



Media Release

Source Protection Stewardship Program Launched

November 1, 2007

A new voluntary program to protect drinking water was launched last week in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is establishing the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund, a program to help landowners take action to reduce threats to local municipal drinking water sources, in 2008 as part of its commitment to safe drinking water and in conjunction with the Clean Water Act. The new Source Protection Stewardship program (SPS) is a local transitional program which will pave the way for the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund in the coming years. It is a companion program to the Source Protection Planning initiative currently underway in the area.

A stewardship partners' launch was recently held to discuss the program with municipal and health unit representatives. Dallas Campbell, Outreach Specialist with the project, reported that response to the launch was very positive. "We received lots of positive feedback and good suggestions for how to reach landowners effectively," he said.

The Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities are implementing the Source Protection Stewardship program within the two watersheds. Staff will be working with landowners to provide information about Drinking Water Source Protection and to assist them with undertaking projects that will help to protect their community's groundwater or surface water supplies. Funding has been made available for these projects on a first-come first-served basis.

SPS efforts will focus on farm, business, and property owners in two key geographical areas; those located within a 100 metre radius of a municipal wellhead and those within a 200 metre radius of a municipal surface water intake.

The goal of SPS is to inform landowners about the role they play in protecting their community's drinking water. "Clean drinking water is vital to healthy communities and everyone has a responsibility to protect this important resource," said Campbell. Staff will be contacting business, farm and other property owners in the focus areas by mail, through media releases and

community meetings. A phone survey has already been conducted to gain an understanding of the concerns of property owners within the target areas.

A website has been set up so anyone interested in the program can learn more about upcoming activities. Detailed information about funding opportunities is available on the site and visitors will be able to view profiles of local environmental leaders. The site is located at www.sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca.

For information about the Source Protection Stewardship program contact Chris Van Esbroeck or Dallas Campbell at (519) 335-3557 or visit the website.

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