 |
| Establish, Review, and/or Distribute Spill Response Procedures | 34 |
| Recognition Programs | 32 |
| Regulation and Enforcement | 30 |
| Test and Model Management Practices | 25 |
| Public-Private Partnerships | 25 |
| Research | 23 |
| Zoning/Health Ordinances | 21 |
| Financial Incentives | 16 |
| Land Acquisition | 6 |

A second meeting will take place to:

- identify potential sources of contamination in the GWMA,
- specify management strategies to recommend to the GWMA Committee and to use in a regional plan, and
- share current information on drinking water programs.

Details will be mailed out closer to the date of the next meeting.