



State of Louisiana Wellhead Protection Program

September 2002

Office of Environmental Assessment

Issue 6



SAVE A LIFE. PREVENT CONTAMINATION. HOW? PLUG AN ABANDONED WATER WELL.

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Abandoned water wells pose serious safety hazards. An abandoned well is a direct pathway for contaminants to be introduced into an aquifer. Some wells are up to 36 inches in diameter and can cause a fatal accident if a person were to fall in. This last reason is best supported by the 1987 case of eighteen month old Baby Jessica who fell into a well with a diameter of only 8 inches in Midland, Texas. These two rather compelling facts are among the reasons why DEQ stresses that abandoned water wells **have to be plugged!**

Plugging a well refers to removing all pumps and piping, filling the well with cement grout, cutting of the well at ground surface and then filling the hole to make it level. In November of 1985, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Office of Public Works, Water Resources Section issued the publication titled "Water Well Rules, Regulations and Standards – State of Louisiana." These regulations describe how water well contractors become licensed and how wells are registered. The regulations also describe the standards for drilling water wells and for

plugging abandoned wells. A well does not have to be plugged if it is on standby, or if it is inactive, but is maintained for future use. According to the regulations, a well is considered to be abandoned "if its use has been permanently discontinued; its pumping equipment has been permanently removed; the well is in such a state of disrepair that it cannot be used to supply water and/or has the potential for transmitting surface contaminants into an aquifer; the well poses potential health or safety hazards, or the well is in such a condition that it cannot be placed in the active, standby, or inactive status."

The regulations also state that the owner of an abandoned well has to plug it in accordance to the methods and standards of the

regulations within ninety days of the initial date of the abandonment. Private domestic well owners can plug their own abandoned wells as long as they follow the rules and regulations.

An important component of your Wellhead Protection Program should be an attempt to locate and plug all abandoned wells within the Wellhead Protection Area. Plugging an abandoned well could prevent an aquifer from becoming contaminated! Plugging an abandoned well could save a life!

For more information about the rules and regulations for plugging abandoned water wells, contact the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Office of Public Works, Water Resources Section at (225) 379-1434.



An example of an abandoned well recommended to be plugged.

**FACT:**

According to National Geographic, the United Nations said that 2.7 billion people will face severe water shortages by 2025 if consumption continues at its current rate.

**THINK:**

If, for one year, everyone in the United States turned off the water while brushing their teeth, approximately 365 billion gallons of water would be saved.

WHPP ON TRACK: EMPHASIS ON PROTECTION

The State of Louisiana Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP) completed its goals for 2002 with the addition of Baton Rouge Water Company, Parish Water Company and the City of West Monroe to its list of approved Wellhead Protection Programs. The WHPP is a program funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and implemented by the Department of Environmental Quality, that seeks to prevent the contamination of underground water supplies to avoid having municipalities face costly clean up efforts and health risks associated with contamination. Through the program, Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs) were delineated for 85 wells in Baton Rouge and 6 wells in West Monroe. Potential sources of contamination located in each WHPA were documented and mapped and are on file at the water system office. Each system also submitted a contingency plan in case of emergency situations.

Baton Rouge Water Company and Parish Water Company serve a total population of 321,000, which to date is the largest number of people served by

one system in the WHPP. The City of West Monroe adds a population of 14,000 to this year's accomplishments. Don Haydel, DEQ geologist in the WHPP, said, "After Baton Rouge, over 54% of the population served by ground water-dependent community water supply systems are covered by the WHPP. The target is to reach 100% of the population by 2010 and we are making every effort to meet that goal."

So far, 170 systems have implemented Wellhead Protection Programs. While the WHPP continues to approve programs, it also hopes to expand its mission. The next step for the WHPP will be to conduct a statewide public awareness campaign about the importance of protecting the sources of our drinking water. Also, with the completion of the Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) by May 2003, the WHPP will be able to use the assessment information to focus on protection issues. The protection phases of the WHPP are being strengthened as they are directed toward systems deemed "higher priority" by SWAP.

DEQ SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is scheduled to complete source water assessments for each water supply in the state by the May 2003 deadline set by the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996. DEQ and contractor GK Associates have already completed 1499 out of 1903 total ground water system assessments and 13 out of 82 total surface water system assessments. The remaining systems will be assessed by the established deadline. The completion of the ground water system assessments will be followed by a susceptibility analysis that will be performed to rank each system as having high, medium, or low susceptibility to contamination. This ranking will be used to develop and implement water supply system protection efforts. Systems ranked as highly susceptible to contamination will be the first to receive protection suggestions such as contin-

gency planning, best management practices, local ordinances, and public education.

With all assessment activity tentatively completed by May 2003, the rational focus will then be shifted to protection efforts. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will soon begin to set criteria for protection activities. Until then, DEQ will be drafting protection efforts as an extension of its Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP).

DEQ will embark on a statewide public awareness campaign emphasizing protection of drinking water sources. The goal of the campaign will be to educate the community and encourage community involvement. DEQ also plans to help communities set up local committees that can continue educational efforts, inspire protection measures, and work with water systems to keep drinking water safe.

WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAMS APPROVED AS OF 2002



City of Abbeville
 City of Alexandria
 Town of Arnaudville
 Atlanta Water System
 Avoyelles Waterworks District #1
 Avoyelles Ward 3 Waterworks Dist.
 City of Baker
 City of Bastrop (Peoples Water Service)
 Bayou Bonne Idee Water System, Inc.
 Bayou Des Cannes Water System
 Beauregard Waterworks Dist. #2
 Belmont Water System
 Town of Bernice
 City of Breaux Bridge
 Town of Broussard
 Buckeye Water District #50
 City of Bunkie
 Cadeville Water District
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #1 (Moss Bluff)
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #2 (Mossville)
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #4
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #5
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #7
 Calcasieu Parish W.D. #9 (Carlyss)
 Cameron Waterworks #2
 Cameron Waterworks #11
 Town of Campiti
 Town of Cheneyville
 Town of Church Point
 Village of Clarks
 Town of Colfax
 Town of Columbia
 Columbia Heights Water District
 Town of Cottonport
 Town of Coushatta
 Couteau Water System
 Creston Water System
 Town of Delcambre
 Town of Delhi
 Village of Delta
 City of DeQuincy
 City of DeRidder
 Village of Dry Prong
 Town of Duson
 East Columbia Water District
 Village of Epps
 City of Eunice (LAWCO)
 Town of Forest Hill
 Fort Polk (U.S. Army)
 Village of Gilbert
 Village of Goldonna
 Town of Grand Couteau
 Village of Grayson
 Greenwood Water System
 City of Hammond
 Town of Haughton
 Hayes Water System
 Hebert Water System
 Village of Hessmer
 Town of Iowa
 City of Jeanerette
 Jeff Davis Central
 Town of Jena
 City of Jennings
 Town of Jonesboro
 Kolin-Ruby Wise W.D. 11A
 City of Lafayette
 Town of Lake Arthur
 City of Lake Charles
 LaSalle Waterworks Dist. #1
 City of Leesville
 Lawtell
 Leland Water System
 Lena Water System
 Town of Leonville
 Liddieville Water System
 Town of Mamou
 Town of Mangham
 City of Mansfield
 Town of Marksville
 Village of Maurice
 Village of Mer Rouge
 Village of Mermentau
 Milton Water System
 City of Minden
 Mire Branch Water Corp.
 Town of Montgomery
 Monticello Water System
 Town of Moreauville
 Morehouse Consolidated W.D. #2
 Morrow Water System
 N-E-W Carroll Water Dist.
 City of New Iberia (LAWCO)
 North Crowley Water Corp.
 North Franklin Water System
 North Hodge
 City of Opelousas
 Village of Palmetto
 Pine Hill Water System
 City of Pineville
 Pioneer-Darnell Water System
 Town of Plaquemine
 Town of Pollock
 Pollock Area Water System
 Village of Powhatan
 Prarie Ronde Water System
 Rapides Parish Waterworks Dist. #3
 City of Rayne
 Town of Rayville
 Red Chute Utilities
 Red Oak Water Co., Inc.
 Robeline-Marthaville Water System
 Rural Franklinton Water Corp.
 Sandy Lake Water System
 Savoy-Swords Water System
 Town of St. Francisville
 Town of St. Joseph
 St. Landry Consolidated #2
 Town of Sibley
 Village of Sicily Island
 Town of Simmesport
 South Bonne Idee Water System
 South DeSoto Water System
 South Grant Water System
 South Oakdale Water System
 S.E. Hodge Water System
 Southwest Ouachita Waterworks, Inc.
 Southwest Allen Parish W.D. #2
 City of Sulphur
 City of Tallulah (Peoples Water Serv.)
 Tangipahoa Parish Water System
 Union Springs Water System
 United Water System
 Town of Urania
 Village Water System
 Town of Vinton
 Walnut Bayou Water Association
 Ward Four Water District
 Town of Waterproof
 West Allen Parish Water District
 City of Westlake
 Weston Water System
 Town of White Castle
 West Grant Water Association
 West Winnsboro Water System
 Town of Winnsboro
 Town of Wisner
 City of Zachary
 Zone Two Water System
 Bayou Liberty Water Association
 City of Bogalusa
 City of Crowley
 City of Denham Springs
 East Feliciana Rural Water Association
 Town of Farmerville
 Louisiana State Penitentiary
 Louisiana Tech University
 Mamou Road Water System, Inc.
 Mandeville Water Supply
 City of Plaquemine
 City of Ruston
 Ward II Water District
 Winnfield

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
THIS YEAR'S APPROVED
WHPPs!**

Baton Rouge Water Co.
 Parish Water Co.
 City of West Monroe

REACH OUT AND EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Survey**– Conduct a customer survey to determine your customers’ “knowledge, attitudes and practices” about protecting the watershed. This would also be a good time to assess their trust in the quality of their drinking water.
- **Guide**– Distribute information to your customers about household hazardous materials, septic tanks, pesticide use and other potential sources of contamination. Any protection measures they take will protect your assets in the future.
- **Sponsor**– Sponsor a “Watershed Festival” in your community or at a local school. Invite the media and it can be a positive public relations event for your company. For directions on how to obtain information about sponsoring such an event, contact Micaela Marchand at (225) 765-0853.
- **Remind**– Again, tell your customers if a copy of the source water assessment program or wellhead protection program is available at your local office.

**Adapted from Source Protection: A National Guidance Manual for Surface Water Supplies*

WATER FACTS:



“Ground water is a significant water supply source– the amount of ground water storage dwarfs our present surface water supply. At any given moment it is 20 to 30 times greater than the amount in all lakes, streams, and rivers of the United States.”

The U.S. is the largest water well market in the world with 15.9 million wells.

**Source: National Ground Water Association*

GOT NEWS? IDEAS?



If you have any news or ideas that you would like to share with other communities in next year’s issue of the newsletter, please submit them to Don Haydel or Micaela Marchand at the following address:

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Baton Rouge, LA 70884-2178

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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