

Best Management Plans for WHPA

Since the last magazine there has been a few changes here at NeRWA. When I started in March I was hired to help with Wellhead protection plans. Since our loss of funding in May I had to change gears. I'm still dealing with groundwater and wellhead protection but it's a much more hands-on. My new job is Implementation of on the Ground Type of Actives in the Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA). Quite a mouth full from Wellhead Protection Plans but this new program still has some of the same pieces from my previous program. This new project takes managing the WHPA up another step. This new project is based off a project done in a central Nebraska town. This town was having problems with high nitrates. When they hit maximum contaminant level of 10 this led to the town being put on administrative order (AO). Since this town had small population and not a lot of revenue like most of us it had to take action to protect its wells. Since it was not feasible to drill new ones. The action it took was to implement some different practices in its WHPA. With help from their local NRD and grant money they were able to change some management practices in the WHPA. This is where my new project got its basis. There are a few stipulations to be a part of the project, which are. First you must show a trend of increasing nitrates. Second you must be on AO or quarterly sampling for nitrates. Then third you must have an approved well head protection plan or close to approval. From these criteria I came up with a little more than thirty water systems that can participate in this project. For the next couple of months I will be contacting these water systems to find out who wants to try this new project. Once I get some water systems involved I will start my research by looking at their contaminant source inventory and try to pinpoint sources of possible nitrate contamination. Once this is figured out I will get a committee of stakeholders that are within WHPA and have a few meetings with them to discuss possible solutions. From these meetings we will decide which practices to try in the WHPA. This is when we devise an incentive program for the people willing to try these practices and start applying for grants to help keep costs down for the water system. Once we find out which grants get approval I can help implement these practices in the WHPA. This new project could have a great impact on how we can control nitrate contamination within our WHPA. Though it will only work if we can get people from within the WHPA to buy into these practices. It's a new challenge but I look forward to seeing some extraordinary results from this project. I would also like to thank NDEQ for the chance at this project.