

# WHAT EVERY FARMER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE CLEAN WATER ACT AND SOURCE PROTECTION PLANNING

*Under the Clean Water Act, 2006 Source Protection Plans will be developed for Source Protection Areas (watersheds) across Ontario by local Source Protection Committees. Here are some answers to questions you may have about Source Protection Planning in Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.*

## **Will my land be affected by the Clean Water Act?**

It is most likely your property will *not* be affected by Source Protection Planning under the *Clean Water Act*. However, you could be affected by local plan recommendations if your farm is located in a vulnerable area. The vast majority of farms are outside vulnerable areas. In many parts of northern Ontario no agricultural land will be affected because there are no farms near municipal wells or intake pipes. In southern Ontario, it is expected at this time that a small percentage of farms will be located in highly vulnerable areas.

## **What is a vulnerable area?**

The *Clean Water Act* protects 'municipal' sources of drinking water. That means Source Protection Planning will only affect land that is located in one of four vulnerable areas. Those are:

- 1) Areas areas nearest a municipal well – such as the 100-metre area or two-year time-of travel area;
- 2) Zones nearest a municipal water intake – such as an Intake Protection Zone 1, 2 or 3;
- 3) Significant recharge areas, or;
- 4) Highly-vulnerable aquifers.

## **Could other areas be included?**

Source Protection Planning could also include a 'well field' or cluster of private drinking water sources – but only if a municipality, or the Minister of the Environment, chooses to include them in the planning process. To date, no additional water systems have been added in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.

## **How can I find out if my land is going to be affected by the Clean Water Act?**

Vulnerable Areas have not yet been finalized. However, if you are interested in finding out if your land is currently located in anticipated vulnerable areas, contact your Source Protection Region. In Ausable Bayfield or Maitland Valley Source Protection Areas phone **1-888-286-2610** for information. If you are not located in this region, go to your local website links at **sourcewaterinfo.on.ca** or to the Conservation Ontario website at **conservationontario.ca** to find the Source Protection Region nearest you.

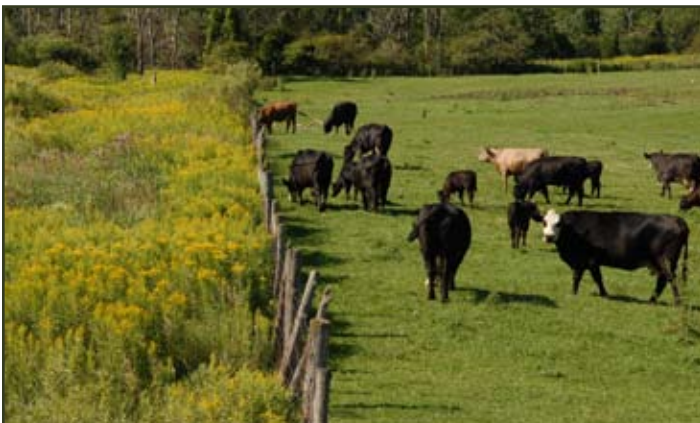


# WHAT FARMING ACTIVITIES WILL BE RESTRICTED? IS THERE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?

**If my land is in an affected area,  
what farming activities are going to be  
restricted?**

We won't know what plan policies will be created until the local Source Protection Plans are prepared, and that is still a few years away. However, The *Clean Water Act* is concerned with protecting municipal sources of drinking water from many types of threats including residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural potential sources. In terms of agriculture, Source Protection Planning will look at activities such as improperly-managed manure, improper use of pesticides and fertilizers or storage of fuels.

Fortunately, most farms already have good farming practices in place, such as nutrient management plans, and healthy grassed stream buffers and barriers to prevent livestock from entering creeks and rivers. When Source Protection Committees begin to create Source Protection Plans over the coming years, they will look for ways to ensure farming activities do not impact municipal water supplies. In some of the most sensitive areas, such as the areas closest to a municipal well or intake pipe, landowners will have the chance to work with a risk management professional to develop plans to reduce significant risks to drinking water sources. There may be a situation where an activity is prohibited altogether, but it's still too early to know how often this will be the case. Visit [sourcewaterinfo.on.ca](http://sourcewaterinfo.on.ca) to keep up to date on the latest planning developments or contact your local Source Protection Region.



Farmers, businesses and home owners nearest to municipal wellheads or intakes are eligible for financial assistance for their best management practices such as well upgrades or decommissioning, septic system inspections or upgrades, erosion and runoff prevention, manure management, and pollution prevention reviews for small and medium-sized business. For information visit [sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca](http://sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca) or call your local Source Protection Region at 1-888-286-2610.



An Assessment Report will document threats and risks in vulnerable areas and Source Protection Plans will be developed locally to create policies to mitigate risks. A small minority of farmers are expected to be in anticipated vulnerable areas but those who are may be able to ensure their risk scores are not significant through best management practices. Financial assistance is already available for voluntary early actions.

