

# **SOURCE WATER PROTECTION, SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Recently your water systems: Yancey Water Supply Corporation, Zinsmeyer Trailer Park, West View and Laurel Canyon Ranch Water Systems participated in a free Source Water Protection program sponsored by US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas Rural Water Association (TRWA). This is a voluntary program that your water systems staff chose to participate in so that they may be better prepared to protect your drinking water sources. As the program was developed, the TRWA Source Water Protection Specialist inventoried each water system for human activities that could potentially threaten the quality of the drinking water source. In your case, this is groundwater as your systems rely solely on water wells to provide water.

A major cause of groundwater pollution in the United States is effluent from septic tanks, cesspools, and privies. Septic systems are used to treat and dispose of sanitary waste, that is, wastewater from kitchens, clothes washing machines and bathrooms. When properly sited, designed, constructed, and operated, septic systems pose a minimal threat to drinking water sources. On the other hand, improperly used or operated septic systems can be a significant source of groundwater contamination that can lead to waterborne disease outbreaks and other adverse health effects.

All homes and businesses within your water systems depend on private septic systems. Therefore, the water system personnel wish to provide the following information so that you may assist with protecting your drinking water quality.

The state of Texas has adopted a code (30TAC, Subchapter G, Rule §30.240) making it mandatory that a professionally licensed and registered sanitarian or engineer designs all new structures. Septic systems and drain fields should be of adequate size to handle anticipated wastewater flows. In addition, soil characteristics and topography should be considered in designing the drain field. The lower the soil permeability, the larger the drain field required for adequate treatment. Drain fields should be in relatively flat areas to ensure uniform effluent flow. Effluent containing excessive amounts of grease, fats, and oils may clog the septic tank or drain field and lead to premature failure.

## **How can you help?**

The following is a list of best management practices that you can put in place in your own home or business to aid in protection. This includes:

- Pumping and inspection of the septic system every 3-5 years. Repairs should be made in a timely manner.
- Fix leaky faucets and fixtures.
- Do not use flush activated toilet bowl tablets or treatments.
- Install lint traps on washing machines.
- Keep the use of antibacterial soaps to a minimum.
- Keep garbage disposal use to a minimum.
- Keep the use of bleach to a minimum.
- Do not flush inorganic materials such as diapers, cigarette butts, tampons etc.
- Reduce the amount of grease and fats by wiping plates, pots, and pans prior to washing.
- Install water conservation fixtures.

If you have any questions or recommendations, please feel free to call the office at 830-741-5264.