

The Education Continues

By Ken Halvorsen, Source Water Specialist

I recently experienced my first in-service training. It was quite educational. Having it in New Orleans with people from all over the U.S. added to the process. I probably learned more just visiting with people that are doing the same job from states around the country.

It seems everyone has their own source water protection issues. Texas, Oklahoma and North Dakota are having issues with the oil fracking process. Wastewater used in that process is finding its way into the potable water wells and contaminating them. They were told the solution was to dig new wells.

States to the east that have a lot of surface water systems are having to deal with “accidental discharges” of contaminants into the rivers these systems use for their water source. It would be a lot easier to deal with this if they knew it was coming.

During discussions with surface water systems I should have known but had not thought about their regulations. Some allow boating, fishing but no swimming. Apparently humans are more toxic than all the birds, fish and other animals that live in and around the water. The gas and oil that is discharged from boats is not considered a problem. I do understand the mental thing about having people swimming in my drinking water.

Of course, Nebraska is not without its own issues. Increasing nitrate levels in wells is our biggest problem. Numerous wells have already been lost due to unacceptable levels. Others are getting close. Hopefully with preventive and corrective measures the trend will reverse. If your nitrate levels are trending higher, contact us to see what help we can provide you.

I also survived my first presentation to a group of water operators from the Chadron area. I must have done okay, nobody got up and left, unless they were all bored and sleeping!!

If you are interested in a source water protection plan or have any questions, you can call me at 402-607-9750.