



# Protecting the Source

PRWA SOURCE WATER  
PROTECTION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

## System Spotlight: Upper Schuylkill River Watershed

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Front row: Matt Genchur, PRWA; Jan Schaeffer, Schuylkill Haven; Amy Batdorf, PA DEP. Back row: Joe Hebelka, PA DEP; Gary Witmeyer, Frackville; Mike Burda, Blythe Township; Jim Cleary, Minersville; Pat Caulfield, SCMA; Carl DeLuca, PA DEP.

In recent issues of our newsletter, we have chosen to shine a spotlight on a water system that has gone above and beyond what is required of them as it relates to source water protection. Taking the time to establish a steering committee, looking for all potential hazards that threaten their raw sources of water, and establishing management strategies to address these hazards are all voluntary under the current national standards. When a system has chosen to make this effort and gain PA DEP Approval for their project, we certainly like to commend and recognize them. So, what do we do when there are six systems that organized together in a joint effort spanning nearly four years? We put them in our newsletter.

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***Since July 2008, PRWA Source Water Protection staff have assisted 72 Public Water Systems through the efforts of their new Course #3186 - “Micro Water Systems: SWP Lab.” If you serve a population of less than 500, read more about the course in the article inside this issue and discover where you can attend the course in future sessions.***

## System Spotlight continued...

The system representatives pictured on page 1 are part of the Upper Schuylkill River Source Water Protection Program. The central location for the effort is Pottsville, probably best known for the Yuengling Brewery, and the surrounding communities. The system participants included Ashland, Blythe Township, Frackville, Minersville, Schuylkill Haven, and the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority. Collectively, these systems supply water to almost 63,000 people in Schuylkill County, or just over 40% of the county's population.

Their regional effort began in 2005, with Ashland Borough individually submitting and receiving a WREN grant for "Water Supply Area" signs on PA Route 61 and Interstate 81, both of which cross their source water watershed. However, as is state regulations, a PA DEP Approved source water protection plan is required for posting of these signs along state-maintained roads. So, PRWA began to work with Ashland to develop this plan. Early in discussions, it became apparent that a regional effort focusing on the Route 81 corridor would make sense from a source water protection perspective. In July 2005, the first of many meetings was held with the water systems in the Upper Schuylkill area. Nearly 4 years later, and through multiple plan reiterations, their Plan was approved by the PA DEP Northeast Regional Office in January 2009.



Interstate 81 poses the largest potential threat to most of the systems involved in the Upper Schuylkill Watershed effort.

Highlights of their effort include:

- A steering committee that beyond the water systems includes local economic development interests (SEDCO), the Schuylkill County Conservation District, Schuylkill Headwaters Association, the Schuylkill County EMA, and a local coal company.
- A membership with other County and regional planning ties, such as fire chiefs/emergency management, county comprehensive planning, and stream remediation projects.
- Education of the system customers via Consumer Confidence Reports, speaker's bureaus, and other education propaganda.
- Coordinating with County Emergency Response to discuss the locations of the source water watersheds and protocols for dealing with accidents in these areas.

The completion and Approval of this program is an excellent example of how source water protection can work at a regional level. Public water suppliers often share the same threats, but often do not have a sounding board for advice and action with their peers. In this case, they had a common threat, and have taken many steps toward protecting themselves in the future. If you have any questions regarding the effort, please contact Pat Caulfield, committee chair, at the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority (570) 622-8240.

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## Pennsylvania American Water Now Accepting Applications for Environmental Grant Program

Pennsylvania American Water will award grants of up to \$10,000. The program is designed to support diverse types of activities.

To qualify, a proposed project must be located within Pennsylvania American Water's service area, completed between June 1, 2009 and November 1, 2009, and be a new or innovative community initiative or serve as significant expansion to an existing program.

Grant information and application forms can be found online at [www.pennsylvaniaamwater.com](http://www.pennsylvaniaamwater.com). Applications must be postmarked by May 1, 2009, and mailed to: Pennsylvania American Water, 800 West Hersheypark Drive, Hershey, PA 17033. Attn: Terry Maenza.

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## Addressing a “Small” Challenge

Since July 2008, PRWA has been offering a source water protection course tailored to the unique needs and challenges of the very small systems in Pennsylvania. Course #3186 – “Micro Water Systems: SWP Lab,” gives community water systems that serve less than 500 an opportunity to create a basic Plan for protecting their typically few sources of drinking water. Granted, we have trained a few systems that don’t fit the target audience (for example, a kosher poultry processing plant), but a majority of the participants have been exactly who we are trying to serve.

Operating a small system like this offers many challenges with increased regulations and limited manpower. Our course is designed to guide these operators through the “steps” of source water protection in the classroom and then follow it up with a visit to the system to ground truth what was discussed in class.

The end result of the course is a source water protection plan that notes the risks to the sources of drinking water, identifies management strategies to address these risks, and a holistic approach to protection.

For water operators, the course is 9 contact hours, with the hours being made up of in-class training and the onsite follow-up visit. We currently have courses scheduled in May, with additional offerings in August, October, and December in 2009. The May 19 & 21 courses will be in Bartonsville and Clarks Summit, respectively. The other specific course locations for this year have yet to be identified, but will take place in the NW, NC, and SW DEP regions of Pennsylvania. Please visit the PRWA website for updated course dates and locations and contact one of the source water protection staff for more information about the course. Our next newsletter in June will highlight this course, the specific findings and results, and the future direction of this offering.

## SWPTAP: An Opportunity for Better Science

The Source Water Protection Technical Assistance Program (**SWPTAP**) can help establish and develop local SWP programs. DEP has secured the services of a contractor to provide technical expertise and assistance to interested community water systems for the development of local SWP programs. SWP programs can involve wellhead protection for ground-water sources, watershed protection for surface-water sources or both for systems using both ground water and surface water.

Types of Projects include:

- Rigorous wellhead protection area delineation
- Enhanced contaminant source inventories
- SWP area management or planning (ordinance development, transfer of development rights, early warning monitoring systems, public education activities, road signs, emergency response plan enhancements/contingency planning)

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Interested parties should complete and submit a SWPTAP Information Request Form. The form and information for this program can be obtained by:

- Visiting the DEP website at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us); Search: “Source Water and Groundwater Protection”
- Contacting the appropriate DEP Regional Office; or
- Contacting the DEP Source Protection Section at (717) 772-4048.

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For more information about Pennsylvania's Source Water Assessment and Protection Program, visit their website at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us), click on "Water" and choose Source Water and Groundwater Protection

This newsletter has been established by the Source Water Protection staff at the Pennsylvania Rural Water Association. Please note that some of the articles have been shortened to allow a wide variety of topics. The full articles and more information on Source Water Protection can be found at our website:

<http://www.sourcewaterprotection.org>

**Suggestions for SWP related articles are Always welcome! Contact one of the staff members listed below:**

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If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email the request to Matt Genchur