

Source Protection Report

By Janet Stavinga, Chair

Ontario's *Clean Water Act* requires municipalities and the local community to work together to protect municipal drinking water sources from becoming contaminated or depleted. This means identifying areas in lakes, rivers and underground aquifers that supply municipal drinking water, identifying land use activities in these areas that pose a drinking water threat, and then developing policies to manage these risks.

At our April and June meetings the Committee approved draft maps showing where our seven municipal groundwater systems in Almonte, Carp, Kemptville, Merrickville, Munster, Richmond and Westport get their groundwater. Open houses were held this summer to get feedback from local residents on these draft maps. The next step was to have Dillon Consulting **identify land uses** in these areas **that could pose a significant threat to municipal source water**.

The Province developed a list of land use activities considered 'significant' drinking water threats if they take place in close proximity to municipal drinking water systems. Dillon used a number of data sources, including databases, aerial photography and drive-by surveys to compile a list of these land use activities occurring close to our seven municipal wells. Individual properties are not identified in the reports.

If detailed information was not available on a property, Dillon made assumptions about what was taking place. Because assumptions were made, this list is simply an educated estimate of how many significant threats currently exist. The purpose of this estimate is for our Committee to know how many property owners would be impacted by a particular land use policy before we decide whether to include it in our source protection plan (plans will be drafted in 2010 to 2012).

At our November meeting, the Committee also reviewed a **list of groundwater quality issues**. These are documented cases of water quality contamination approaching or exceeding Ontario's established drinking water standards. In the Mississippi-Rideau, Dillon Consulting determined there are no issues pertaining to municipal wells and they compiled a short list of issues pertaining to groundwater supplying pockets of private wells.

The next step is to receive feedback from citizens on these draft threats and issues inventories. Study results will be posted shortly on our web site and letters will be sent to all property owners where a potential drinking water threat has been identified. Watch your newspapers and this column for additional opportunities to comment.

In early 2010, this same work will be completed for our municipal surface water systems in Carleton Place, Perth, Smiths Falls, Britannia and Lemieux Island. All these studies will then be compiled into an Assessment Report which will undergo two rounds of public consultation before being submitted to the Province next year for approval.

Our next **Committee meeting** is Thursday, **December 3** at 1 pm at the Rideau Valley Conservation Centre in Manotick. Everyone is welcome. Please check out our web site for agenda details at www.mrsourcewater.ca.

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