

The Town of Bourbon Continues to Work on Wellhead Protection

The source of Bourbon's drinking water is groundwater produced from wells located in and around the community. To help protect the underground aquifer and the water supply wells from potential contamination, Bourbon has developed a Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan, which was approved by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) in 2016. Since that time, the Local Planning Team (LPT) has met annually to update the Plan and implement management strategies to protect Bourbon's drinking water source. A complete copy of the WHP Plan and educational pamphlets are available to the public at the Bourbon Town Council Chambers (104 E. Park Ave, Bourbon, Indiana, 46504).

The WHP LPT held its annual meeting on November 21, 2024 to discuss the WHP Program. Bourbon's WHP Program focuses on public awareness, education, spill prevention, and spill reporting. As part of this program, WHP educational information is included in the Bourbon Water Department's Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, which is provided to customers each year and shall be made available on the Town website. In the upcoming year, Bourbon's LPT will continue its public education efforts and will focus on providing information on protecting groundwater to local emergency responders, local septic system owners, well owners, and potential contaminant sources that are located within the WHP area.

The Town asks the community to remember that leachate from an improperly maintained septic system has the potential to directly affect groundwater used for our public drinking water supply. The LPT asks that owners of septic systems have their septic system inspected regularly. Information regarding the proper functioning and maintenance of septic systems is available through the Town website.

Water wells that become damaged or are no longer used are a potential conduit for surface contamination to reach the groundwater. Residents may not be aware that they have an inactive well on their property. The LPT is working to identify inactive wells, notify landowners of wells on their property, and have these wells properly plugged. Please notify Steve Walsh, Bourbon Utilities Operator-In-Charge, at (574) 342-4755 if you have a well on your property. Information on properly plugging and sealing a water well is on the Town website.

Below are some tips to help you protect our drinking water source:

- Learn about groundwater and your water source.
- Participate in watershed clean-up activities.
- Limit your use of chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, and other hazardous products. Buy only what you need, reducing the amount to be later discarded. Be sure to follow label directions.
- Recycle used oil, automotive fluids, batteries, and other chemical products. Do not dispose of these hazardous products in toilets, storm drains, wastewater systems, creeks, alleys, or the ground; these actions pollute the water supply. Contact the Marshall County Solid Waste District at (574) 935-8618 or visit their website at <https://www.myrecycledepot.org/> for recycling information and events.

- Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other machinery for leaks and spills. Collect leaks with a drip pan until repairs can be made. Clean up spills by absorbing the spill. Do not rinse with water or allow it to soak into the ground.
- If you have a septic system, have it inspected and serviced every three years.
- Plug abandoned wells on your property as these old wells provide a direct route for surface contamination to reach groundwater supplies. Contact a licensed well driller for assistance.
- Keep in mind that groundwater aquifers collect and store rainwater and snowmelt that soaks into the ground.

The Town of Bourbon feels that drinking water protection is the responsibility of all citizens. By assisting the Town with its WHP efforts, residents and business can help ensure the people of Bourbon have a safe water supply now and in the future. Refer to the Town website for additional WHP information.