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**Developing the Virginia Master Well Owner Network in Virginia:  
Building Capacity to Protect Private Water Supplies**

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Abstract:

More than one million households in Virginia rely on private water supplies such as wells and springs. Throughout much of Virginia, the number of new homes using private water supplies is increasing faster than those connecting to public systems. Many well owners lack access to information about protecting and maintaining their systems and often wait to take action until a problem arises. The revitalization of the Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VAHWQP) began in 2007 with the securing of a USDA CSREES Extension Education grant (2007-5113-03887). This revitalization includes developing the Virginia Master Well Owner Network (VAMOWN). The VAMWON is based on the Master Gardener concept and is modeled after a similar, successful program in Pennsylvania. Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) agents and screened volunteers trained in topics such as wellhead protection, well maintenance, and water testing, treatment, and conservation will comprise VAMWON. This poster reports on progress towards delivering grant outputs and achieving outcomes. We report on progress towards training 70 VAMWON extension agents and 240 VAMWON lay-volunteers and discuss participation in on-going county-based drinking water clinics. We provide an overview of the project's website [www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu](http://www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu) which was launched in October 2008. Additionally, we report on collaborations with we have formed with existing VCE Family and Consumer Science programs, faith-based initiatives, and advocacy groups like the Southeastern Rural Community Assistance Program to encourage the participation of low-income families in VAHWQP drinking water clinics.

Impact Statement:

This presentation is a progress report for year 1 of the grant cycle. Project impact assessment is on-going.

Category: Other Water Resource Topics

Type of Presentation: Oral Presentation