

City of Sturgeon Lake's Efforts in Wellhead Protection



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The city of Sturgeon Lake's Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan was approved approximately 2 1/2 years ago. For a number of years the city has worked diligently to protect its source of drinking water and most recently doing so by completing the various management strategies described in their WHP Plan. A lot of effort has been done in regards to public education.

The city has developed numerous factsheets pertaining to the potential contaminants of concerns and best management of those potential contaminants and has made them available to the residents. WHP signs have placed on the perimeter of the Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) to better inform the public of the area. In addition to informing the public the city has created awareness for the county emergency management and fire department of the city's WHP Plan and provided them a map of the DWSMA so they are better informed of the area and consider it as they respond to various emergencies.

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One of the biggest accomplishments for the city has been the partnership formed with Timberline Campground, which began before the adoption of the city's WHP Plan. Until a few years ago, Timberline Campground had a private well and septic systems to serve its 250 sites, pool and shower facility. In the summer of 2006, the campground began having issues with their well and in working with city opted to hookup to city water. To better protect the city's source of drinking water they talked with the campground owners to see if there was interest in having the unused well sealed. Without any plans to use the well in the future the owners were agreeable. Soon after the city applied for a grant through Minnesota Department of Health to have the well sealed. In 2012 the city was awarded a grant and the well was sealed at no cost to the city or the campground.

In addition to connecting to city water, the city and campground began discussions of eliminating the aging sewer system and connecting to the city sanitary sewer. In the fall of 2012, Timberline Campground invested approximately \$250,000 into upgrading and extending their sewer collection systems. To date, approximately 90% of the sites are connected and served by the city's sanitary sewer.

The city of Sturgeon Lake has taken Wellhead Protection a step further on working to seal wells in city limits, although outside of the DWSMA. Back in 2007, the city's first water system came online and until then all the homes in town utilized their own wells. Now that city water is available to most

residents they will no longer need their private wells and the city has taken big steps to assist them. Recently, the city was awarded a \$115,000 grant from the Clean Water Legacy fund issued through the Pine County SWCD to pay up to 50% of the costs associated with sealing wells. The city has notified the residents through an article in the city's newsletter and direct correspondence making them aware of the opportunity. The city looks forward to being able to assist the residents in sealing their unused well, along with removing potential threats to groundwater in the process.

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