



## **USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Wellhead Education Conducted by Oklahoma Youth**

A 4-H Environmental Stewardship Impact Project is developing youth, adult and community partnerships across Oklahoma to educate rural residents about their drinking water quality and the management of private wells. Training and equipment for basic wellhead assessment, water testing, and GPS use were provided to Educators and youth from 20 counties in Spring, 2005. Participating youth, mostly grades 7-8, have a major role in deciding the direction of the Project along with their county 4-H Educators, so varying approaches may be taken in different counties. Many conduct well water screening tests for parameters including pH, hardness, alkalinity, nitrate and TDS, and perform homestead assessments, mapping the location of wellheads in relation to potential pollution sources. They discuss the results with well owners, providing basic information about wellhead management and pointing out potential areas of risk. They also offer Total Coliform mailer kits and encourage owners to send water samples to the State DEQ for bacteria testing. They also can use GPS units to identify and map wellhead locations in a statewide database. The project anticipates evaluating at least 400 rural private wellheads over its 4-year duration. It is also expected that many youth will remain in the Impact Project for the duration, helping it evolve in complexity and subject matter as they and their County Educators grow in experience and confidence. Many have expressed interest in volunteer stream and lake monitoring, for example.

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