

Municipal Newsletter

October 2024

This is the October 2024 municipal update about the work we do, in partnership with you, to protect municipal drinking water sources in Maitland Valley and Ausable Bayfield source protection areas.

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1. Source Protection Plans updated

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Committee (SPC) has developed two separate updates to the source protection plans to better protect sources of drinking water.

a. Updates to the Maitland Source Protection Plan were approved by the Province of Ontario on July 24, 2024. The amendment reflects changes to the Lucknow and Century Heights drinking water systems. The vulnerable area mapping for both systems have been updated, while the previously approved policies in the Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan remain unchanged.

The approval was posted the Environmental Registry at <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-8799>

b. In March 2024, the Province approved a comprehensive update to the Source Protection Plans. Numerous policies were changed to align with changes to the Ontario *Clean Water Act, 2006* and to address policy implementation challenges.

Thanks to all our local municipalities for their input during consultation.

Updated documents can be downloaded at this link:

<https://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca/the-plans/>

About Us

Source Protection Committee

- 12 members plus a Chair
- Represents local municipalities; economic sectors; and Other/Public

Source Protection Plans (SPP)

- Developed locally
- Approved by Province in 2015
- Updates approved in 2024
- Policies to protect municipal sources of drinking water
- Area covered – Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley source protection areas

Goal: To protect region's municipal sources of drinking water – aquifers and lakes – from contamination and overuse

2. New Source Protection Committee member

The newest member of the local source protection committee is Carol Leeming. She is a representative of the agriculture sector on the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee (SPC). She attended her first committee meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2024 in Holmesville.

Matt Pearson is Chair of the SPC. He says the new committee member will be a positive addition to the committee.

“Carol brings many strengths to her new role as a Source Protection Committee member,” he said. “Her experience in farming, local government, and the volunteering sector will complement the diverse skills and insights of the committee members. We look forward to working with Carol on our mandate to protect source water supplies.”

Welcome, Carol!



3. Elizabeth Balfour replaces retiring Program Co-Supervisor Mary Lynn MacDonald

Mary Lynn MacDonald has retired from her position of Co-Supervisor for the local source water protection program, following more than 15 years of dedicated and resourceful contributions, to our region, in different roles. We are pleased that Elizabeth Balfour has agreed to join the team as her replacement. Elizabeth has worked at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) for nine years and has a strong background in watershed management, agriculture, and GIS analysis. She is already familiar with the source water protection program and has successfully completed the Province’s Risk Management Official training.

Welcome, Elizabeth!



4. ‘Water Wise’ Events: Promoting water protection to landowners with private wells

Very few landowners with private wells get their water tested on a regular basis. They may be aware that annual testing is important but often find the process to be challenging. In 2023 and early 2024, drinking water source protection staff, with assistance from Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH), organized several *Water Wise* events in partnership with local community and service groups. The goal was to encourage well water testing by providing a one-time local drop-off point for the water samples.



Local community groups hosted the Water Wise best practices events and assisted with distribution of water sampling bottles to local residents. Participating community groups include the Goderich, Dublin, Monkton, Londesboro, and Atwood Lions Clubs; and the Kirkton-Woodham and Howick Optimists, plus shoreline residents from Ashfield-Colborne Lakefront Association.

More than 420 people attended the events and more than 440 water bottle samples were provided to local public health for testing. There were more than 1,500 water bottles distributed by community volunteers. At these events, private well owners also received information about protecting source water and maintaining their wells and septic systems.

Provincial funding for this pilot project was provided to promote Ontario's Best Practices for non-municipal water (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/best-practices-source-water-protection>). The message to the public, at these events, was to **Test, Protect and Maintain**: test your well water; protect your source of water; and maintain your well and septic system.

Support for an additional event in 2024 was made possible thanks to the County of Huron's Huron Clean Water Project.

5. Source protection region supports water protection through Water Wednesdays information campaign this autumn

Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region, in partnership with the Province of Ontario and Conservation Ontario, is promoting positive local action to protect local municipal drinking water sources. The region is educating the public through **#WaterWednesdays** source protection posts on social media on Wednesdays, in autumn 2024, from October 2 to November 13. Campaign messages include:

- Drop off hazardous waste at municipal household hazardous waste days or depots.
- Select non-toxic chemicals and cleaners when doing fall cleanup this autumn.
- Tips for protecting your septic systems.



We encourage you to follow Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley source protection platforms and to share the posts with your neighbours.

To find out more visit the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee web page (<https://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca/the-committee/>) on the local source protection region website at <https://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca>

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