

November 27, 2014

Cataraqui Source Protection Plan approved

The Cataraqui Source Protection Plan has been approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. It will come into effect on April 1, 2015.

The plan includes requirements and recommendations to reduce the risk of pollution near drinking water supplies. It builds on other local and provincial initiatives with policies that are appropriate, effective and economical for local communities.

There is a focus on protecting the sources of water for the 12 municipal drinking water systems located in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area. These include three systems in Kingston, two in Greater Napanee, two in Loyalist and one each in Brockville, Gananoque, South Frontenac, Leeds and the Thousand Islands, and Front of Yonge.

“The approval of our source protection plan is an important milestone,” said Steve Knechtel, General Manager. “In addition to the policies intended for municipal sources in cities and towns, we have also encouraged the protection of groundwater aquifer sources in our rural areas.”

The plan was developed by the Cataraqui Source Protection Committee – a local, multi-stakeholder group representing municipalities, businesses and other community organizations. The Committee based the plan on a series of technical studies that assessed the water sources and identified risks to source water quality. The Committee also consulted extensively with local communities.

“The plan policies range from encouraging good stewardship to requiring the development of plans to reduce the risk of activities that could pollute municipal drinking water sources,” explained Knechtel. “Going forward, decisions on topics such as spill response and land use planning will reflect the source protection plan, and the water sources will be better protected.” Implementation of the plan will be a cooperative effort amongst municipalities, local health units, provincial ministries, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, businesses and others.

Some work commenced while the plan was being developed. Local property owners benefited from approximately \$400,000 in provincial funding under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program. They completed more than 70 projects to repair or replace faulty septic systems, upgrade sub-standard wells and improve fuel oil storage.

The source protection plan was completed under the provisions of the *Clean Water Act* and its regulations and was funded by the provincial government. Similar plans have been prepared for other areas across Ontario.

Information about how the policies affect landowners and municipalities as well as the plan itself are available at www.cleanwatercataraqui.ca.

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