



## **Groundwater Guardian/Groundwater Guardian Green Site Partnership Case Study**



# **Valparaiso, Indiana**

### **Groundwater Guardian Community: City of Valparaiso, Indiana**

### **Groundwater Guardian Green Sites: Forest Park Golf Course and Valparaiso Country Club**

The City of Valparaiso, Indiana was first designated as a Groundwater Guardian Community in 2004. Valparaiso is located in northwest Indiana, and is home to over 27,000 people, all of which rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water. Current groundwater-related concerns and issues include groundwater quality and quantity, pollution prevention, road salt intrusion, and community education.

The City's Groundwater Guardian team is made up of representatives from the City of Valparaiso, the Valparaiso Department of Water Works, the local university, wellhead protection team, and a local business. Since 2004, the local team has implemented a variety of groundwater education and protection activities, including developing and distributing water bill stuffers, hosting educational activities during National Drinking Water Week, staffing informational booths at a local Earth Day Celebration, and installing "no dumping" storm drain markers in the wellhead protection area. In 2008, the team submitted a Result Oriented Activity (ROA) plan to work to involve local sites in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program.

The Valparaiso Groundwater Guardian team, led by System Protection Administrator Daryl Brown, worked with two sites to apply for Groundwater Guardian Green Site designation: Valparaiso Country Club and Forest Park Golf Course, both of which earned Green Site designation for the 2008 program year. The Groundwater Guardian team saw the inherent benefits of the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program to their own groundwater protection efforts, as well as an opportunity to spread the word about groundwater protection and conservation to golf course staff and course patrons, and presented it as a tool for both golf courses to review their current practices.

Valparaiso Country Club is a private, 18-hole golf course established in 1922. Four of the City's wells are located on the Valparaiso Country Club's property, and the Golf Course Superintendent, David Threlkeld, served as a member of the City's Wellhead Protection Steering Committee. Regarding the Country Club's participation in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program, Thelkeld said, "I feel Valparaiso Country Club is a great



environmental asset to the community of Valparaiso. I also know we have a great environmental obligation, especially with having four city drinking water wells on our property.” The Country Club has instituted many environmentally-friendly practices, including yearly soil sampling, use of organic fertilizers, tracking irrigation water use, proper pesticide and fertilizer application practices, proper disposal of toxic substances, a recycling program, and the installation of native plants.



Forest Park Golf Course is a public golf course owned and operated by the City of Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation. The 18-hole course was developed in 1930. The City of Valparaiso enjoys a positive working relationship with Forest Park staff, though they were relatively unaware of the efforts of the Valparaiso Groundwater Guardian team prior to becoming involved in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program. Rich Frey, Golf Course Superintendent at Forest Park, said the Valparaiso Groundwater Guardian team has “been very supportive and attentive to our needs.” Frey manages a second golf course in Valparaiso that he plans to pursue Groundwater Guardian Green Site designation for in 2009. Forest Park Golf Course implements a variety of positive environmental practices, such as using lower input plants, tracking irrigation water usage, maintaining a no-application zone around active wells, disposing of toxic substances properly, installing rain gardens, and increasing habitat areas.

Brown has indicated that the Groundwater Guardian team will continue to work with the Valparaiso Country Club and Forest Park Golf Course on future groundwater protection and education activities; though the team will be in a transition in 2009 with Brown’s retirement from the City of Valparaiso. Groundwater Foundation staff will assist the new team leader with Groundwater Guardian paperwork and program requirements, and help ensure the continuation of the successful partnership between the two Green Sites and the Groundwater Guardian team.

Learn more about the Groundwater Guardian and Groundwater Guardian Green Site programs online at [www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org).

Groundwater Guardian and Groundwater Guardian Green Site are programs of



The Groundwater Foundation  
P.O. Box 22558  
Lincoln, NE 68542-2558  
phone: 402-434-2740  
fax: 402-434-2742  
toll free: 1-800-858-4844  
web: [www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org)  
email: [info@groundwater.org](mailto:info@groundwater.org)