

What farmers need to know about the *Clean Water Act* and Source Protection Planning

Across Ontario local Source Protection Committees are developing plans to protect their communities' sources of drinking water. These Source Protection Plans are being developed under Ontario's *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Will my farm be affected?

In eastern Ontario, early calculations estimate that a very small percentage of agricultural land may be affected by the *Clean Water Act*. This is because few farms are located near municipal wells or intake pipes which are the areas of most interest since the primary focus of the Act is to protect **municipal** sources of drinking water.

The area of land to be protected around municipal wells and intakes is still being mapped and will depend on local soil and water conditions. Contact your local Conservation Authority to find out if your land may be affected (contact information listed below). Contact Conservation Ontario to find out which Conservation Authority covers your area.

Which farming activities might be restricted in these protected areas?

All land uses, not just agriculture, will be evaluated for potential threats. Within agriculture, source protection planning will look at activities such as improperly managed manure, improper use of pesticides and fertilizers or improper storage of fuels. Fortunately, most farms already have good farming practices in place, such as nutrient management plans, so the impact on farms located in protected areas could be minimal.

Source Protection Committees will be developing Source Protection Plans over the coming years. They will look for ways to ensure farming activities, and all other land uses, do not pose a risk to drinking water sources. In the most sensitive areas, such as those closest to a municipal well or intake pipe, property owners may be asked to work with a risk management official to develop a plan to reduce significant risks to drinking water. There may be a rare situation where an activity must be restricted or prohibited.

Who is in charge of source protection planning in my area?

Your local Source Protection Committee is responsible for assessing risks and coming up with the best ways to address them. In Eastern Ontario all Committees have agricultural representatives on them. Find out who your representatives are by contacting your local Conservation Authority.

What if I don't like what the Source Protection Committee decides?

Source Protection Committee meetings are open to the public so you can follow the development of Source Protection Plans. Once a Committee has finished a draft Source Protection Plan, they are required by law to make it available to the public for comment. Watch your local newspaper and source protection website (see below) for information on when and how to comment. Source Protection Committees are then required to review and consider all public comments. Final Source Protection Plans will be submitted to the Minister of the Environment for approval by 2012. Once Source Protection Plans have been approved by the Minister you can make a formal appeal.

Will I be compensated for changes I need to make under the *Clean Water Act*?

The Province of Ontario entrenched the **Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program** in the *Clean Water Act* to provide financial assistance to property owners affected by the legislation. This program has \$28 million in funding for 2007-2011.

To date funding has been provided for voluntary stewardship activities close to municipal wells and intake pipes because it was unknown who would be affected by the Act. In 2009 the province is consulting with the public about how to refocus the program since technical studies will begin to identify what land use activities pose a risk to source water.

Find out if you are eligible for funding by contacting your local Conservation Authority or the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) if your farm is registered under the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (COFSP).

Can Conservation Authority staff come onto my property without permission?

Conservation Authorities have local protocols in place requiring their staff to contact landowners and get permission before entering private property. Contact your local conservation authority to find out what their policy is. The *Clean Water Act* does authorize staff, if formally trained and designated by the Province, to enter private property to assess if there is a risk to a community's drinking water source. However, staff will adhere to their local Conservation Authority protocol regardless of what the Act allows.

Will information about my land be made public?

Conservation Authorities are not allowed to release personal information about landowners or their property. Under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, personal information cannot be made public and this applies to all reports and documents involved in source protection planning.

How can I participate in source protection planning?

Stay informed by joining your local Conservation Authority's mailing list or attending Source Protection Committee meetings. Committees may also seek input from working groups or the public on specific issues. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on draft Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plans before they are submitted to the Province for approval. Watch for all of these opportunities in your local newspaper, on your source protection website or contact your local Conservation Authority.

For more information contact:

Conservation Ontario

www.conservationontario.ca
1-905-895-0716

Ontario Ministry of the Environment

www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/cleanwater/index.php
1-800-565-4923

Your Local Conservation Authority:

Cataraqui Source Protection Area

613-546-4228 or 1-877-956-CRCA ext 224
robmcrae@cataraquieregion.on.ca
www.cleanwatercataraqui.ca

Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region

613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1147
sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca
www.mrsourcewater.ca

Quinte Source Protection Region

613-968-3434 ext 114
ktaylor@quinteconservation.ca
www.quintesourcewater.ca

Raisin-South Nation Source Protection Region

613-938-3611 or 1-866-938-3611 ext 247
dallaire@rrca.on.ca
www.yourdrinkingwater.ca

