

Source Protection Annual Progress Report | May 1, 2019

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing the source protection plans (SPP) for the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Source Protection Areas, as required by the Ontario Clean Water Act, 2006 and its regulations.

This is the second annual progress report submitted for the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Region. It covers the period of January 1st, 2018 to December 31st, 2018.

We appreciate the outstanding efforts made by our local municipalities, stakeholders, ministries and the Source Protection Committee in the development of the Source Protection Plans, the ongoing implementation of Source Protection Plan policies, and the development of this annual progress report.



II. A message from your local Source Protection Committee

Our progress score on achieving source protection plan objectives this reporting period:

- P : Progressing Well/On Target** – The majority of the source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing.
- S : Satisfactory** – Some of the source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing.
- L : Limited progress** – A few of source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing.

The Source Protection Committee (SPC) has worked diligently for several years to develop the Source Protection Plans for our Region. Following approval of these plans in 2015, the Source Protection Committee is now focused on tasks that deal with implementation of the plans. This includes reviewing annual progress reports that summarize the progress made by various stakeholders in implementing the policies of the plans, identifying areas for future improvement, and overseeing any technical updates as required.

A regular public meeting of the Source Protection Committee for the ABMV Source Protection Region was held on March 22nd, 2019 in which endorsement of this Annual Report was reached by consensus. As the majority of the source protection plan policies have been implemented or are progressing, the SPC determined that the objectives of the SPP are “Progressing Well/On Target”.

III. Our Watershed

To learn more, please read our assessment report(s) and source protection plan(s).

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Region (SPR) is made up of the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Source Protection Areas (SPA). The two SPAs overlie the same jurisdiction as the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley conservation authorities. Their jurisdictions abut and their major rivers flow into Lake Huron.

The combined watersheds are approximately 5,690 square kilometres in size, with a combined population of 105,000. There are six counties and 24 lower-tier municipalities entirely or partly within the SPR. There are no First Nations within the two watershed areas. The Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Area is adjacent to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

Land uses can have a significant impact on water quality and quantity. Agriculture is the major land use in the region, with small urban area scattered throughout. Their watersheds share common patterns of landscapes and natural systems. Their towns are small; their economies are based on the economic driver of a thriving agricultural sector, a significant manufacturing sector as well as the additional economic pillars of tourism, heritage and culture. Lake Huron is a major driver of the tourism industry.

In the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region there are 25 municipal groundwater well systems and two Lake Huron intakes. Approximately half of the population is served by these systems; the remainder receives their water from private or communal wells and intakes.

The Intake Protection Zones for the intakes are:

- Lake Huron Primary Water Supply System (in Port Blake, near Grand Bend)
- Goderich Water Supply

The Wellhead Protection Areas for the municipal well systems are:

- Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh – Century Heights, Dungannon, Huron Sands
- Municipality of Bluewater – Zurich (Varna to be added in 2018)
- Municipality of Central Huron - Auburn, Benmiller, Clinton, Kelly, McClinchey, SAM, Vandewetering
- Municipality of Huron East – Brucefield, Brussels, Seaforth
- Township of Huron-Kinloss – Lucknow, Whitechurch
- Town of Minto - Clifford (well system itself is outside ABMV SPR), Harriston, Palmerston
- Municipality of Morris-Turnberry – Belgrave
- Township of North Huron – Blyth, Wingham
- Municipality of North Perth – Atwood, Gowanstown, Listowel, Molesworth

The source of water for the wells is typically deep bedrock aquifers, which are protected by a thick overburden. There have been no Issue Contributing Areas identified in the SPR. There have been a number of changes to these well systems since approval of the source protection plans in 2015, triggering the need for amendment under Section 34 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. This amendment was submitted to the Province of Ontario in February, 2018 following extensive consultation. The amendment was approved by the Province in 2019, with effective date of February, 5, 2019.



IV. At a Glance: Progress on Source Protection Plan Implementation

1. Source Protection Plan Policies

The overall progress score on achieving source protection plan objectives in this reporting period is: **P : Progressing Well/On Target**

The majority (90 %) of the legally binding policies that address significant drinking water threats are implemented, and the remainder are in progress (10%). In 2018 significant gains were made by Provincial Ministries, municipalities and Risk Management Officials to implement the policies that aim to protect our sources of municipal drinking water.

The majority of the policies (88%) that address moderate and low drinking water threats are implemented, and 60% of policies that are not directly related to drinking water threat activities are implemented. Note that these policies are 'non-binding' on implementing bodies.

2. Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

Nine lower-tier municipalities and four upper-tier municipalities in our source protection region have vulnerable areas where significant drinking water threat policies apply.

P : Progressing Well/On Target – All of the municipalities in our source protection region have processes in place to ensure that their day-to-day planning decisions conform with our source protection plans.

Thirteen municipalities in our source protection region are required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the local source protection plans. Eight of the municipalities (lower and upper tier) have completed the required Official Plan update and the remaining are in progress. It is anticipated that all municipalities will complete their Official Plan update within the five-year time-line stated in the source protection plans for our source protection region.

