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**Protecting Your Groundwater Resources: A Homeowner's guide to Private Well and Septic Systems**

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Abstract:

In 2007 Montana State University, with their partners from the Northern Plains and Mountains National Water Program (NP&M) initiated the development of an educational DVD for private well and septic system owners. The goal of this project was to produce a DVD with a 15 minute main section covering how well and septic systems are connected to ground-water resources and how these systems function. The main section would also be complemented by extra segments or 'chapters' covering individual topics in more detail. These sections will be beneficial for use in workshops and trainings by providing more in-depth information about specific well and septic issues.

Well and septic owners have a direct connection to ground-water resources and play a critical role in protecting those resources. Through an understanding of proper well and septic system protection, maintenance, and monitoring homeowners can take the steps to facilitate ground-water protection. This audience is wide spread and growing throughout the NP&M region. Thus, the video does not target single state-specific information, but covers a breadth of information appropriate to many states in the NP&M region. However, the video is supplemented by state specific resources to better serve the individual viewer. The final product targets existing well and/or septic owners and serves to educate them on the basic functions of these systems and on issues surrounding ground water protection and system maintenance. In addition, the audience will learn the significance of the septic and groundwater interactions that could adversely impact their or their neighbor's drinking water resources.

Impact Statement:

**Outputs:** An educational DVD for private well and septic system owners that emphasizes how to protect drinking water resources.

**Outcomes:** Each state within the NP&M team will provide the video to ten county Extension agents, conservation districts, water quality districts, etc., it can be conservatively estimated that at least ten private well and septic users from each contact will see the video. That impacts a conservative target audience of 600. In addition, the video will be presented to state agencies at conferences and symposiums which will promote the product to natural resource professionals in each state.

**Partnerships:** Northern Plains & Mountains national Water Program, Montana Department of environmental Quality, Colorado School of Mines, Montana State University School of Film & Photography.

**Leveraging:** 1) Time and resources for DVD input and review from partners; 2) MT DEQ 319 funding for DVD reproduction for MT Well Educated program (pending); 3).

**Lessons Learned:** The immense amount of information needed to develop a well balanced, content rich, yet engaging video made this task challenging. However, through thorough collaboration with our partners the end product has provided a resource that will benefit many private well and septic owners within the NP&M region.

Category: Rural Environmental Protection

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation