

MAP Project Highlights

**Where:**

Red Bud Lake Improvement District, Dickinson County, Kansas

Problem:

Failing and inadequate on-site septic systems contaminating groundwater, exposing citizens to health hazards

Solution:

MAP helped hire a different engineer, obtain funding to rehabilitate the drinking water system, install a public wastewater system and prepare the District to operate and manage both utilities.



Sewer main installation gets underway

New systems restore safe drinking water

This picturesque lakeside community of 38 homes was served by a public drinking water system. But its failing and inadequate on-site septic systems were contaminating the groundwater. Raw sewage was percolating to the surface in inadequately sized drainfields, exposing citizens to health hazards.

In addition, drinking water distribution lines passed too close to sewer lines or through a lateral septic drainfield, risking exposure to *e coli* bacteria if raw sewage were drawn into the drinking water system by back-siphoning due to the constant water leaks. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment had cited the City of Abilene for excessive nitrate levels beyond the Safe Drinking Water Act standards. Red Bud Lake's on-site septic systems also were contaminating the city's aquifer.

The project initially experienced challenges with the original engineer, the realization that the existing public drinking water system must be replaced and obtaining funding. The District finally was deemed eligible for a low-interest loan and a 45-percent grant. While this was welcome news, the board was given a deadline that allowed them just weeks to submit the application, a process that normally takes months.

MAP staff completed environmental reports, an emergency response plan and vulnerability assessment for both utilities and helped the board prepare to oversee construction and subsequently operate and manage both utilities. Additionally, MAP will create an owner's manual to assist the board in managing the utilities.

MAP helps revitalize small communities and tribal nations in nine states by working with them to find solutions for their infrastructure, enterprise development, aging, technology, or training issues.

MAP is a member of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership. RCAP is a national network of regional nonprofit organizations that provide comprehensive, on-site technical assistance and training to help small, rural communities address their drinking water, wastewater, and other community development needs.

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