

Resources Republics Supply Watershed Protection: Darcia Routh, P.G. Arkansas Drinking Water Update Article



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Ms. Darcia Routh, P.G. published an article in the Arkansas Department of Health publication Arkansas Drinking Water Update (Winter 2016).

Ms. Routh is a Professional Geologist in the Engineering Section of the Arkansas Department of Health.

The article provides insight into:

- The watershed approach to improving source water quality
- Developing a comprehensive watershed plan

Ms. Routh initially notes that source water protection takes place at the local level. Further, she states the importance of source water protection is illustrated by the fact that the statistics she cites estimates approximately 63% of Arkansans obtain their drinking water from public water systems using intakes on lakes and rivers. She further notes:

Most of these intakes are located in the Ozarks, Arkansas River Valley and in the Ouachita Mountains, where high quality, abundant surface water is available. Maintaining or improving source water quality is also cost-effective strategy. It would cost your PWS more to add additional treatment or to select and then develop an alternative source than to maintain or improve water quality in your specific watershed. The US EPA, especially through the Clean Water Act, provides many tools for the protection of drinking water watersheds.

The article addresses issues such as:

- How a watershed is hydrologically defined
- Watershed planning involves all stakeholders
- A watershed plan strategically addresses priority water resource goals

The article notes that six public water systems in Arkansas have leveraged Clean Water Act Section 319(non-point source pollution program) funds to develop comprehensive 9 Minimum Element Watershed-Based plans. It asks the readers how they would “go about becoming a seventh system to develop such a plan.” Cited are two planning tools and resources to guide a PWS forward.

[Those sources can be found in Ms. Routh’s article which can be downloaded here.](#)