3. Septic Inspections

P : Progressing Well/On Target

In areas where an on-site sewage system (septic system) is considered a significant drinking water threat, inspections are required once every five years in accordance with the Ontario Building Code's mandatory on-site sewage system maintenance inspection program.

In the ABMV Source Protection Region, 206 on-site sewage systems are subject to the mandatory inspection program. 99% of these systems have been inspected in accordance with the Ontario Building Code. The Inspection results found the majority (99%) are functioning as designed or carrying out required pump-outs. Additionally, four sites have connected to sanitary sewer and decommissioned the on-site septic system.

In the ABMV SPR, the inspections are carried out by the Huron County Health Unit, the municipal Chief Building Official (CBO), or B. M. Ross and Associates Limited (for the Township of Huron-Kinloss). Educational materials were provided by the source protection authority and reviewed with the landowner at the time of the inspection. This education package included a map of the property, best practices for septic systems, plus information about the wellhead protection area and the importance of protecting local sources of drinking water.

4. Risk Management Plans

P : Progressing Well/On Target

In the previous calendar year (2018), 14 risk management plans (RMP) were established in our source protection region. Since our source protection plans took effect in April 2015, a total of 79 risk management plans have been established. More than 75% of the estimated number of required risk management plans are in place or are in progress. As a result of ongoing threat activity verification and changes to properties, the number of activities / properties requiring a risk management plan is expected to decrease.

Approximately 200 inspections have been carried out by a Risk Management Official/Inspector for prohibited or regulated activities. This include inspections required to complete risk management plans, to ensure compliance and to verify current threat activities. To date, there is a 100% compliance rate with the risk management plans established in our source protection region.

5. Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P : Progressing Well/On Target

Ontario ministries are reviewing previously issued provincial approvals (i.e., prescribed instruments, such as environmental compliance approvals under the Environmental Protection Act) where they have been identified as a tool in our plan to address existing activities that pose a significant risk to sources of drinking water. The ministries have identified prescribed Instruments that may be subject to significant drinking water threat policies and require further review. The provincial approvals are being amended or revoked where necessary to conform with plan policies. Our policies set out a timeline of three years to complete the review and make any necessary amendments. The ministries have completed this for 100% of previously issued prescribed instruments in our source protection region (an increase from 75% completion in the previous reporting period).

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

Eighty-eight Drinking Water Protection Zone signs have been installed in our source protection region. The signs are installed on roads near municipal water sources to alert citizens that their actions in these zones can have an impact on a municipal drinking water source. The signs are an effective way to educate and remind everyone of the need to protect our sources of water. Several of the municipalities in this region have included information about the signs and the Drinking Water Source Protection program on their websites.

Significant efforts have been made by source protection authority staff to implement the education and outreach policies for significant threat activities in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Region (SPR). This successful Education and Outreach program - developed in collaboration between municipalities, source protection authorities, and conservation authorities - includes an updated website and social media presence. A three-part web video series was created and has received more than 1,300 views. Fact sheets were created for specific sectors as well as for individual well systems. This focused outreach results in improved awareness about local sources of water and increased potential for changes in behavior. Education and outreach has ranged from direct tools (site visits; phone calls; open houses; presentations; meetings) to general (print; broadcast; web; electronic; social media; etc.)

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Not applicable: Progress has been made on implementing all policies related to significant drinking water threats.

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

In our source protection region, no Issues have been identified in our local science-based assessment reports regarding the quality of the sources of municipal drinking water.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

In our source protection region, a Tier 3 Water Budget was required for the Goderich subwatershed and the Century Heights municipal drinking water supply. A report entitled 'Century Heights Scoped Tier Three Local Area Risk Assessment Report' has been completed. The report concluded that the water quantity risk level to the Local Area is low. Since a moderate or significant risk level was not assigned to the Local Area, no water quantity threats were identified. As such, no new policies related to water quantity threats are proposed. The findings of the Tier 3 report will be included in the next amendment to the Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plans.

10. More from the Watershed

To learn more about our source protection region/area, visit our Homepage.

<http://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Region. The header features the logo "DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION" with the tagline "Our Actions Matter". The navigation menu includes "Home", "About", "The Plans", "The Committee", "Risk Management", "Documents", "Maps", and "Contact". A search icon is also present. Below the navigation is a green "Welcome" banner. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column features a large image of a "Drinking Water Protection Zone" sign with the text "Keep contaminants away from drinking water" and "Drinking water protection zone signs tell you that you are near a municipal wellhead. Help to protect the water there." Below this are three smaller sections: "Risk Management Office" with a photo of water, "Maps" with a map, and "Fact Sheets" with a document image. The right column is titled "WHAT'S NEW" and lists two news items: "New supervisors for local drinking water source protection program" and "New representative from environmental sector to join Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Committee (SPC)". A "Read More" link is provided for each item. At the bottom right, there is a button labeled "ALL NEWS ITEMS".

