

# Source Water Protection For Mobile Home Parks and Apartments

By

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There are over 1,000 mobile home parks and apartment buildings that have their own water supply and are thus classified by the New York State Department of Health as community water systems. These systems are generally located in more rural areas that are not serviced by municipal water systems. Although mobile home parks and apartments generally have fewer resources than municipal water systems, they face many of the same problems that the larger systems do. One such challenge is source water protection. Nearly all mobile home parks and apartments classified as community water systems are serviced by ground water. As such, many are susceptible to potential contaminant sources such as on-site wastewater disposal, petroleum storage, hazardous chemicals, and others. In fact, data from the recently completed New York State Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) indicate that nearly one-quarter of all such systems have ground water sources that are highly to very highly susceptible to various contaminants.

Up until now, mobile home parks and apartments have had little available resources to assist them with source water protection. Not surprisingly, few such systems have approached me with interest in source water protection. However, I am pleased to state that for the first time there is help. Cornell Cooperative Extension has recently completed a set of materials entitled *“Providing Safe Drinking Water: A Primer for Small Businesses and Organizations”*. The purpose of these materials is to provide small drinking water system owners and operators with the information needed to reduce the threat of contamination to their drinking water supply. The materials include an excellent site assessment that covers such topics as hazardous chemical products, grounds maintenance, pesticides, on-site wastewater treatment systems, fuel storage tanks, and wells. Following the self-assessment, the owner or operator devises a list of actions to reduce the potential threats. To me, this so-called action plan could form a critical portion of a broader wellhead protection plan that would also involve looking at off-site contaminant sources, as well as, future planning.

New York Rural Water Association will be collaborating with Cornell Cooperative Extension to help introduce the *“Providing Safe Drinking Water: A Primer for Small Businesses and Organizations”* materials to owner and/or operators of small community water systems, such as mobile home parks and apartments. NYRWA hopes to utilize these materials as part of an overall protection plan for interested water systems.

If you are the owner or operator of a mobile home park, apartments, or similar system, and are interested in protecting your water supply source(s), please contact me at 1-888-NYRURAL ext. 17 or [Winkley@nyruralwater.org](mailto:Winkley@nyruralwater.org). There is one additional benefit of working with us on source water protection. **Upon completion of a wellhead protection plan, you will receive 6.5 contact hours for NYSDOH water operator license renewal!** This is an important incentive that we hope will prompt greater interest. Please contact me if you have any questions.