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State of Louisiana Drinking Water Protection Program

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Office of Environmental Assessment

Issue 13



Drinking Water America's Top Environmental Concern

Global warming - It's today's hot topic; the most widely discussed environmental issue in the media and the source of heated debates worldwide. But surprisingly, Gallup's annual environment survey shows Americans consider it to be the least of their worries. The poll, conducted between March 5-8, 2009, revealed that global warming/"greenhouse effect" ranked last in a list of eight environmental issues. At the top of the list is pollution of drinking water, with 59% saying they worry "a great deal" about the issue. Given the necessity of water to sustaining life, it's no wonder that some form of water pollution has been the top-ranking environmental issue of concern to Americans in each Gallup poll since 1989.

on problems rather than successes. The Safe Drinking Water Act set national health-based standards for drinking water, focusing primarily on treatment to provide safe drinking water at the tap. The law was amended in 1996 to greatly enhance that protection by recognizing source water protection, operator training, funding for water system improvements and public information as important components of safe drinking water. Annual consumer confidence reports now put drinking water quality information into the hands of the consumers.

participating in the efforts of local drinking water protection committees. The water supply in America is safer now than ever before. Nevertheless, drinking water safety cannot be taken for granted. Concern about drinking water quality is a good thing...especially if it results in actions to protect it.

For Gallup Poll results visit www.gallup.com/poll/117079/water-pollution-americans-top-green-concern.aspx

Submitted by Drinking Water Protection Team Member
Mary Gentry

In Louisiana, citizens and water system personnel are helping to protect drinking water sources by



The Vernon Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee holds a meeting at the local office of the Louisiana Department of Health Hospitals in Leesville, LA. The goal of this committee is to protect the sources of drinking water in Vernon Parish. Vernon parish residents receive drinking water from four aquifers: the Jasper, the Evangeline, the Catahoula, and the Cockfield Aquifers. Preventing contamination of these sources is key to maintaining drinking water quality.

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When the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed by congress in 1974, the country was just beginning to be sensitized to drinking water quality. Through the years media headlines reporting pharmaceuticals, MTBE, *e. coli*, and other contaminants detected in public drinking water supplies have created a negative perception of tap water. That perception has helped fuel the bottled water and treatment device industries to the tune of several billion dollars per year. Learning that regulations governing the purity and safety of bottled water are often less stringent than those for public water supplies may come as a surprise to some consumers.

The negative perception of tap water is exacerbated by focusing

On the Radar Targeted Parishes for Drinking Water Protection Programs 2010

- Caddo
- LaSalle
- Lincoln

See p. 2

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Visit us at our website:
<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/aeps>

GOT NEWS? IDEAS?

If you have any news or ideas that you would like to share with other communities in next year's issue of the newsletter, please submit them to deqdwpteam@la.gov or to the following mailing address:

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225-219-3510

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION TEAM



The Drinking Water Protection Team is a part of the Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Section in the Water quality Assessment Division. This Division falls under the Office of Environmental Assessment at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Drinking Water Protection Team members educate the public on the importance of protecting drinking water sources. The team plays a vital role in working with Louisiana communities to establish local drinking water protection programs. The team is available to give presentations on water protection issues to your school or organization. Please call 225-219-3510 for more information.

We look forward to helping you protect your community's drinking water!

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Drinking Water Source Protection Programs



The Drinking Water Protection Team recently completed programs in three parishes: Ouachita, Calcasieu and Beauregard Parish. Work in Vernon parish is still in progress. New work is beginning in Caddo, Lasalle and Lincoln parishes.

Ouachita Parish has forty-five (45) active public community water systems. There is one (1) surface water system and five (5) water systems that purchase surface water. The surface water system is the City of Monroe and the sources of drinking water are the Ouachita River and Bayou Desiard. There are thirty-six (36) ground water systems, and three (3) systems that purchase ground water. The main aquifer for the parish is the Sparta Aquifer. A community meeting was held in October 2008, and a volunteer committee was formed to work on projects to protect source waters. The committee worked through April, 2009. Some of their accomplishments include:

- The committee had guest speakers such as Reggie Coleman on DEQ's Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program as well as Ann Wilson from the City of Alexandria on Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days.
- The committee produced a factsheet on Best Management Practices for Contractors that was distributed through the Louisiana Homebuilders Association of Louisiana.
- The committee visited local businesses to distribute information on source water protection.
- A Ground Water Protection Ordinance was passed by the City of West Monroe.

