



SOURCEWATER PROTECTION IN NORTH CAROLINA

The term “source water” refers to streams, rivers, springs, lakes, and groundwater that are used for drinking. Protecting water at the source is an important way to ensure the health of people, ecosystems and economies. Ensuring safe and plentiful sources of drinking water is best accomplished by taking a multi-barrier approach, in which implementing source water protection strategies is the first step.

Approximately half of North Carolina’s population obtains their drinking water from groundwater, whereas the other half relies on surface water. Our state has a diversity of challenges in ensuring the health and cleanliness of its drinking water sources. Differences in land use, topography, hydrology, economics, and demographics all present different realities and challenges for residents of the state’s Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains. Population growth and land use changes are straining limited supplies of high quality groundwater and surface water.

A variety of techniques can be implemented to protect source water, including:

- **development and implementation of protection plans,**
- **land conservation,**
- **watershed assessment and restoration,**
- **establishment of local ordinances, and**
- **education/outreach campaigns.**



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The N.C. Source Water Collaborative is an alliance of non-profits, state and local governments, academics, and others who are working together to address the water supply challenges of North Carolina. The collaborative is dedicated to the concept that protecting our state's drinking water sources not only serves public health and the economy, but also benefits the state's complex natural ecosystems. The intent of the collaborative is to develop and support strategies to preserve the streams, rivers, springs, lakes, and groundwater used for drinking water and the land that protects and recharges these sources of water.

Everyone has a role in protecting their source of drinking water. . .

Citizens can get involved by:

- knowing their source of drinking water
- limiting fertilizer and pesticide use
- cleaning up pet waste

Local government staff can:

- develop a protection plan for their source
- consider new ordinances to protect drinking water
- talk to their Soil and Water Conservation District about cost share programs

Elected officials can:

- learn about cost savings and other benefits associated with source water protection
- learn about the water challenges within their district
- participate in cooperative efforts and partnerships to protect source waters
- compete for a Source Water Protection Award

Industries and commerce can:

- sponsor stewardship events, such as stream and road-side cleanups
- implement water use reduction strategies
- work with their water supplier to support source water protection

*These are just few ideas of how you can get involved, for more details please visit our website: www.ncswc.org