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Policies for Education & Outreach

Encouraging Source Protection



When it comes to protecting drinking water, everyone has an important role to play, big and small. The best protection is when everyone in a community is engaged in a collaborative effort to protect their local source of drinking water. Education and outreach programs are an effective way of raising awareness about where drinking water comes from, the importance of protecting it, and what residents, businesses and visitors can do to help.

What You Will Find in this Section

Three education and outreach initiatives form an integral part of protecting drinking water sources in the Mississippi-Rideau region. Two initiatives focus on protecting *municipal* sources of drinking water while the third helps protect *regional* drinking water. Each subsection includes:

- Policy intent which explains the need for each education and outreach program and its desired outcome
- Policy wording which describes each program, identifies the body responsible for implementing it and the compliance date

Corresponding Monitoring Policies

Section 5 of this Plan contains corresponding monitoring policies for each education and outreach initiative. These monitoring policies outline important information that Source Protection Authorities need to receive from implementing bodies in order to assess if implementation has been successful and if policies are achieving their objectives.

4.1 Living and Working in the Drinking Water Zone

Background

It is important that people who live and work near municipal drinking water sources know that they are in an area where their everyday actions could impact local drinking water. Knowing they are close to their community's source of drinking water and understanding the simple steps they can take to help protect it will prevent inadvertent contamination. An education and outreach initiative will help ensure people know:

- Where vulnerable drinking water areas are located
- What activities could pose a threat in these areas
- What actions can help protect drinking water in these areas
- What incentive programs exist to help initiate these actions

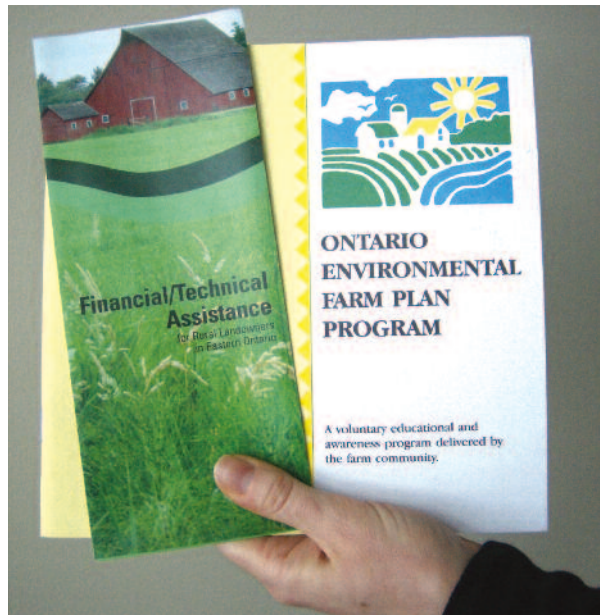
Policy Intent

Providing information to residents and businesses in the most vulnerable areas of a municipal drinking water source is intended to accomplish several goals:

- Complement mandatory policies. An example is to provide information on septic system care and maintenance in order to keep septic systems functioning properly between five year mandatory inspections.
- Address significant threats that have thresholds so low that mandatory measures would be impractical and unnecessary. Examples include spreading bagged manure on vegetable gardens or keeping one horse on a five acre upland pasture. Both activities can be considered a significant threat but addressing them through mandatory measures would be unreasonable.
- Address moderate threats that have a high level of risk but cannot be addressed through mandatory measures because they are not considered a significant threat under the *Clean Water Act*. An example is to encourage risk management measures for outdoor, above ground heating oil storage tanks. These measures are needed to truly safeguard drinking water as well as protect people's property and assets.
- Address threats at the "household" level where individually, activities may not constitute a significant threat but the cumulative impact of many households could be profound. An example of this is where many homeowners in one community might use excessive amounts of road salt on their driveways.
- Raise general awareness of the vulnerable areas, encourage good stewardship practices and promote financial assistance programs that help property owners initiate these practices.



Encouraging good stewardship



Promoting incentive programs

POLICIES

Policy: EDU-1-LB

Living and Working in the Drinking Water Zone

Within one year of the Source Protection Plan taking effect, the municipality shall initiate an education and outreach program targeted at residents and businesses located in the Wellhead Protection Areas with a vulnerability score of 10 and the Intake Protection Zones with a vulnerability score of 8 or higher. Source Protection Authorities will help develop materials that will raise awareness about these vulnerable areas and foster good stewardship practices within them. Municipalities will then use any means that effectively disseminates this information to residents and businesses in these areas such as a mail-out, participation in community events and partnering with other agencies to make use of existing programs. Once established, this education program shall be ongoing with materials being disseminated periodically as deemed appropriate by the municipality. The program may address any water quality or quantity topic but must include promotion of the following:

- Awareness of the vulnerable areas (will be marked by road and waterway signs)
- Best management practices for waste that is regulated by the MOECC through means other than Prescribed Instruments
- Proper septic system care and maintenance
- Awareness of the Mandatory On-Site Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program
- Best management practices for storing and applying nutrients and for outdoor livestock areas
- Risk management measures for fuel storage
- Awareness of Ontario's Cosmetic Pesticide Ban and best management practices where pesticides are used under an exemption from the ban
- The importance of complying with all aspects of the pesticide training/certification and Integrated Pest Management programs
- Participation in the Environmental Farm Plan Program
- Awareness of DNAPL and organic solvent substances and the products that may contain them, alternative products that do not pose a threat to drinking water and proper disposal of unwanted products
- "Smart salt practices" for the use of road salt
- The importance of addressing existing transport pathways such as abandoned wells and ensuring new projects, such as geothermal installations, do not create new transport pathways
- Existing funding programs available to help property owners and businesses implement best management practices and Source Protection Plan policy requirements

Implementing bodies should see Section 5 for corresponding monitoring policies which could contain reporting requirements.

