



Media Release

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Conservation Authorities and Province Partner to Protect Ontario's Drinking Water Sources through New Phase of Stewardship Program for Landowners and Businesses

Conservation Authorities are partnering with the Provincial government to assist in delivering the second phase of a popular drinking water stewardship program designed to protect municipal sources of drinking water in Ontario.

The Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP) is a \$28 Million four-year commitment from the Provincial Government to assist landowners, businesses and municipalities to protect municipal drinking water. 2011 marks the introduction of the second phase of the program moving from Early Actions to Early Response.

"We're very pleased to continue this important partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Environment", said Jo-Anne Rzadki, Watershed Stewardship Coordinator for Conservation Ontario, the association that represents the province's 36 Conservation Authorities.

"Today, there are 34 Conservation Authorities participating in this phase of the program, working with landowners and businesses to ensure clean water sources for Ontario communities," Rzadki said, "The types of projects they deliver include: improving septic systems, decommissioning abandoned wells, managing and storage of pesticides and fertilizer as well as proper fuel storage and management."

Locally within the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Region, five Conservation Authorities (Crowe Valley, Ganaraska Region, Kawartha, Lower Trent and Otonabee) have been administering the stewardship program. The source protection planning region encompasses the Trent/Ganaraska River watersheds, covering a 14,500 square kilometre area stretching from Algonquin Park to Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte.

"To date, there have been 120 groups and individuals who have received financial assistance through this program in our source protection region," said Jim Hunt, Chair of the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Committee.

"This program is an excellent example of individuals, businesses, municipalities, Conservation Authorities and the Province working together towards a common goal – the protection of municipal sources of drinking water," Hunt said.

Over the past three years, a total of \$419,570 has been spent on stewardship projects aimed at protecting sources of water for municipal drinking water systems within the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Region. The Province has provided \$285,190 in financial assistance with program participants contributing \$134,380.

... 2

www.trentsourceprotection.on.ca

The types of projects delivered in phase one included: well decommissioning and upgrading, septic system inspections and upgrades, runoff and erosion control, pollution prevention reviews for businesses, other best management practices and public education. Many have been completed, but some are still underway across Ontario.

The ODWSP operates under the Clean Water Act (2006) which helps protect drinking water from source to tap with a multi-barrier approach that stops contaminants from entering sources of drinking water - lakes, rivers and aquifers.

Ontario's Clean Water Act:

- requires that local communities - through local Source Protection Committees - assess existing and potential threats to their water, and that they set out and implement the actions needed to reduce or eliminate these threats
- empowers communities to take action to prevent threats from becoming significant
- requires public participation on every local source protection plan - the planning process for source protection is open to anyone in the community
- requires that all plans and actions are based on sound science.

More Information on ODWSP and Conservation Authorities - **Conservation Ontario Backgrounder**
http://www.conservationontario.ca/source_protection/protection.html

Ministry of Environment: Clean Water Act and Source Protection
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/category/water/index.htm>

Ministry of the Environment: Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program

http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/subject/protection/STDPROD_080599

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