

Source Protection Report

By Janet Stavinga, Chair

June is a busy month for the Source Protection Committee (SPC) as we have embarked on a series of Open Houses across the Mississippi and Rideau watersheds. **These Open Houses, hosted and held in cooperation with our local municipalities, started on June 3 in Almonte and will wind up in Westport on June 19.** For the full schedule and locations, visit our website at www.mrsourcewater.ca or call us for further information.

Please attend our Open Houses to learn more about your municipal drinking water system, the *Clean Water Act*, funding sources available to landowners for early actions to protect drinking water and the SPC's draft Terms of Reference or work plan for the next five years.

The **draft Terms of Reference**, one covering the Mississippi watershed and another for the Rideau, outlines all the elements to be studied and projects to be undertaken in the development of Source Protection Plans for each watershed. **Comments on the draft Terms of Reference must be received no later than Friday, June 20.** The draft documents can be viewed at our two Conservation Authority offices or on our website.

The SPC regular monthly meeting was held in picturesque Merrickville on June 5. We were provided with an overview of our region's water quality (both surface and groundwater) and the existing drinking water threats inventory for our watersheds. Threats are defined as any contaminant currently or having the potential to negatively affect a drinking water source from a water quality perspective. The inventory focuses primarily on assessing past and current land use activities.

The presentation also highlighted identified issues — that is, the realization of a specific threat within a drinking water source — such as bacteria/nitrates in Lanark Village, chlorinated solvents from the Manotick dry cleaning spill, and the former Beckwith landfill site. Lastly, we learned of the data gaps that exist within our present knowledge base and the need for more detailed work.

Further information can be found in the Preliminary Draft Watershed Characterization Report on our website. This detailed report provides a relatively “big picture” view of the current state of knowledge about drinking water in our region. It also includes information on the natural characteristics of the two watersheds, population distribution, land uses, water quality trends, water use and vulnerable areas. This report provides the foundation on which much of our technical work will build on.

The SPC also heard a brief report from the Ministry of the Environment about pending changes to the Ontario Building Code regarding septic system re-inspection under the authority of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. A summary of the presentation can be found on our website.

Our next SPC meeting is on Thursday, July 3 at 7 p.m. at the Rideau Vista Public School, 9921 Country Road 42 (at the corner of County Road 42 and the Perth Road). There is also a “meet and greet” hour from 6 pm to give you an opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences with Committee members one-on-one. Hope to see you there!

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