## **Will I get financial assistance for changes I need to make under the *Clean Water Act*?**

Over the next three years, the Province has made \$21 million in funding available to help landowners located nearest to municipal sources of drinking water. This program is called the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program and focuses on activities around municipal wells and water intake pipes that could potentially affect the quality and quantity of municipal drinking water. Funding may be available for:

- Upgrading or decommissioning (properly closing) wells
- Inspecting and upgrading septic systems
- Preventing erosion and runoff
- Managing manure
- Improving barns
- Confidential pollution prevention reviews for small and medium sized businesses
- Land conservation measures for municipalities to purchase lands in highly vulnerable areas [*pending*]

To find out if you are eligible for funding, contact your local Conservation Authority, or the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) if your farm is registered under the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (COFSP). Visit [sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca](http://sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca) for more information or call your local Conservation Authority (*see info on back page*).

# CAN STAFF ENTER MY PROPERTY WITHOUT PERMISSION? WILL INFORMATION ON MY PROPERTY BE MADE PUBLIC?

## Can Source Protection Authority staff come onto my property without permission?

The *Clean Water Act* does authorize certain trained Source Protection Authority (Conservation Authority) staff to enter property if this is necessary to assess if there's a potential threat to a community's drinking water source but staff must be formally designated and receive formal training, and they will seek prior landowner permission as a matter of practice. The philosophy of Source Protection Planning in Ontario is voluntary measures (with financial assistance often available), first; negotiated solutions, second; and mandatory measures only when required.



Drinking Water Source Protection begins with voluntary initiatives by property owners in vulnerable areas – and financial assistance is available for best management practices by those closest to municipal wells and intakes. Landowners will later be able to work with risk management officials to reduce their risk scores. Trained staff will be permitted by law to enter a property to assess a possible drinking water threat – but that is a last resort and landowner permission will be asked as a matter of course.

## Who is in charge of Source Protection Planning in my area?

Your local Source Protection Committee is responsible for looking at threats to municipal drinking water sources and coming up with the best ways to reduce those threats. The process will take up to four years. To find out who is on your local Source Protection Committee, visit [sourcewaterinfo.on.ca](http://sourcewaterinfo.on.ca) and click on 'Committees/Working Groups' or click on 'Links' to find a link for your Source Protection Region or Area. Once the plans are drafted all members of the community will have a chance to review them and ask questions before they become final.

## Will personal information related to my property be made available to the public?

Personal information cannot be made public under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



It is much more expensive to fix a drinking water problem than it is to prevent it. Drinking Water Source Protection is a multi-barrier approach to appropriately manage risks to protect the municipal drinking water sources upon which local families rely.

## How does Agriculture have a say in our Source Protection Region?

Source Protection Committees have been created by the Ontario Minister of the Environment based upon a selection process facilitated by the two local Source Protection Authorities (Conservation Authorities). In the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region three of the fifteen members are selected from Agriculture. (Additional community or municipal members may also happen to be farmers.) Three of the five designated Economic Sector seats are reserved for Agriculture in this region – the fourth Economic Sector seat is for Industry and the fifth Economic Sector seat is for Commerce. (Five seats on the committee are reserved for Municipalities and the other five seats are reserved for Other Sectors – such as Public-at-Large [2], Property Owners, Environmental [2]). Community members from the farm sector are also active in local, multi-stakeholder community working groups. Source Protection Committee meetings are open to the public and there are advertised public consultation opportunities throughout the planning process. To get involved or to provide feedback throughout the process, go to [sourcewaterinfo.on.ca](http://sourcewaterinfo.on.ca) or phone 1-888-286-2610.

## What if I don't like what the Source Protection Committee decides?

Once Source Protection Committees have finished creating draft Source Protection Plans, they are required by law to make them available to the public for comment for at least 30 days and possibly longer. The best place to watch for this opportunity to comment is in your local newspaper or on your local Source Protection Region or Area website (visit [sourcewaterinfo.on.ca](http://sourcewaterinfo.on.ca)). Source Protection Committees are then required to review and respond to all public comments. Final Source Protection Plans will be submitted to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for approval.

# WHAT CAN I DO NOW TO PROTECT WATER SOURCES?

## What can I do to protect drinking water sources now?

You can initiate voluntary best management practices on your property. Farmers and other landowners within 100 metres of a municipal well head or in anticipated two-year time-of-travel area (wellhead) or one-kilometre zone (intake) may be eligible for financial assistance under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program. For information on this program in Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley areas phone 519-335-3557 or 519-235-2610 or toll-free 1-888-286-2610.

## Where can I find more information?

**Ontario Ministry of the Environment website**  
(*Drinking Water Ontario*)  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/cleanwater/index.php](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/cleanwater/index.php)

**Conservation Ontario's website**  
[conservationontario.ca](http://conservationontario.ca)

**Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley  
Source Protection Region websites**  
[sourcewaterinfo.on.ca](http://sourcewaterinfo.on.ca)  
[sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca](http://sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca)

For information on Drinking Water Source Protection planning in Ausable Bayfield Matiland Valley Source Protection Region call 519-335-3557 (*Maitland Valley Conservation Authority/Source Protection Authority*), 519-235-2610 (*Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority/Source Protection Authority*) or toll-free 1-888-286-2610.

For information on Source Protection Planning in other regions of Ontario call call Conservation Ontario at 905-895-0716.



## SOURCEWATERINFO.ON.CA

**Ausable Bayfield Matiland Valley Source Protection Region**

Toll-free 1-888-286-2610

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This project has received funding support from the Province of Ontario. Such support does not indicate endorsement of the contents of this material.

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October 2008