



NEWS RELEASE (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Nebraska Water Professionals Celebrate Source Water Protection Week (September 27th-October 3rd, 2026)

Who	Nebraska Section - American Water Works Association, a professional association of more than 300 members working in the field of drinking water in the state of Nebraska, including more than 40 public water utilities.
What	Source Water Protection Week
When	September 27th to October 3rd, 2026
Where	Source Water Protection Week is a nationwide program of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The Nebraska Section - AWWA encourages special attention and recognition for this week close to home.
Why	All drinking water comes from some original source, whether it's surface water (rivers, streams, and lakes) or groundwater (drawn from wells). Protecting that water from contamination is everyone's responsibility.
Release text	The Nebraska Section - American Water Works Association is joining with water professionals across the country to celebrate Source Water Protection Week, September 27th to October 3rd, and encourages all Nebraskans to raise a glass in celebration of our excellent drinking water supplies while taking a few simple steps close to home to help ensure that source waters remain safe to use for generations to come. When we keep contamination from chemicals, pollution, and excess nutrients out of source waters, it saves our public water utilities the expense of trying to remove those contaminants before delivering them to our homes, schools, hospitals, and workplaces. "Safe drinking water is one of the biggest victories in public health," says Brian Gongol, chair of the Nebraska Section - American Water Works Association. "We need to treat the source waters that ultimately end up in our taps with the same approach you and I should take with our own health: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Keeping contaminants out is easier, cheaper, and more effective than trying to remove them once they've gotten in." Ordinary people can help in lots of simple ways, starting close to home: • Property owners can help protect source waters by limiting pesticides and fertilizers to only the amount necessary to do the job. Rain and runoff from lawn watering can carry these contaminants into source



waters, where they are much harder to remove than to keep out in the first place.

- **Take leftover pills and liquids** to designated drop-off sites at local pharmacies for proper disposal. Medication shouldn't be dumped down the drain or flushed down the toilet unless it's passed through your body first.
- **When camping, hiking, or being active outdoors**, avoid vegetation on streambanks. When people disturb plants and their root systems, they can trigger erosion and upset natural ecosystems that help to protect source water quality.
- **Always clean up after your pets**. Pet waste isn't the same as what's left behind by animals in the wild, because pet diets are more highly concentrated than wild diets. What they drop off shouldn't be washed into the storm sewers.
- **Farmers and ranchers** have tremendous influence over the quality of source waters downstream of their operations. Careful custodianship of the land and water means taking steps to prevent erosion and properly treat animal wastes.
- **Remember that storm sewers are mostly untreated**. That means they act as a direct conveyor from your curb to the creek. Whatever goes down the storm sewer goes into our source waters, so keep grass clippings on the lawn or in a compost pile, use hazardous-waste collections for liquids like paint and motor oil, and avoid high-runoff activities like hand-washing your car at home.

Even communities that get their drinking water from deep wells have an important role to play in source water protection. Underground aquifers are heavily influenced by how we treat water and soil near the surface. Both point-source pollution (discharges we can identify) and non-point-source pollution (like runoff and erosion) affect source water quality, both at the surface and far below ground.

Remember: every drop of water that flows downstream from any creek or river in Nebraska ends up in the Missouri River, then the Mississippi River, and ultimately becomes part of the Atlantic Ocean. Millions of people are affected downstream of our behavior, but we can all take steps close to home that help to protect our own communities and neighbors.



Contacts

Brian Gongol

Chair, Nebraska Section
American Water Works Association
drinktap@awwaneb.org
402-730-7781 main
515-979-2837 mobile
