

## ***Webinar: Working with NRCS and Agricultural Partners to Protect Drinking Water Sources***

**Date:** Tuesday, June 25, 2019

**Time:** 12:00 – 1:30 pm (eastern time)

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**Description:** This free webinar is intended to encourage and promote partnerships between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), state water programs, water utilities and other stakeholders to take advantage of NRCS opportunities (i.e., new Farm Bill provisions, National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Source Water Protection watersheds, and Regional Conservation Partnership Projects (RCPP)) to work with agricultural and forest landowners to implement conservation and best practices that protect drinking water sources. State drinking water and water quality programs, drinking water utilities, NRCS State Conservationists, and all other Source Water Collaborative organizations and their members are encouraged to attend, along with anyone else who would like to participate.

### **Webinar Agenda:**

- **NRCS National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) and Source Water Protection:** *Dee Carlson, USDA-NRCS Water Quality Specialist, and Martin Lowenfisch, USDA-NRCS Branch Chief for Areawide Planning* will share information about the NRCS National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) that is delivered in partnership with EPA, and seeks to address water bodies impaired by nutrients, sediment and/or pathogens in agricultural-dominated watersheds. NRCS has worked with EPA to expand focus on watershed assessment and partner engagement in priority small watersheds selected in collaboration with state water quality agencies and have seen positive results. In FY19, NWQI expanded to include source water protection areas for both surface and ground water public systems. The initiative can help support states as they roll-out efforts to comply with the source water protection requirements in the new Farm Bill.
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Source Water Protection:** *Kari Cohen, Projects Branch Chief at USDA-NRCS* will share how the 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized RCPP and made substantial changes to the program. This presentation will highlight those changes and discuss how entities interested in source water protection may participate.
- **Locally Led Source Water Collaboratives in Oregon:** *Jay Gibbs, Acting NRCS State Conservationist for Oregon* will present how Oregon's Strategic Approach to Conservation provides a framework for locally led conservation efforts to be successful from inception to implementation including the recent success in securing funding for five SWC planning efforts. The projects in Oregon were not all at the same stage of planning, nor were they reflective of all the stakeholders' number one priorities. Understanding that different stakeholders have different metrics of success allowed the Oregon partnership to agree on the five projects they could all move forward on.
- **Source Water Protection and State Nutrient Reduction Strategies - Overview of Efforts in Iowa:** *Adam Schneiders, Water Quality Resource Coordinator and Acting Legislative Liaison for*

*the Iowa Department of Natural Resources* will highlight the successes of the Iowa Water Quality and Drinking Water Programs, and the Iowa Agricultural Source Water Collaborative, to leverage resources and funding for NRCS program opportunities in collaboration with drinking water utilities, farmers and landowners, and many other partners. This presentation will explain the role of the state source water protection program in cultivating these partnerships and identifying priority areas, and share tips and examples for developing successful NRCS projects and proposals to implement agricultural conservation and management practices that protect critical drinking water sources and improve water quality.

- **Establishing a NWQI Source Water Protection Project:** *Jennifer Heymann, Source Water Protection Program Manager, American Water Mid-Atlantic Division* will provide an overview of the NWQI Source Water Protection program and a case study of how a water utility got involved in establishing a project in central Pennsylvania. This will include a review of lessons learned from the process and resources available to other utilities and partners who may be interested in this program.

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### Webinar Moderator



**Karen Wirth** is the Team Leader for the Source Water Protection Team in EPA's Office of Ground Water & Drinking Water and has been with EPA's Office of Water since 1999. Her primary focus is protecting sources of drinking water – the lakes, rivers, streams and aquifers that are tapped for drinking purposes. Karen is also EPA's representative to the National Source Water Collaborative with 29 federal, state, and local members that work together and with many partners to integrate source water protection into key land use decision making processes at the local level.

### Webinar Speakers



**Dee Carlson** is the Water Quality Specialist with USDA-NRCS in Washington, DC. She coordinates the National Water Quality Initiative and the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative. Dee has 35 years of experience working in water resource planning and has expertise in hydrology and erosion modeling.



**Martin Lowenfish** is the Branch Chief for Areawide Planning with USDA-NRCS and has responsibility for overseeing the design and delivery of targeted efforts to deliver USDA conservation programs in a way that achieves outcomes for clean water, wildlife habitat and other objectives. Water quality efforts include the National Water Quality Initiative and the Mississippi River Basin Health Watershed Initiative. Martin began his USDA career working with Alaska Native communities to support reindeer management and has been working on national programs since 2001.



**Kari Cohen** oversees a team responsible for a number of project-based programs at USDA-NRCS. These programs include the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Conservation Innovation Grants, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Wetlands Mitigation Banking Program. Prior to this most recent position, Kari served as the Director of NRCS's Conservation Innovations Team, providing strategic and operational leadership for the agency's environmental markets and conservation finance activities.



**Jay Gibbs** is currently the Acting State Conservationist for Oregon, he is usually a Basin Team Leader in the John Day / Umatilla and Snake Basin in Eastern Oregon, a position he has held for over 25 years. Jay has successfully implemented multiple collaborative and partnership efforts across a broad geographic area with a wide cross section of partners at the local, state and national levels.



**Adam Schneiders** is the Water Quality Resource Coordinator and Acting Legislative Liaison for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He has worked in various roles within the DNR including coordinating the state's water quality standards efforts and supervising the NPDES program. He participates in a number of workgroups, including the Gulf of Mexico HTF and the EPA/state Nutrient Working Group. He is the Co-Chair of the ACWA Nutrients Policy Committee and the Chair of the Water Quality Executive Committee for the UMRBA.



**Jennifer Heymann** is the Source Water Protection Program Manager for American Water's Mid-Atlantic Division. She leads a team to identify and mitigate risks to drinking water supplies for approximately 75 water systems in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Jennifer currently serves as Chair of the AWWA Source Water Protection Committee and Technical Advisory Workgroup.