

## San Luis Valley LEAP HIGH Collaborative Partners

Adams State College—Mary Hoffman

Agro Engineering

Alamosa County Commissioners—Frank Mestas

Alamosa County Nursing Service

Alamosa Riverkeepers—Cindy Medina

Central Pump Company—Orville Diss

Conejos County Commissioners—

Tressesa Martinez

Conejos County Nursing Service—Connie Edgar

Costilla County Commissioners—Ed Vigil

Costilla County Nursing Service—

Vivian Gallegos

Hospice del Valle—Lois Booth

Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project—

Mike Gibson

Saguache County ScSEED—Deanna Wilfong

San Luis Valley Development Resources

Group—Mike Wisdom

San Luis Valley Resource Conservation &

Development—Jim Mietz

Sangre de Cristo Lab—Evelyn Vigil

Congressman John Salazar and

Senator Ken Salazar have written letters of

support for this project

For well water testing, information on treatment systems, or other questions about your water, contact your local

**Certified** laboratory:

Evelyn Vigil, Owner  
Sangre de Cristo Labs  
2329 Lava Lane  
Alamosa, CO 81101  
719-589-1024

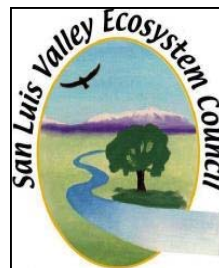
### Test your water more than once a year if:

- Someone in your household is pregnant or nursing
- There are unexplained illnesses in the family
- Your neighbors find a dangerous contaminant in their well
- You note a change in water taste, odor, color, or clarity
- There is a spill of chemicals or fuels into or near your well
- When you replace or repair any part of your well system

### Keep Your Distance!!!

To keep wells safe, be sure possible sources of contamination are not close by. Experts suggest the following distances as a minimum for protection—farther is better!

- Septic tanks— 50 feet
- Livestock yards, silos, septic leach fields— 50 feet
- Petroleum tanks, liquid-tight manure storage and fertilizer storage and handling— 100 feet
- Manure stacks— 250 feet



### San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council

P. O. Box 223 537 Main Street

Alamosa, CO 81101

719-589-1518 Website: slvec.org

Email: slvec@fone.net

**Agua es Vida!**



### Environmental Health is the Foundation for Public Health!

#### Do you know?

If your family gets drinking water from a private well, do you know if your water is safe to drink? Unlike municipal systems, private wells are not regularly tested by experts.

There are many things that affect the quality of drinking water. Most are caused by our own activities. Some are natural, such as storms, floods, and fires. Stormwater runoff is the single biggest threat to the health of our waterways. Water that washes over roofs, pavement, farms, and grassy areas picks up fertilizers, pesticides, litter, etc., and deposits them in surface water and ground water.

Every year:

- We apply 6.7 million pounds of pesticides to our lawns
- We produce more than 230 million tons of garbage that contains bacteria, nitrates, viruses, synthetic detergents, and household chemicals

### San Luis Valley LEAP HIGH

Landscape Environmental Assessment Plan—  
Health Inspired Goals for Humans

## What is LEAP HIGH?

In the summer of 2006, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through their Environmental Justice program, came to the San Luis Valley to offer free well-water testing to Valley households. A partnership was formed, entitled SLV LEAP HIGH, which included several environmental, business, civic, governmental, educational and health organizations. This Partnership organized the campaign for well testing in all six counties in the SLV. Well-testing was provided to 417 households.

Testing results indicated that 28.5% of household wells were positive for bacteria (such as e-coli), 1.4% for nitrates, 11.9% for arsenic, 1.4% for lead, 3.1% for uranium, and 3.6% for fluoride. This was the first regional project to provide free sampling and analysis of drinking water from private wells. It is estimated that 30 percent of Valley residents are not served by public water systems, and obtain their water from household wells.

For the next three years, the SLV LEAP HIGH program will be gathering water quality data and examining its relationship to health issues in the Valley. We will be working with health care providers to link the exposure of contaminants through well water with residents' health issues, and providing information to reduce exposure and health risks.

## What you can do:

- Have your water tested on a regular basis (every year)
- Use reverse osmosis, shock chlorination or other treatment plans to clean your water
- Reduce use of pesticides, fertilizers, and household chemicals
- Dispose of oil, gasoline, or household wastes in appropriate ways—remember what goes on the ground ends up in groundwater
- If health issues occur in your house, talk to your health care provider about well-water testing



**Arsenic!** Arsenic is colorless and tasteless and enters drinking water supplies from natural deposits in the earth, or from agricultural and industrial practices. Health affects from drinking arsenic include: discoloration of the skin, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, numbness in hands and feet, partial paralysis, and blindness. Arsenic has been linked to cancer of the bladder, lungs, skin, kidney, nasal passages, liver and prostate.

## Bottle Basics!

If you drink bottled water for health related reasons, check to make sure the water you purchase is safe. **Purified water** (treated by distillation or reverse osmosis) is essentially free of all chemicals. **Sterile water** is essentially free of all microbes, but has not been treated. Artesian water, ground water, spring water, or well water may or may **not** be treated. Carbonated water, soda water, seltzer water, sparkling water and tonic water are considered soft drinks and are not regulated as bottled water. Mineral water is ground water that naturally contains 250 or more parts per million of total dissolved solids.

## Common Sources of Contamination

Animal burial areas  
Drainage fields/wells  
Animal feedlots  
Irrigation sites  
Fertilizer storage/use  
Manure spreading areas/pits  
Pesticide storage/use  
Construction areas  
Nearby Cemeteries  
Railroad tracks and yards  
Scrap and junkyards  
Storage tanks

SLV LEAP HIGH is currently looking for funding to offer fund free/reduced price well testing. To sign up, please go to our website, [slvec.org](http://slvec.org), or call 589-1518 and leave a message. **If you have concerns about your water or health problems in your household, please have your well tested immediately!**