

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

ACT FOR CLEAN WATER

 Mississippi Valley
Conservation Authority

 RIDEAU VALLEY
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Media Release – August 28, 2014

Manotick, Ontario

LOCAL PLAN TO PROTECT DRINKING WATER GETS APPROVAL

The Ministry of the Environment has approved the locally developed Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan. The Source Protection Plan, required under Ontario's *Clean Water Act*, sets out policies to keep contaminants out of rivers and underground aquifers that supply municipal drinking water systems in the region. The *Clean Water Act* is one of the province's responses to the Walkerton tainted water tragedy and is part of Ontario's strategy to safeguard drinking water from source to tap.

"The Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan is the culmination of many years of work by the Source Protection Committee and municipalities and a great deal of valuable input from provincial ministries, interest groups, local residents and the broader public. The result is a Plan that balances economic and practical considerations with strong policies that will afford a high level of protection for this very important natural resource – our shared drinking water sources" states Janet Stavinga, Chair of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee.

About Source Protection

Keeping contaminants out of drinking water sources rather than just depending on water treatment plants to remove them is an idea that is catching on across North America. The principle is simple: first, science is used to map the most vulnerable areas around municipal drinking water sources; next, a Source Protection Plan is developed to prevent or lower the risk of contaminants being released in these vulnerable areas. To ensure Source Protection Plans are effective and fair, the process in Ontario is guided by a local Source Protection Committee made up of representatives from municipalities, small business, industry, agriculture, First Nations, environmental groups and the general public.

About the Local Plan

The Plan protects the drinking water of over 730, 000 residents of eastern Ontario. The policies in the Plan mainly apply in the small vulnerable areas close to a municipal well or river that supplies municipal drinking water. The policies range from those that **encourage** positive actions at the household level to mandatory policies such as those that **prohibit** future undesirable land uses like landfills or industrial effluent discharges near drinking water sources. In between are policies that **manage** the risk of activities through the establishment of Risk Management Plans. A small number of residents and businesses located near drinking water sources will need a Risk Management Plan if they have an activity that could endanger the water supply such as storing a large amount of fuel. The Risk Management Plan demonstrates that the activity is being done safely and will provide assurances for the municipality and the water users as well as peace of mind for the property owner. Municipalities and/or Conservation Authorities will work with affected people to help them understand and meet the new requirements.

Communities Where the Plan Applies

While the Plan includes some non-mandatory measures that will help protect drinking water region wide, the main purpose of the *Clean Water Act* is the protection of shared municipal drinking water sources. In the Mississippi-Rideau region, the communities with municipal water services are the City of Ottawa (including Carp, Munster and Richmond in rural Ottawa) and seven smaller centres (Almonte, Carleton Place, Kemptville, Merrickville, Perth, Smiths Falls and Westport).

More information: Allison Gibbons, Co-Project Manager, Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1148 allison.gibbons@mrsourcewater.ca
www.mrsourcewater.ca