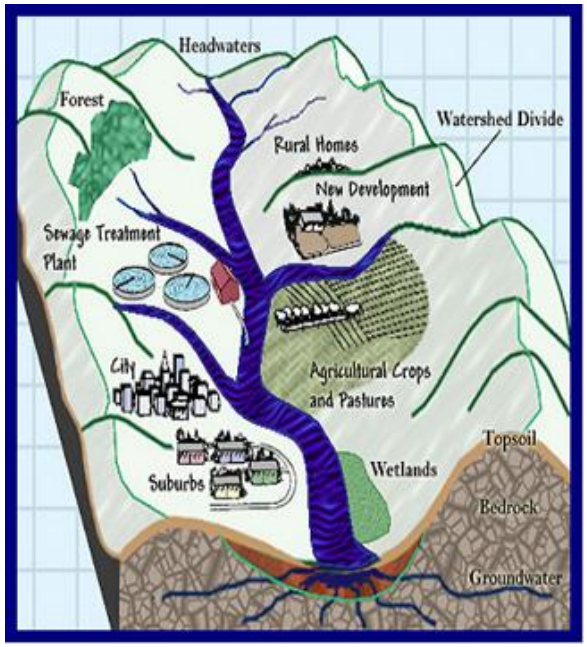
What is a Watershed?

A watershed is all the land that drains to the same river or lake. Water travels from the highest points at the watershed edge to the lowest point at the bottom of the watershed. Wherever you are, you are in a watershed!

When it rains, some water travels over the land surface to the nearest stream or creek. This water is called *surface runoff* or *stormwater*. As the stormwater flows, it picks up any contaminants lying on the surface – pesticides and fertilizer from lawns, manure from farms, sediment from construction sites, and oil and gas from roads. Small streams join to form larger and larger rivers, until the water – and any contaminants it is carrying – reaches the final lake or river.

Some precipitation, instead of traveling over the land, will percolate into the soil and reach the *groundwater*. Similarly, the groundwater may pick up nitrates from failing septic systems, gasoline from leaky storage tanks, and industrial chemicals from improper dumping. The groundwater ultimately flows into one of the rivers or lakes in the watershed.



Ways to Help

What can you do?

- Dispose of motor oil at a garage that will recycle it. Never pour oil on the ground or in a storm drain or sewer on the street.
- Pump out your septic system every two or three years. Look under "Septic Tanks" in the Yellow Pages to find a contractor.
- Bring household hazardous waste – such as paint, varnishes, and other chemicals – to a county waste collection site. Call ahead or check the county website for dates.
- Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides on your lawn and garden.
- If you drill a new well, make sure the old one is properly closed and abandoned.
- Do not dump swimming pool water into a creek or storm drain at the end of the season. If possible, direct the water into the sanitary sewer. Otherwise, wait until the chlorine diminishes and then direct pool water onto grass, forest, or other natural area.
- Remember: anything you throw or store on the ground can find its way into the water supply. Store and handle chemicals properly.
- Call the regional Department of Environmental Protection office at (814) 332-6945 immediately if you observe a chemical spill.

For more information

Pennsylvania DEP www.dep.state.pa.us
Watershed Protection www.epa.gov/owow/
Center for Watershed Protection www.cwp.org
Source Water Collaborative www.sourcewatercollaborative.org
American Waterworks Association: www.awwa.org
Maintaining Your Septic System
www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/homeowner_guide_long_customize.pdf

CITIZEN'S GUIDE

Protecting Your Drinking Water

Brookville Municipal Authority
Source Water Protection Program

This brochure is funded by the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Source Water Protection Technical Assistance Program.

For more information:
Brookville Municipal Authority
18 Western Avenue – Suite A
Brookville, PA 15825
(814) 849-5320

A Message from the Brookville Municipal Authority

Everyone uses local water sources every day, but do you know where your water really comes from?

The staff at BMA work around the clock to provide top quality water to every tap. They work hard to protect your water resources, which are the heart of your community, your way of life and your children's future. To maintain a clean, dependable water supply, they need your help!