Calcasieu Parish has fifteen active public community water systems, including the City



DEQ Geologist Mary Gentry and Mayor McMilan of Jena discuss the Drinking Water Protection Program.

of Lake Charles which serves a population of 80,000. All of the systems are ground water systems. A community meeting to introduce the program to the public and solicit volunteers to form a committee was held on August 14, 2008. A training session was held in November, 2008. The committee participated in many activities such as:

- The committee hosted a screening of the public television documentary "*Liquid Assets: The Story of Our Water Infrastructure.*"
- The committee had guest speakers such as Christy Rando on DEQ's Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program, Brad Hanson from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development on the proper plugging and abandonment of water wells, and Rusty Reeves from the Louisiana Rural Water Association on backflow prevention and cross connection control.
- A used oil recycler's list was developed for the parish and 5000 copies were distributed.
- The committee visited local businesses to distribute information on drinking water protection.
- A Ground Water Protection Ordinance was passed by the City of Westlake.

Beauregard Parish has six active public community ground water systems. A community meeting to introduce the program to the public was held on December 4, 2008. A volunteer committee worked on the following efforts:

- The committee visited local businesses to distribute information on drinking water protection.
- Guest speaker Rob Fendick of the United States Geological Survey gave a presentation on local aquifers.
- Committee volunteers supported a model ground water protection ordinance at police jury meetings. To date, ordinances have been passed by the City of DeRidder and the Town of Merryville.

Work is still in progress in **Vernon Parish**, which has sixteen active public community ground water systems. One system purchases water and three of the sixteen systems serve the U.S. Army Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk. A public meeting was held on February 19, 2009. The volunteer committee has grown to over 21 members. So far, committee accomplishments include:

- The committee visited local businesses to distribute information on drinking water protection.
- Guest speaker Brad Hanson from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development on the proper plugging and abandonment of water wells.
- Ordinances were adopted by the Village of Anacoco, the Town of Hornbeck, the City of Leesville, and the Vernon Parish Police Jury.

Would you like to get involved in any of our local Drinking Water Protection Programs this year? Committees are gearing up in Caddo, Lasalle and Lincoln parishes. Please contact the Drinking Water Team at 225-219-3510 for more information.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Grants

SIBLEY LAKE

The City of Natchitoches has worked with DEQ since May 1, 2007 under a contract titled "Sibley Lake Watershed Individual Sewage Treatment System Improvement Project" to repair or replace malfunctioning individual sewage treatment systems located around Sibley Lake. As of the writing of this newsletter the City of Natchitoches has inspected 818 individual sewage treatment systems, of which 157 were malfunctioning. Thus far 110 of these malfunctioning systems have been

repaired or replaced with a portion of the cost paid for from money provided under the contract. This number is expected to increase by the end of the contract which terminates on October 31, 2009. However a new contract is under consideration that will not only continue the work of the current contract, but also possibly work to limit the amount of non-native aquatic plants infecting Sibley Lake while also sampling the lake for water quality improvement.

BIG CREEK

Big Creek, which is a source of drinking water for people in southern Grant Parish and northern Rapides Parish, is not meeting the fecal coliform standard necessary to support its designated use of primary contact recreation. In order to meet the state's water quality goals, nonpoint pollution sources on Big Creek needed to be identified so that they may be controlled and/or managed to extent that water quality standards can be met and designated uses restored.

The goal of the project titled "Source Water Protection- Big Creek Coliform Sources" was to determine whether on site sewerage systems and/or agricultural and pasture land are significant sources of high fecal levels in Big Creek. The objectives were to conduct targeted monitoring of selected sites for fecal coliform sources and to analyze microbial, orthophosphate-P and fluorometric optical brightener data to identify "hot spots" that may be contributing fecal coliforms to the creek.

As a result of this project, twelve sampling events were conducted from March to July of 2009 during rain and non-rain events. During non-rain events, elevated levels were measured from drainage ditches originating behind residential trailer homes at two sites. As determined by the Project Investigator, Dr. Kevin Baer of the University of Louisiana Monroe, these levels may be due to faulty sewage systems or natural sources (i.e. soil bacteria and/or indigenous wildlife). During rain events, several areas adjacent to pasture land and a construction site were identified that may contribute to elevated fecal coliform levels in Big Creek.

First, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality plans to follow up with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. It is under the authority of this agency to investigate the residential trailer homes to ensure that their wastewater disposal systems are functioning properly. Fecal coliform loading at identified hot spots adjacent to pasture land and construction sites may be addressed accordingly through implementation of recommended Best Management

Practices. Key sites may be re-sampled in order to demonstrate water quality improvements.

BAYOU LAFOURCHE

The Bayou Lafourche Sewage Project is scheduled to be completed by September 30, 2009. Under this project, which began on February 20, 2008, Nicholls State University has identified locations that exhibit high levels of fecal coliform bacteria in Bayou Lafourche and its contributing ditches/canals.

Sampling was conducted for 55 sites along Bayou Lafourche and in contributing drainage from the southern end of Assumption Parish to below Lockport, in Lafourche Parish. Each site was sampled on a rotating basis starting in the summer of 2008 through September of 2009 which enabled the contractor to sample during different times and weather conditions. Each site was sampled for fecal coliform and optical brighteners. High optical brighteners levels were used as a rough indicator for human sewage or gray water input into the drainage systems to Bayou Lafourche.

Sites with both human derived optical brightener levels and fecal coliform bacteria levels that exceed the bayou's water quality standards indicate a human source. Such sites will be targeted for possible best management practices or other remediation, such as local ordinances to inspect sewage treatment systems, to eliminate the release of poorly treated or untreated sewage into the drainage basin of Bayou Lafourche.

*Submitted by Project Managers
Micaela Coner and Jesse Means*



University of Louisiana Monroe's Shannon Banks, Quality Assurance Officer for the "Source Water Protection -Big Creek Coliform Sources" Project, takes water samples at a sampling site at Big Creek in Grant parish.

NEW WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAMS/SURFACE WATER CERTIFICATES APPROVED

September 2008-August 2009

Town of Rosepine
FrostTown Water System
Indian Village Water System
Cheniery Drew North Water System (GOWC)
Cheniery Drew South Water System (GOWC)
Calhoun Water System
Better Waterworks Water System
Hickory Bend Water System
Waterworks District #5 of Beauregard
Starks Water and Gas, Inc.
Town of Merryville
Monroe Water System

CONGRATULATIONS! THE DRINKING WATER TEAM SALUTES!



Municipalities that have enacted a Drinking Water Protection Ordinance by Parish-

Acadia Parish— Town of Church Point, City of Crowley, Town of Iota, City of Rayne
Avoyelles Parish— City of Marksville, Town of Mansura, Town of Moreauville, Town of Simmesport
Beauregard Parish— City of DeRidder, Town of Merryville
Bossier Parish— Town of Haughton, Town of Plain Dealing
Calcasieu Parish— City of Westlake
East Feliciana Parish— Village of Norwood, Town of Wilson
Grant Parish— Town of Pollock
Jefferson Davis Parish— Town of Welsh, Town of Lake Arthur, City of Jennings
Lafayette Parish— City of Youngsville, Town of Duson, City of Carencro
Natchitoches Parish— Village of Goldonna
Ouachita Parish— City of West Monroe
Rapides Parish— Town of Lecompte, Town of Cheneyville, Village of McNary, Town of Glenmora, Town of Woodworth
St. Landry Parish— City of Eunice, Town of Melville, City of Opelousas, Town of Washington
Vermilion Parish— City of Abbeville, Town of Delcambre, Town of Erath, Town of Gueydan, Town of Kaplan, Town of Maurice
Vernon Parish— Village of Anacoco, Town of Hornbeck, City of Leesville
West Baton Rouge Parish— Town of Addis
West Feliciana Parish— Town of St. Francisville
Washington Parish— Town of Angie

Parishes that have enacted a Drinking Water Protection Ordinance --

Acadia Parish Police Jury, Avoyelles Parish Police Jury, Bossier Parish Police Jury, Jefferson Davis Parish Police Jury, St. Landry Parish Council, Vermilion Parish Police Jury, Vernon Parish Police Jury