

Press Release - Minnesota Rural Water Association

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Minnesota Rural Water Association and Minnesota Department of Health present the Small Public Water Supply System Source Water Protection Award to City of Balaton.

The **MRWA/MDH Source Water Protection Award** is given annually at the MRWA Technical Conference to recognize the importance and value of source water protection efforts in Minnesota, and to recognize individuals, public water systems and organizations that have shown long term commitment, initiative, leadership, sharing of successes, and initiation or participation in activities which resulted in the protection or improvement of their source water.



The **City of Balaton** adopted their first wellhead protection plan in 2009 and are currently in the plan amendment process. The city's wellhead protection area dynamics are complicated; it has both high and moderately vulnerable geology plus the contribution of surface water run-off into their wells' recharge area. To make things even more challenging for the city, this area includes a wide variety of land uses from industrial and lake shore to agricultural production.

Balaton city staff, including Kent Henkel and Josh Torgeson, lead a very active local wellhead protection team. Over the years the city has successfully applied for project funding through the MDH Source Water Protection grant program to help accomplish groundwater protection activities. Some of the projects the city has focused on for the protection of their drinking water source include:

- Additional water quality data gathering, including quarterly isotope monitoring and storm water analysis in cooperation with MDH;
- Updating the inventory of potential contaminant sources in their protection area;
- Distributing groundwater educational materials to lake owners and farmers in the protection area and posting articles in the local newspaper;
- Participating in agricultural field days and tours in cooperation with their local county and conservation partners, and
- Mapping their storm sewer and catch basins, visiting each site, and participating in an emergency response exercise with their local fire department.

Congratulations to the City of Balaton for winning the Small Public Water Supply System Source Water Protection Award.

Photo above from left to right: MRWA Source Water Protection Specialist Robyn Hoerr, City of Balaton operations specialist Josh Torgeson, and Minnesota Rural Water Association Chairman Les Anderson.