This brochure was developed to make your community aware of the importance of protecting your water supply. Once a water source becomes contaminated, the cleanup often takes many years and can be very expensive. It is in our community's best interest to take the proper precautions to prevent contaminants from entering our water supply.

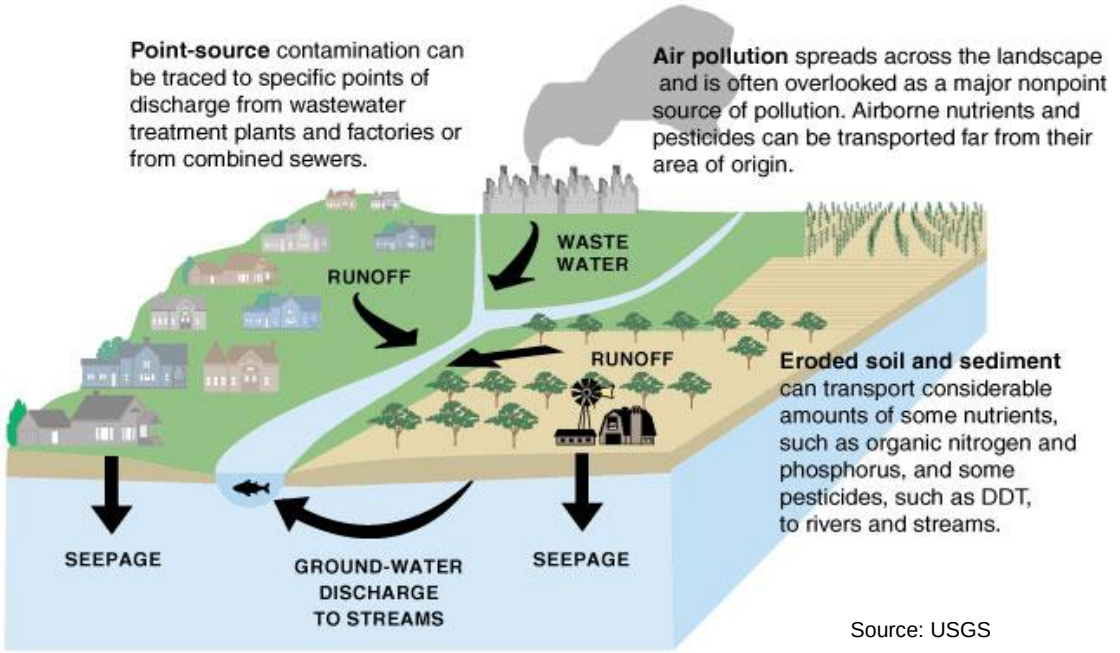
Who is responsible for protecting your drinking water? EVERYONE!

If you have any questions about source water protection in your area, please contact the BMA office at (814) 849-5320 for more information.

PENNSYLVANIA SOURCE WATER PROTECTION
Safe Drinking Water Starts at the Source!

SSM
SSM GROUP, INC.
Engineering and Environmental Services
ssmgroup.com

Examples of Source Water Contamination



Source: USGS

The Brookville Municipal Authority obtains your drinking water from a creek and groundwater wells. Source water protection can help prevent your drinking water from becoming polluted by managing possible sources of contamination in the watershed. Everyone has an important part to play in protecting drinking water – today and for the future. Source water protection is a community effort – we hope you will read this and other information forwarded to you, and help protect our water supply.

Why do water sources sometimes become polluted? A water supply can become polluted when substances that are harmful to human health enter the groundwater, rivers, reservoir, or springs. Common pollutants include gasoline or oil from leaking tanks, nitrate and pesticides from agriculture and lawns, pathogens from livestock and pet waste, salt from winter road maintenance, and chemicals from industrial facilities. Once drinking water is contaminated, it must be treated or abandoned as a drinking water source. The expense of treating polluted water or finding a new source of drinking water can be avoided through source water protection.