4.2 Travelling Through the Drinking Water Zone

Background

The majority of policies in this Plan address activities that are taking place in a vulnerable drinking water area. However, a plan to protect drinking water would be incomplete without addressing threats that might travel through these areas. Policies to address the transportation of hazardous materials through Wellhead Protection Areas and Intake Protection Zones can reaffirm the importance of spill prevention and ensure appropriate spill response. It is also prudent to make the travelling public aware of when they have entered the most vulnerable areas of a municipal drinking water source.

Section 3.13 of this Plan contains two additional policies to help ensure spills along transportation corridors in vulnerable areas are adequately addressed:

- Municipalities are encouraged to update their Emergency Response Plans to ensure that spills in vulnerable areas are responded to appropriately.
- The MOECC is encouraged to ensure that their Spills Action Centre has access to the most current mapping of vulnerable areas so that reported spills are responded to appropriately.

Policy Intent

Three policies are intended to encourage the Ministry of Transportation and municipalities to install road and waterways signs that would make the travelling public and emergency responders aware of when they have entered the most vulnerable areas of a municipal drinking water source. Identifying these areas is intended to encourage good stewardship and prompt spill reporting and response.

An additional policy is intended to encourage municipalities to facilitate educational opportunities for local businesses that move hazardous materials through Wellhead Protection Areas and Intake Protection Zones. Employees should be made aware of:

- The location and sensitivity of these vulnerable areas (what the road signs signify)
- The importance of spill prevention and spill response in these areas



Transportation corridors in vulnerable areas

POLICIES

Policy: EDU-2-NLB

Signs Along Provincial Highways

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation, in collaboration with the MOECC as well as in consultation with Source Protection Authorities, is strongly encouraged to design a sign to the appropriate Provincial standards, to identify the locations of Wellhead Protection Areas and Intake Protection Zones. The Ministry of Transportation should manufacture, install and maintain the signs along Provincial Highways within the Wellhead Protection Areas with a vulnerability score of 10, and within the Intake Protection Zones with a vulnerability score of 8 or higher. This policy should be implemented within two years of the Source Protection Plan taking effect.

Policy: EDU-3-NLB

Signs Along Primary Municipal Roads

The municipality is strongly encouraged to purchase, install and maintain signs designed by the Ministry of Transportation in collaboration with the Source Protection Authorities to identify the locations of Wellhead Protection Areas and Intake Protection Zones. These signs should be placed, at a minimum, where municipal arterial roads are located within a Wellhead Protection Area with a vulnerability score of 10 and/or an Intake Protection Zone with a vulnerability score of 8 or higher (appropriate sign locations will ultimately be determined based on site-specific factors such as the size of the area scored 10). This policy should be initiated within two years of the Source Protection Plan taking effect.

Policy: EDU-4-NLB

Signs Along Recreational Waterways

The municipality is strongly encouraged to purchase, install and maintain signs designed by the Ministry of Transportation to identify the locations of Intake Protection Zones. These signs should be placed along recreational waterways where awareness of the Intake Protection Zones should be raised. Source Protection Authorities will collaborate with municipalities, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Parks Canada to determine appropriate sign locations and secure any necessary approvals for the installation. This policy should be initiated within two years of the Source Protection Plan taking effect.

Policy: EDU-5-NLB

Transporting Contaminants Through the Drinking Water Zone

Within one year of the Source Protection Plan taking effect, the municipality is strongly encouraged to initiate an education and outreach program targeted at local fuel distributors, sewage haulers, lawn care companies and other businesses that transport potential drinking water contaminants in Wellhead Protection Areas and Intake Protection Zones with a vulnerability score of 8 or higher. The Source Protection Authority will assist with the identification of potential businesses and the development of educational materials. To the extent feasible, this initiative should use existing training opportunities offered within these sectors to promote:

- Awareness of vulnerable areas (will be marked by road and waterway signs)
- Spill prevention (emphasizing the importance of adhering to existing spill prevention guidelines when operating in vulnerable drinking water areas)
- Spill response (emphasizing the importance of adhering to or learning procedures to follow in the event of a spill in a vulnerable drinking water area)

Implementing bodies should see Section 5 for corresponding monitoring policies which could contain reporting requirements.

4.3 Protecting Regional Groundwater

Background

Groundwater throughout most of the Mississippi-Rideau region is considered highly vulnerable to contamination because there is fractured bedrock and little soil cover. These conditions facilitate the movement of surface contaminants down into groundwater. For many people on private wells, highly vulnerable aquifers are their source of drinking water. It is therefore important to raise awareness about the vulnerable nature of groundwater in the Mississippi-Rideau region and promote ways for people to protect it.

Policy Intent

The policy is intended to encourage the Source Protection Authority to develop educational materials that promote actions people can take to help protect regional groundwater. Educational resources should be easily accessible to everyone, including the public and those agencies and groups who may wish to promote or disseminate the materials (municipalities, health units, environmental groups, lake associations). This could be achieved through website design.



A private well

POLICIES

Policy: EDU-6-NLB

Protecting Regional Groundwater

Within one year of the Source Protection Plan taking effect, the Source Protection Authority is strongly encouraged to develop materials about the highly vulnerable nature of the Mississippi-Rideau region's aquifers and actions that would help protect them. The materials should be accessible by all residents in the region, and should be disseminated when possible by the Source Protection Authority, municipalities, health units and other interested groups and agencies.

Implementing bodies should see Section 5 for corresponding monitoring policies which could contain reporting requirements.