

# Working Together to Protect Our Water

To attention of: CAO/Clerk for distribution to Heads of Council and Councillors

October 27, 2008

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## What is Source Water?

Source water is untreated water from streams, lakes, rivers or underground aquifers that people use for potable water supply.

## What is Source Water Protection?

It is the protection of water resources such as lakes, rivers and groundwater from contamination or overuse. Water is critical to all aspects of our lives. Protecting water sources is important because it ensures there is enough safe water for all of our uses - now and in the future.

## Why Source Protection?

Source Protection is part of a multi-barrier preventative approach to protecting drinking water. It's far less expensive to prevent a problem than it is to take corrective action should contamination occur. Source protection planning is a responsible approach to protecting our own water, the water of our neighbours and sources of water for future generations. Source Protection Committees will create the source protection plan and municipalities will be required to carry out that plan to protect the sources of their municipal drinking water supplies. The Clean Water Act will:

- ◆ Require local communities to look at the existing and potential threats to their water and set out and implement the actions necessary to reduce or eliminate significant threats.
  - ◆ Empower communities to take action to prevent threats from becoming significant.
  - ◆ Require public participation on every local source protection plan. This means everyone in the community gets a chance to contribute to the planning process.
  - ◆ Require that all plans and actions are based on sound science.
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## What's Being Done

The Source Protection Committee will produce three key documents:

1. **Terms of Reference (ToR establish who does what)** The Source Protection Committee will prepare terms of reference outlining all the steps to be taken to develop and implement a plan to protect drinking water sources. The terms of reference will set out who is responsible for carrying out different activities. The terms of reference will include strategies to consult with potentially affected property owners, to involve the public and to resolve disputes.

[Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching-Black River TOR](#)

[Nottawasaga Valley TOR](#)

[Severn Sound TOR](#)

2. **Assessment Report (due one year after the Terms of Reference has been approved by MOE)** Source protection committees including municipalities, conservation authorities and other key stakeholders will identify and assess threats to the quality and quantity of drinking water sources and decide how to address them. They will decide which risks:

- ◆ are significant and need immediate action,
- ◆ need monitoring to ensure they do not become significant, or
- ◆ pose a low or negligible risk.

This work involves identifying present and future groundwater and surface water municipal supplies, areas where large regional aquifers are being recharged, and where these are vulnerable to contamination. It also involves measuring how much water exists both at surface and below ground, how it moves, and how much water is withdrawn to identify potential water shortages.

3. **Source Protection Plan (due Fall 2012)** A source water protection plan is a management strategy designed to minimize the impact that human and natural activities have on the quality and supply of our water resources. Once the risks to drinking water sources are identified, the source protection committee will work with various groups to come up with a source protection plan to address these risks. Broad consultation will involve municipalities, conservation authorities, property owners, farmers, industry, businesses, community groups, public health officials, First Nations and the public in coming up with workable, effective solutions.

#### **Mission**

The Source Protection Committee exists to ensure an open process is followed in the development of reasonable, science based policies that protect municipal sources of drinking water now and into the future.

#### **Timelines:**

**Fall 2008** – Terms of Reference submitted to MoE

**January 2010** – Technical Assessment Report due (assessment of risks to drinking water)

**Fall 2012** – Source Water Protection plans due – These plans include the development of risk reduction strategies (to mitigate existing problems) and land use planning policies (to prevent new risks)

**2013 ++** – Source Water Protection plans to be implemented - primarily through municipal official plans, but province and others also subject to the plans

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#### **Funding Available for Landowners**

The Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP) has been established by the Clean Water Act to help landowners take action to protect your municipality's drinking water sources. Whether they are farmers, landowners, or small or medium businesses, this funding program can help your community protect its drinking water. This is what good stewardship is all about.

Residents (living within certain zones identified as vulnerable) can access funds to do projects such as:

- ◆ [upgrade and repair their septic system](#)
- ◆ [upgrade and decommission their well](#)
- ◆ [build buffers to prevent soil erosion and contamination runoff, manage manure and improve their barn](#)
- ◆ [carry out pollution prevention reviews](#)
- ◆ protect land around your municipal wells and intakes (details coming soon)

**Information about eligibility requirements and funding available can be found by contacting your local Conservation Authority or Source Protection Authority ([SSEA](#), [NVCA](#), [LSRCA](#)) or go to <http://www.ourwatershed.ca>**

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#### **Online Resources:**

[Fact sheets](#)

[News Release and Backgrounder](#)

[Technical bulletins](#)

[Legislation and regulations](#)

[Source Protection Downloads](#)

[Links to Other Websites](#)

**South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region**  
**120 Bayview Parkway, Box 282**  
**Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 4X1**  
**1-800-465-0437 or [www.ourwatershed.ca](http://www.ourwatershed.ca)**