

# Protecting the Source of Drinking Water for Upper Ohio River Communities

*Steps your community can take to  
help limit the costs of water treat-  
ment and ensure a safe supply of  
water for the future*



*AirPhoto-Jim Wark*

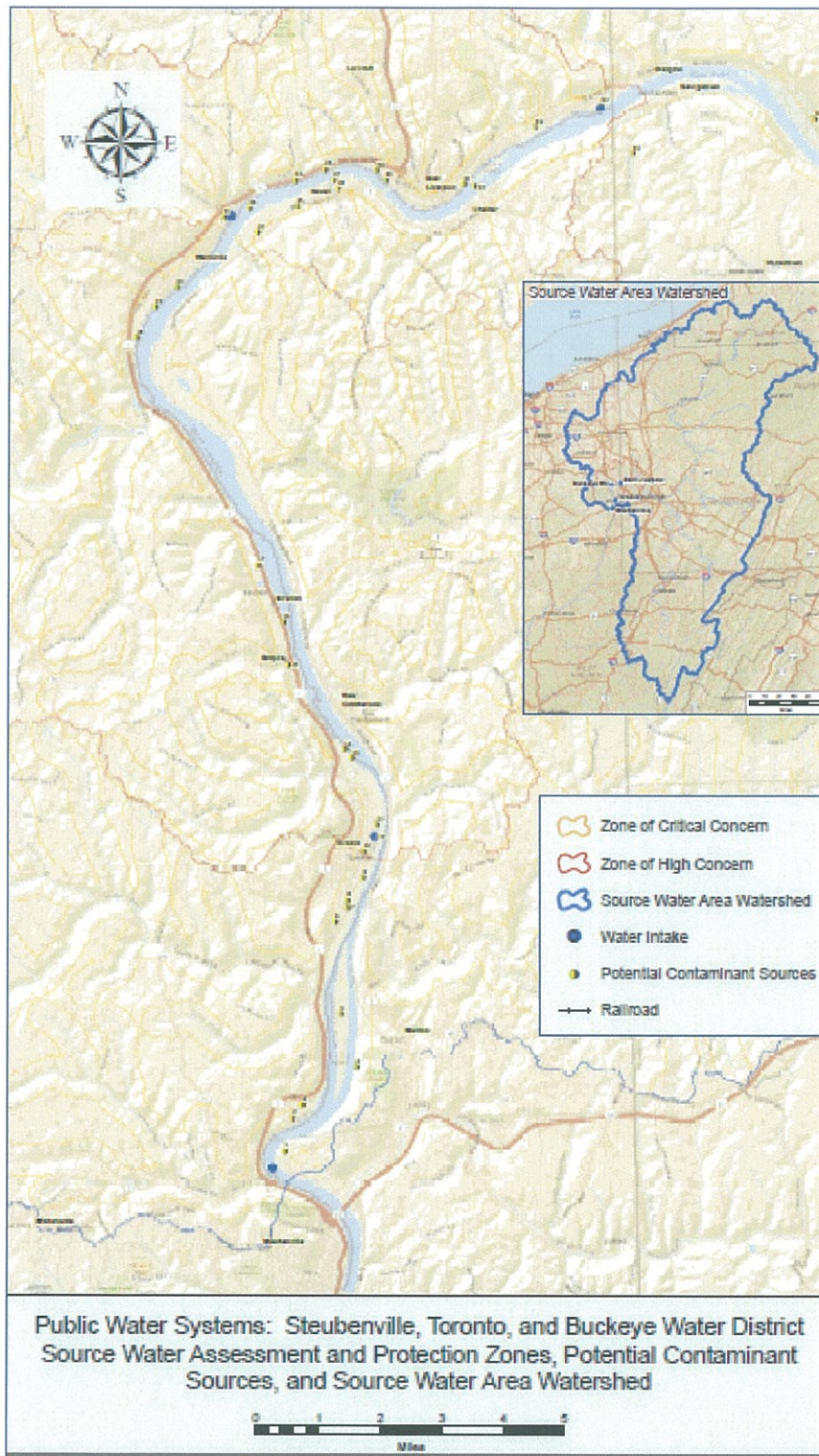
Between Follansbee, West Virginia and East Liverpool, Ohio—a distance of about 30 river miles--six communities and one large industry use the Ohio River as a source of drinking water. In 2012, staff from several of these communities' water systems met with local officials and staff from Ohio EPA and the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) to consider what they could do collectively to lessen impacts on the river's water quality from other uses the river provides: industrial transport, industrial cooling, discharge of wastewater, recreation, etc.

By 2013, a joint source water protection plan was developed and three of the six public water systems had agreed to implement it: the City of Toronto, the City of Steubenville and Buckeye Water District, which serves the Village of Wellsville.

**What are the main threats to the Ohio River's water quality?** This stretch of the Ohio River was an early center of heavy industry and the surrounding land use is highly industrial. In terms of the volume of chemicals that could be involved in a spill or release, the following are considered the greatest concerns:

- Spills from commercial shipping on the river
- Rupture of petroleum pipelines
- Railway accidents
- Releases from power plants
- Collapse of bermed retention ponds

**How to protect the Ohio River from spills?** The first line of defense is a **facility's own efforts**—its Spill Prevention, Control and Counter-measures Plan, Facility Operations Plan, and compliance with environmental regulatory requirements. The second line of defense is the **early warning function** provided by ORSANCO, and **spill response** by the companies contracted by industries to respond to a spill, coordinating with county Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) and the Coast Guard. The third line of defense is **public awareness and vigilance**, which is greatly facilitated by the work performed by the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District for the Cities of Toronto and Steubenville. The most effective strategy public water suppliers can pursue is to maintain good contact with all these groups, sharing information and concerns.



As a result, the centerpiece of the joint source water protection plan is annual update meetings between public water suppliers and representatives of the various local industries. Public water suppliers also will improve communications with the county EMA. Other planned activities focus on increasing public information.

By working together, the public water suppliers can pursue similar goals without overlap, and can share the effort involved. Other communities within this 30-mile stretch that use the Ohio River for public drinking water will be encouraged to become formal participants in its implementation.

The joint source water protection plan and other information about source water protection are available on the Buckeye Water website at: [www.buckeyewater.com](http://www.buckeyewater.com)

***For questions about the joint source water protection plan, contact***

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