

Acadia Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee Meeting April 29, 2004

1. Meeting called to order. Thank you and introductions.
2. Discussion of Training Manual –
Mary Gentry went over the contents of the training manual that explains what the Drinking Water Protection Program is about and defines the role of the Committee. Ms. Gentry stressed that the Committee belongs to the Committee-members. She informed the Committee that the three main goals that DEQ would like the Committee to accomplish are visits to potential sources of contamination, promotion of ordinances, and distribution of material. She told the Committee that the visits to potential sources of contamination would be the primary subject for the next Committee meeting. Jesse Means then told the Committee about the drinking water protection ordinance that DEQ developed as a model. Mr. Means told the Committee that in Avoyelles Parish, the ordinance was introduced to the Avoyelles Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee and they approved it and came up with a plan of action to get it passed. The plan of action was to get the ordinance passed by the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury to cover all public supply wells outside any municipality's jurisdiction and to have those municipalities with public supply wells within their jurisdiction pass an ordinance as well. He told the Committee that the ordinance was approved by the Avoyelles Parish Planning Commission and then went to the Police Jury, where it is now under consideration and will be voted upon at their next meeting. He told the Committee that the Chairman of the Avoyelles Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee is scheduled to talk to the Police Jury's lawyer to make sure the ordinance is suitable. Mr. Means also told the Committee that the ordinance is currently under consideration in three municipalities and that it has been passed in another one. He told the Committee that it looks like there is a good chance the ordinance might get passed where it needs to. Cindy Redlich asked what the ordinance does and Mr. Means said that it basically prohibits new facilities that could contaminate a water supply from being built within 1000' of a public supply well and that since it is a model, the Committee can change it however they want to better fit their community. Mary Gentry then discussed what is meant by the

distribution of material, saying that DEQ has developed various educational materials about protecting drinking water that the Committee can use. Ms. Gentry then went over what the Committee members can do as volunteers. She said the first thing that can be done is to visit the potential sources of contamination. She showed the Committee the educational material that is distributed during the visits and showed a script of what can be said during the visits. Jesse Means said that DEQ and the Avoyelles Committee received a positive response everywhere they went for the visits in Avoyelles Parish. Mary Gentry offered the passage of a drinking water protection ordinance as another thing that can be done. She explained again what the ordinance does and went over things that can be done to get a drinking water protection ordinance passed. Margaret Frey asked about the location of LSU-Eunice's wells to see if the Committee could pass an ordinance for them. Ben LaBiche explained that LAWCO Eunice, which isn't in Acadia Parish, supplies LSU-Eunice. There was more discussion by the Committee about LSU-Eunice's wells. Mary Gentry recommended that the Committee meet with the Police Jury and town councils in Acadia Parish and get their lawyers involved. She then showed the Committee the model ordinance, copies of which were included in the training manual. Jesse Means stressed the effectiveness of having an ordinance since it is a very good legal mechanism to protect drinking water. Mary Gentry then went over the fact sheets that have been developed under the Drinking Water Protection Program. Jesse Means told the Committee about the irrigation well fact sheet and the blank spill plan. Margaret Frey said it's important to get people with storage tanks to have a means of containment. Mary Gentry said that the information that the Committee gets to the public could be targeted toward the drinking water protection needs of the community. She then explained that the basic message of the Drinking Water Protection Program is to tell people where their water comes from, why it's important to protect, and what they can do to protect it. She then gave a brief history of the program, starting off with a discussion of the Wellhead Protection Program, moving to the Source Water Assessment Program, and then on to the Drinking Water Protection Program. She showed the Committee the glossary and media sections of the training manual. She told about how the media has been used to get the word out. Ben LaBiche suggested putting messages on drinking water protection in water bills. Jesse

Means said how in Avoyelles Parish, newspaper articles and the radio has been used. Margaret Frey said that things like the “How To Conserve Drinking Water In Your Home” could be included with water bills. Mary Gentry said that using water bills would be a very good idea. Ms. Frey told about a local morning radio show that could also be used. Ms. Gentry then went back to the media section of the training manual and discussed the sample letterhead and media contacts. She said that in Avoyelles Parish, used oil recycling was promoted in the newspaper. She went over the Earth 911 sheet next. Nick Simoneaux asked who covers the cost of getting everything with the Committee done and Ms. Gentry explained how DEQ will cover the costs of most of the work and assists the Committee as much as possible. Mr. Simoneaux told about how he used thirty-second radio advertisements to promote some agricultural programs. Mary Gentry asked Howard Fielding to tell about any grants that may be available, to which he replied that they are out there, but the cost of getting one may outweigh the benefit. Margaret Frey talked about the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) funding support for abandoned irrigation well closures. Mary Gentry said that maybe the Committee could become involved with that program, and Jesse Means explained how the Avoyelles Committee is doing just that with this same NRCS program by advertising its availability on the irrigation well best management practices fact sheet. Nick Simoneaux stated that the Committee may have to file for 501C3 status, which is the federal fiscal agent status for non-profit organizations. This designation allows the organization to be eligible for certain grants. Ms. Gentry and Jesse Means explained that there are grants out there.

