



JOB OPPORTUNITY WORKING ON RURAL WATER ISSUES

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[Interested in working with small rural towns to help keep their drinking water clean?](#)

[Check out the Ohio Rural Water Association!](#)

The Ohio Rural Water Association (a non-profit, 501(c)(4) organization) is currently seeking an outgoing individual for a full-time position helping rural drinking water systems write and implement source water protection plans. The Source Water Protection Specialist works as an employee of the ORWA, but collaborates closely with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) and the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. The OEPA administers the source water assessment and protection (SWAP) program for the State of Ohio and the Farm Service Agency provides funding for the ORWA Source Water Protection Specialist position at ORWA.

The job includes comprehensive health benefits (including vision and dental) and payment into the PERS retirement program. The Source Water Protection Specialist also has the opportunity to attend continuing education seminars and conferences related to your specific field (GIS, geology, forestry, watershed management, etc.)

What is Source Water Protection?

Source water assessment and protection (SWAP) is a national program administered in Ohio by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The program started as the Wellhead Protection Program, which was part of the 1986 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. These amendments required states to administer a source water protection program for their systems using ground water. In 1992 Ohio's Wellhead Protection Program was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The wellhead protection program provided guidance and technical assistance to public water systems, who were encouraged to complete assessments and protection plans using their own resources. OEPA staff reviewed the assessments and formally endorsed them.

In 1996, the Safe Drinking Water Act was amended again. Section 1453 was added, providing states with the necessary federal funding to complete source water assessments for their public water systems. At that time, the program was extended to include surface water systems and was renamed "Source Water Protection." Starting in 2000, OEPA staff began assessing Ohio's water systems and by January 2006, this phase was complete for almost all of Ohio's public water systems. It was the intent of Congress that public water systems use the information in their source water assessment to develop a drinking water source protection plan.

Source water protection planning is an important tool to keep water safe to drink and treatment costs low for community public water systems. A source water protection plan is a locally designed and implemented plan to mitigate current and potential threats to drinking water.

It is currently a requirement by the OEPA to have a plan in place within two years of installing a new well or surface water intake for public drinking water.

To learn more about the Ohio SWAP program, visit: <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/swap.aspx>

To learn more about FSA's role in source water protection, visit:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=swp>

The specific duties of the job:

Goals

To assist rural and small communities served by public water systems to reduce or eliminate the potential risks to drinking water supplies through the development of Source Water Protection Plans and providing assistance to entities for the implementation of contamination prevention measures.

Objectives

1. Coordinate activities and facilitate the process of source water protection planning and implementation.
2. Provide professional one-on-one "on-site" assistance and training to rural and small communities in implementing source water protection plans.
3. Provide liaison and assistance in the development of source water protection plans.
4. Facilitate coordination, communication and collaboration between the rural and small community, multi-jurisdictional entities, and local, county, state and federal agencies in the development and implementation of the source water protection plans.
5. Provide outreach material, reports, and articles to rural and small communities.
6. Provide presentations and assistance to local officials, community groups, and others.
7. Attend two national conferences per year (National Rural Water Association in-service training in June and the annual conference in September).
8. Respond to inquiries from facilities, consumers, governmental agencies, and others regarding technical matters.
9. Complete and submit required reporting as scheduled.

Requirements:

1. Ability to travel throughout Ohio extensively: Most of the job (at least 2-3 days per week) is done on the road. The other work days can be completed at a home office. There is at least one required monthly meeting at the state office in Zanesville.
2. Self-motivation: The majority of this job is done without direct supervision. Thus, the individual needs to have a lot of energy and discipline to complete tasks in a timely manner.

3. Strong organizational skills: Good records of all meetings with water systems must be kept.
4. Excellent communication and presentation skills: A good candidate must be comfortable presenting to large audiences and be able to facilitate meetings among the general public and local officials, such as mayors, village administrators, township trustees, and county commissioners.
5. Technical knowledge of water and wastewater systems is not required: It is much more important to be able to explain things clearly, keep good records, and work well with numerous government agencies.
6. Some experience working on water quality issues preferred: This can include working with a watershed group, research project, stream cleanup, or similar project.
7. Knowledge of GIS software strongly preferred: The Source Water Protection Specialist will have access to the latest ArcGIS software to utilize for source water protection planning.

To apply, please send your resume, cover letter stating why you meet the qualifications for the position, and a writing sample to Kevin Strang, Executive Director, at admin@ohioruralwater.org. Application materials are due by July 1, 2014. The position will begin September 1, 2014.

If you have any questions, you can contact the current Source Water Protection Specialist, Kyle Bohland, at 614-296-0174 or krbohland@gmail.com.

About the Ohio Rural Water Association

The Ohio Rural Water Association was founded in 1976, with the goal of improving the quality of life in rural Ohio. With funding primarily through membership dues and federal grants, ORWA offers free on-site technical support to water and wastewater systems, both large and small. This includes: assistance with the operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment plants; source water protection planning; and distribution system troubleshooting such as leak detection, smoke testing, line locating, and sewer line inspecting. ORWA also offers training opportunities on the operation, management, finance, and governance of water and wastewater utilities.