



# **Education, Advocacy, and Value: The Power of Public Outreach in Water Programs**

Drinking Water 1-2-3 Regional Event #1

# Why is Public Outreach Important?



- Transparency
- Education
- Creating advocates
- Creating value
- Controlling your message – Perception vs. reality
- Building consensus / public support



# Public Outreach Essentials

1. Know your audiences and stakeholders (internal and external)
2. Develop a transparent and consistent message
3. Organize stakeholder engagement plan and tools



# What Can Public Outreach Look Like?

Public Outreach takes many shapes and forms:

- Social media and website
- Public open houses and board meetings
- Community presentations/professional society events
- Customer bills
- Door hangers
- Newsletters, articles and interviews
- Staff interactions with community
- Community partnerships

**What is important to your community?**





# Case Study: Great Water Alliance Program

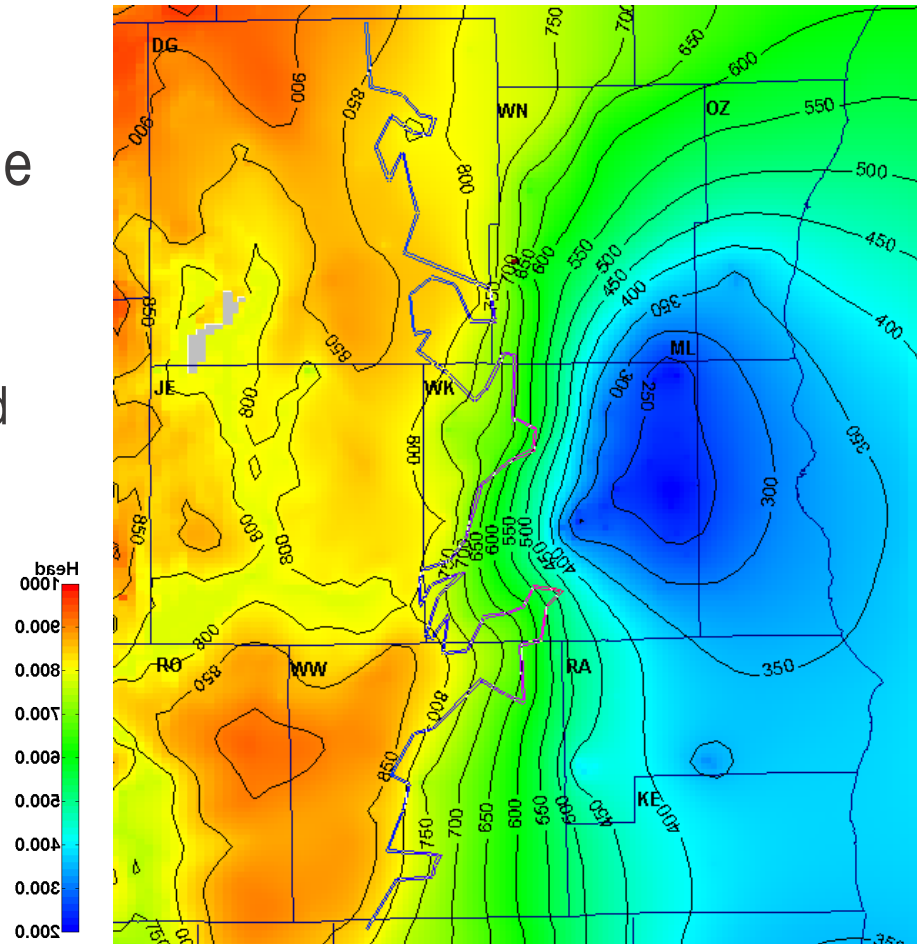


# Waukesha, Wisconsin's Challenge

Waukesha needs to provide sustainable water supply for the next 100 years:

- Water quality challenge
- Water quantity challenge – Limited aquifer recharge
- Shallow wells impact environmentally sensitive areas

The Milwaukee/Chicago cone of depression is one of the largest areas of groundwater drawdown in North America



Water Levels in the Sandstone Aquifer (feet above sea level)



# Waukesha's Challenge

- Great Lakes Compact – Exceptions to the Diversion Ban
  - Straddling community
  - Community in a straddling county



# Waukesha's Challenge

- Diversion Application Approval
  - Great Lakes Compact Council Approval (8 states) and 2 Canadian Provinces
  - Diversion Permit requires the amount of water borrowed is returned to Great Lakes Basin







# GREAT WATER ALLIANCE™



# Public Outreach for Great Water Alliance

- Developed Great Water Alliance brand
- Pocket cards for staff in field
- 11 open houses
  - 7 different communities
  - 1,000+ attendance



# Public Outreach for Great Water Alliance

- 1,500+ website views/month
- 5,000+ social media engagements
- 22,000+ customers with Program information in bills
- Regular meetings with community leaders, politicians, environmental groups, etc.
- Dedicated hotline and weekly emails

