

# Upper Mississippi River Basin Source Water Protection Initiative



## *Project Goal*

Establish and implement a coordinated approach to protecting sources of public drinking water throughout the Upper Mississippi River Basin in Minnesota.

- Build on the work that has been done by the River Defense Network and the wellhead protection program.
- Establish a pilot that creates a template for large river drinking water sources. Include a groundwater protection component for the basin.

## SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT AREAS FOR MINNEAPOLIS, ST. CLOUD, AND ST. PAUL



## *Project History*

- The cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Cloud began efforts to protect public drinking water by establishing the River Defense Network.
- All three cities use the Mississippi as their drinking water source and collectively serve about one million customers.
- The River Defense Network was established as an ad hoc committee to develop coordinated basin-wide emergency response for containing fuel and chemical releases into the Mississippi River.
- Membership includes the three water utilities, state agencies, county emergency response agencies, county water planning staff, industry representatives, and staff from an organization called the Mississippi Headwaters Board.

## *Project Status*

The role of the River Defense Network has expanded over the past 5 years to develop a broad based strategy for addressing point and nonpoint sources of contamination that may impact the river as well as groundwater resources that supply drinking water.

- A \$125,000 grant (state Clean Water Partnership) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and \$190,000 in cash and in-kind services is being used to begin to develop a basin-wide plan for protecting public water supplies.
- A final report will be completed in September, 2001, and will serve as a blueprint for:
  - Coordinating efforts by public water suppliers and others to develop and implement source water protection plans.
  - Sharing information needed to manage point and nonpoint sources of contamination that may impact the Mississippi River and groundwater resources.

## *Project Status - continued*

- Setting priorities for allocating resources for addressing potential contamination sources.
- Developing relationships between water utilities, state/local governments, and the general public needed to implement drinking water protection measures.

The Minnesota Department of Health has worked with Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Cloud to prepare source water assessments for the surface water intakes used by these three cities. The cities want to develop source water protection plans using their assessments as a starting point.

The Minnesota Department of Health is also preparing source water assessments for all of the communities that use groundwater throughout the Upper Mississippi Basin and is phasing these communities into the wellhead protection program under the provisions of the state wellhead protection rule.

## *The Project's Future*

There is a great potential to combine the goals of the federal Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act in protecting surface and groundwater resources.

The challenge is to develop creative and cost effective ways of doing this.

- There is a joint ASDWA and ASIWPCA effort to help states coordinate drinking water and clean water efforts in targeted basins.
- EPA has agreed to use the Upper Mississippi River Basin Source Water Protection Initiative as a pilot to create a source water protection plan template for large river basins that use surface water as the drinking water source.