



# New York Rural Water Association

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## Wellhead Protection Technical Assistance Program

### Fact Sheet

#### Program Background

New York Rural Water Association's Wellhead Protection Technical Assistance Program provides professional technical assistance to rural communities and water systems in the design and implementation of local wellhead protection plans. Since 1995, NYRWA's Wellhead Protection Technical Assistance Program has helped complete nearly 200 plans that protect the drinking water of New Yorkers.

#### Wellhead Protection Planning

A **Wellhead Protection Plan** is a local initiative designed to prevent the deterioration of a ground water well or spring used for public drinking water. Such a plan involves the following steps:

- Forming a planning team;
- Defining the area to be protected;
- Identifying and locating potential contaminant sources;
- Managing the protection area; and
- Planning for the future.

NYRWA's Water Resources Planning Specialist seeks the guidance and input of local individuals during the planning process to ensure that the completed wellhead protection plan reflects the needs and desires of the local community and/or water system. Individuals on the planning team commonly include the water supplier(s), local government officials, and other interested agencies and organizations.

#### Technical Assistance Provided

NYRWA's Water Resources Planning Specialist helps **identify the area that needs protection**. In many cases this area is limited to the Wellhead Protection Area or Source Water Protection Area. This is the area that supplies water to the well or spring. In other instances, the area that should be protected may be broader and include entire aquifer areas within a community. NYRWA's Ground Water Specialist utilizes Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) mapping technology.

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Once the area that needs ground water resource protection has been identified and mapped, NYRWA assists with an **inventory of potential sources of contamination**. This includes a review of information from source water assessment(s) as well as an analysis of present and future land use and land cover. Identifying potential sources of contamination is necessary in order to design an appropriate management program that reduces the susceptibility of ground water resources to contamination.

Next, NYRWA helps **design and implement realistic management strategies** to protect local ground water resources. These management strategies or tools are dependent upon local factors. The strategies could include non-regulatory measures such as public education, acquisition of land or easements, inter-municipal cooperation, monitoring, and/or encouragement of best management practices. Management strategies could also include regulatory tools such as overlay zoning, site plan review, subdivision regulations, other municipal local law(s), and/or New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR).

Finally, it is critical for communities and water systems to **plan for the future**. NYRWA helps to identify future hazards that could threaten local ground water resources as well as plan for future water supply needs. This step commonly includes: identifying areas that are threatened by future development, delineating ground water resources that may be suitable for public water sources, and developing an emergency response plan to ensure that there is an alternative water supply in the event of contamination or other disruption event.

## **About NYRWA's Water Resources Planning Specialist**

**Steve Winkley** has served with NYRWA since the inception of the Wellhead Protection Technical Assistance Program in New York. Steve is a licensed professional geologist with a M.S. in Hydrogeology from Syracuse University and a B.S. in Geology from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He has over 20 years of professional experience in the field of ground water development and protection.

## **About New York Rural Water Association**

**New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA)** is a not-for-profit organization organized in 1979 with the goal of helping communities and systems to comply with complex regulations and to protect the public health and environment. NYRWA provides on-site technical assistance to rural communities and small water and wastewater systems.

### **Contact Information:**

Steven Winkley, Water Resources Planning Specialist  
New York Rural Water Association  
P.O. Box 487  
Claverack, NY 12513

Phone: (518) 828-3155, extension 17  
Fax: (518) 828-0582  
Email: [winkley@nyruralwater.org](mailto:winkley@nyruralwater.org)  
Website: [www.nyruralwater.org](http://www.nyruralwater.org)