



2008 USDA-CSREES National Water Conference
Sparks, NV

Private Water Supply Protection in Virginia

Brian Benham and Julie Jordan

Abstract Text:

Ground water contamination is a common concern for residents using a private water supply. Unlike homes served by public water, homeowners using a private water supply are responsible for all aspects of water system management including routine maintenance, regular water testing, interpretation of test results, and addressing water quality or quantity problems. Lack of knowledge about private water supply management and water quality issues may lead to system neglect and the absence of regular water testing.

Drinking water quality is a concern for all citizens; however for some rural citizens characterized as members of underserved communities (those that are impoverished, a minority, and/or elderly) the quality of their drinking water often is not, by necessity, a primary concern. Unfortunately, these underserved citizens are often those with the poorest water quality. Underserved citizens and their communities can benefit from learning about private water supply protection management and maintenance.

Currently in Virginia, there is no on-going effort specifically dedicated to reaching owners of private water supply systems. As a result, most homeowners with private systems lack knowledge about how to effectively manage and maintain their system.

Clearly, innovative, effective programs are needed to educate Virginia private water supply system owners about proper maintenance and protection of their systems. This project will create a network of VCE agents and lay-volunteers trained in the proper design, management, and maintenance of private water supply systems, the Virginia Master Well Owner Network (VAMWON). The network will educate home owners about the quality of their water and proper care and maintenance of their water supply systems by revitalizing and expanding the Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VAHWQP). This project will increase the capacity of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) to deliver private water supply system educational programming to the citizens of Virginia.

Impact Statement:

This project was funded in Sept. 2007 and has yet to generate impacts.