

Source Protection Report

By Janet Stavinga, Chair

The Source Protection Committee (SPC) meeting this month in Almonte was another step along the path to the protection of municipal drinking water supplies in the Mississippi-Rideau watersheds.

During the meeting, held in the Almonte Old Town Hall on May 1, the SPC reviewed and commented on our draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the second time. Our region must produce two ToR, one for the Mississippi watershed and one for the Rideau watershed. These two key documents lay out the basic elements and expected projects that will make up the source protection efforts in our area over the next five years. The ToR identify the municipalities and drinking water systems within our region followed by detailed information on the systems, the work plan as to how we will complete the technical Assessment Reports and the Source Protection Plans, and of course, a preliminary budget as we look ahead.

These draft **Terms of Reference** have been circulated to our municipal partners and are available for public comment. **Comments are to be submitted no later than June 20, 2008.** Please watch for announcements in local newspapers and on our website about how to comment on the draft ToRs as well as Source Water Protection Open Houses in your communities.

These Source Water Protection Open Houses, hosted and held in cooperation with local municipalities, will give you information about your municipal drinking water, an update on technical progress in Source Water Protection, outline current incentive programs for early actions to protect drinking water, and the chance to review and comment on the two draft Terms of Reference.

During the second part of our meeting, the SPC reviewed the concept of “vulnerable areas” as defined in the Clean Water Act. This concept is very important as it defines our focus in terms of producing the two Source Protection Plans to protect municipal source water in our region. There are four types of vulnerable areas - municipal wellheads, municipal surface water intakes, significant groundwater recharge areas and highly vulnerable aquifers.

There are 12 municipal drinking water systems in the Mississippi-Rideau area — seven of those draw source water from underground aquifers using wells, and five take source water from local rivers. Municipal wells serve Almonte, Kemptonville, Merrickville, Westport, Carp, Richmond (King’s Park subdivision) and Munster Hamlet. The five river intake systems are in Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls and urban Ottawa (two intakes - Britannia and Lemieux Island).

These 12 municipal systems treat and distribute potable drinking water for a vast majority (84%) of the people living in the watershed region. The remaining 16% rely on private wells and intakes to get their daily drinking water.

Our **next SPC meeting** is on the Rideau River in the **Merrickville Community Centre**, 106 Read Street, on Thursday, **June 5** starting at **1 p.m.** Check out our website or call us for further information.

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