3. Discussion of Activities and Progress of Avoyelles Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee –

Jesse Means discussed briefly what all had been accomplished by the Committee in Avoyelles Parish. He went over how the visits to potential sources of contamination and the introduction of the ordinance went. He said the Avoyelles Committee is getting information on used oil recycling and well abandonment out to the public. He talked about how the Committee developed the fact sheet on best management practices for irrigation wells and the blank spill prevention plan and how it is looking into doing something on the proper maintenance of sewage treatment systems. Mr. Means told

how the Avoyelles Parish Committee operates. He stated that a chairman was elected who runs the meetings based on the agenda. The agenda is set by the previous meeting's business and by what needs to be addressed. DEQ types up each agenda and gets it approved by the Committee Chairman. Mr. Means records the meeting minutes and types them up to be distributed to the Committee members. He also said that meeting reminders are sent out by DEQ prior to each meeting. Howard Fielding then went over the most threatening and most prevalent potential sources of contamination that were found in Avoyelles Parish and how protection efforts have been directed toward those facilities. Mr. Fielding told how the Committee really wanted to address above ground storage tanks and how they invited the State Fire Marshal and a representative of DEQ's enforcement staff to discuss the regulations for them. He discussed DEQ's regulations on spill plans and how the Committee decided to develop a blank spill plan from what it learned. He also told how the Committee had invited a local fuel distributor to discuss above ground storage tanks and how through this contact, the blank spill plans will be distributed. Jesse Means stated that this is just an example of how DEQ couldn't be where it is now in its protection efforts in Avoyelles Parish without the help of the Committee. Nick Simoneaux asked if an ordinance that addresses the need for people that have above ground storage tanks to have spill plans could be developed, to which Jesse Means said that it is a possibility. Cindy Redlich asked if a copy of the regulations on spill plans could be provided. Mary Gentry said DEQ would provide a copy. Ben LaBiche said that he thinks underground storage tanks would be more of a problem. Jesse Means explained how when dealing with ground water, they are, but that there are strict regulations about their construction. Howard Fielding said that old underground storage tanks are a problem because they sometimes corrode and leak. Mr. LaBiche talked about how common underground storage tanks are, saying that even mailmen or other people who did a lot of driving for their work would have their own underground storage tanks at their home. Andrew Gauthreaux told the Committee about an old service station in Crowley where he knows an old underground storage tank still exists. Cindy Redlich asked what person should be called for questions or concerns with the regulation of above ground storage tanks and Jesse Means told her that there's really no one particular person to call, but that DEQ

does have a contact number that can be called to report problems or ask about regulatory compliance for above ground storage tanks. Mary Gentry showed Ms. Redlich the DEQ contact number. Margaret Frey talked about a facility that voluntarily put a berm around an above ground storage tank. Ben LaBiche said that insurance companies reduce the rates on facilities that put berms around above ground storage tanks. He said that's why many water systems put berms around any above ground storage tanks they have.

4. Selection of Committee Chair Members –

Mary Gentry explained to the Committee that a chairman should be selected, as well as any other officer that may be needed. Jesse Means explained again that in Avoyelles Parish, there is only a chairman, and that DEQ records the minutes. Margaret Frey nominated Nick Simoneaux. The nomination was seconded and the Committee agreed. Mr. Simoneaux accepted the position. Mary Gentry informed the Committee that the next meeting would be about the visits to the potential sources of contamination. She asked what the Committee thought about setting aside a day to complete the visits as a group activity. Howard Fielding asked the Committee how many water systems are represented on the Committee and the Committee members counted six systems. The Committee then discussed the best way to get the visits completed. The Committee then decided to rotate the position of secretary so that no one person has to record the minutes at every meeting.

5. Open Discussion –

Jeff Bouillion asked about how the Committee could get the new water district (currently under construction) involved with the program. The Committee then discussed this matter at depth. Mary Gentry then told the Committee how it could help DEQ check for updates to Source Water Assessment reports.

6. The next meeting was set for Thursday, May 27 at 6:30, to be held in the same location as the current meeting. The Committee also decided to hold its meetings on the last Thursday of every month. It was also decided to serve a meal at the next meeting.

7. Meeting adjourned.