

From Sara Peel the President

In this, my last *LakeLine* as the NALMS president, we turn our focus to the protection and enhancement of one of



our most precious resources – drinking water. Source water protection is a program, usually initiated by a water utility to maintain or enhance water quality in streams, lakes,

reservoirs, and groundwater that provides source water for water treatment utilities. Surface water is the source for over 220 million North Americans, and a supply of safe and abundant potable water is essential for protection of public health and maintaining the economy.

The preservation of our drinking water or source water protection involves more than management of the surface waterbody. The engagement of lake users, watershed residents, and partner groups is necessary to protect our drinking water sources. As part of this effort, NALMS developed a Source Water Protection position statement and serves on the Source Water Collaborative.

NALMS participates in the Source Water Collaborative – a 29-member organization which operates with the goal of protecting water at its source. NALMS' mission to foster the management and protection of lakes and reservoirs for today and tomorrow is in perfect alignment with the Source Water Collaborative and its goal. The Source Water Collaborative is working to develop tools and programs to assist local residents, drinking water managers and watershed groups protect their drinking water at its source.

One NALMS member, the Beaver Water District, serves as a great example of the engagement and partnerships necessary to successfully implement and

manage a source water protection program. Through their partnerships with the West Fork White River Watershed Initiatives Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Beaver Watershed Alliance and other local, regional and state partners, leveraged more than \$8.7 million in on-the-ground conservation efforts including agricultural best management practices, habitat restoration and streambank stabilization efforts. The Beaver Watershed Alliance hosted more than 100 events over the last year focused on connecting Beaver Water users to their local streams and Beaver Lake. And the Beaver Water District hosted their 14th Annual Secchi Day connecting local residents to Beaver Lake through educational booths while deploying more than 30 volunteers across the lake to

assess water quality. Figures 1 and 2 included here highlight some of the scenes from their events, and you can read more about their efforts in their article in the following pages.

These efforts are a great example of the NALMS Source Water Protection Position Statement. It is the North American Lake Management Society's position that:

- Source water protection programs, source water management, optimized water treatment, distribution system management, and water quality monitoring are essential components to provide safe potable water.
- When lakes or reservoirs are used as source waters, water supply is the highest priority use of the water body



Figure 1. Beaver Water District hosted their 14th annual Secchi Day, including educational booths like this one.

and non-compatible uses should be minimized in the lake and along the shoreline.

- Source water protection programs should identify management strategies that will minimize nutrients, algae, turbidity, and organic loading.
- Source water protection programs should manage watersheds to prevent degradation of water quality from point and nonpoint sources of pollution, chemical spills, wildfires, storm impacts, and emerging contaminants.
- Water utilities should assess their watersheds for potential sources of contamination, impacts from upstream/nearby activities and land uses, emergencies, and extreme weather events.
- Water utilities and their customers are beneficiaries of SWP efforts and should help finance the cost of the SWP program.

Sara Peel, CLM, is the NALMS president, previously serving as the director at large, two terms as secretary, and one term as the Region 5 director. Sara received her B.S. in biology and Chemistry from Alma College and her M.S. in environmental science from Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Sara is the lead scientist and co-owner of Arion Consultants – a regional environmental consulting firm with a focus on lake and watershed management. She is an experienced leader in water quality and watershed management. 🌿



Figure 2. West Fork White River Watershed Initiatives: restored streambank on Rock Creek using EQUIP funding. Upper photo is site prior to restoration showing eroding cut-bank; middle photo shows restored streambank with toe-wood structure and revegetated constructed soil lifts; bottom photo shows revegetated terraces planted with native trees, shrubs, and grasses and seeded with native grasses and wildflowers.