

Source Water Protection Overview

South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region



Water
is life.
Protect
Yours.

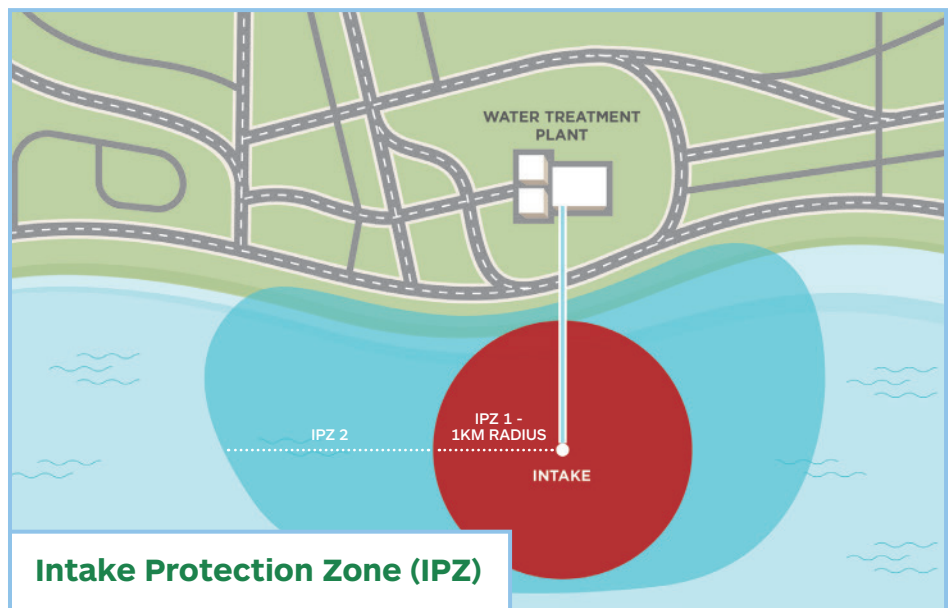
ourwatershed.ca

Source water protection is a provincial program to protect our municipal drinking water sources (water found in lakes, rivers and underground) from contamination and overuse. The program is concerned with protecting these supplies from threats if they exist within **vulnerable areas** in the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region.

A clean glass of water starts long before you turn on the tap. Source water protection is a team effort built on collaboration and open communication between Source Protection Authorities, provincial ministries, municipalities, communities, and landowners. Everyone relies on, and plays a role in, protecting drinking water.

What's a "vulnerable area"?

Vulnerable areas are located in the protection zone of a municipal wellhead or surface water intake, or within a groundwater recharge zone. Activities here will have a greater impact on drinking water sources.



How source water protection works



1. The **Ontario Clean Water Act, 2006**, is legislation that aims to protect drinking water at its source, as a first step in the multi-barrier approach.
2. Our region's **Source Protection Plan** contains policies that prevent contaminants from getting into a municipality's wells and water supplies, and protect groundwater supplies from overuse. It is required by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.
3. It was the role of the Region's **Source Protection Committee** to research, collaborate on and develop the Source Protection Plan. The committee is responsible for evaluating the plan to ensure its policies continue to be sound and relevant.
4. The Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching/Black River, Nottawasaga Valley and Severn Sound **Source Protection Authority Staff** are responsible for the Source Protection Plan, monitoring activities that affect sources of municipal drinking water, providing support with education and outreach materials, and reporting directly to the province and the public.
5. A **Risk Management Official or Inspector (RMO/RMI)** oversees municipal drinking water protection. They work with landowners to identify risks, offer guidance and expertise, and develop a **Risk Management Plan**, if necessary.

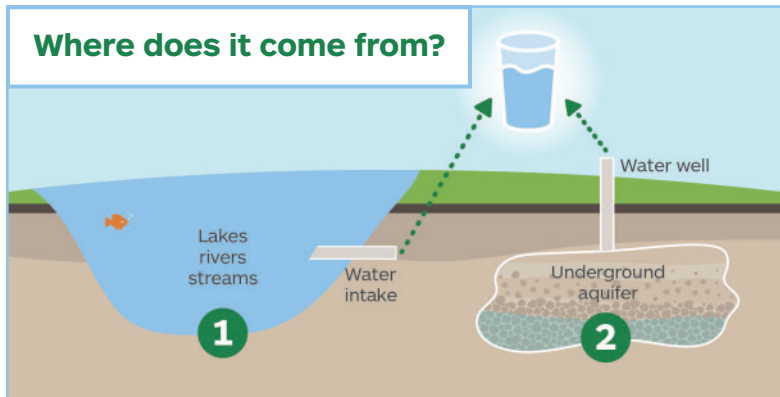
What's a "Risk Management Plan"?

A Risk Management Plan is a negotiated agreement between a landowner and an RMO that ensures municipal drinking water sources are protected. Risk Management Plans are only needed in certain circumstances, when a property is in a vulnerable area AND an activity is taking place that may pose a threat to drinking water.

6. **Municipal building staff** are often the first point of contact for a landowner, developer/builder or another party submitting a planning or development application. **If the property is located in a vulnerable area, those submitting the application may need to coordinate with their municipality's RMO/RMI, depending on the type of activity they plan on carrying out.**
7. **Landowners** in vulnerable areas are responsible for activities on their property that may affect sources of drinking water including new development, a private well, or a septic or fuel oil system.
8. **Developers/Builders** seeking permits or site approvals for properties in vulnerable areas need to be aware of development restrictions.
9. **Other Parties**, like local media, may request information about source water protection.

What needs to be done?

1. Understand source water:



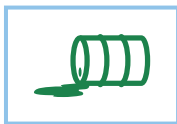
Isn't our drinking water already safe?

Yes, your municipal drinking water is safe. Water treatment plants remove many (not all) contaminants, but this process is expensive – protecting sources before they are overused or polluted is more cost-effective.

2. Recognize the threats:



HAZARDOUS LIQUIDS: Fuel, oil, paint and countless other toxic liquids could contaminate municipal drinking water if improperly used, stored or disposed.



HAZARDOUS WASTE: Storing paint or other toxic substances in unsafe conditions, or dumping fluids like motor oil into storm drains can contaminate municipal drinking water. Even small quantities of toxic substances are a problem because they have the potential to contaminate large amounts of water.



SEWAGE: If a septic or treatment system is outdated or not properly maintained, or is used for the disposal of toxic liquids, it can introduce chemicals, bacteria and viruses into the ground, which could then get into a municipality's water supply.



AGRICULTURAL: Improperly applying nutrients, fertilizers or pesticides to land, or using land for livestock operations may introduce chemicals or animal waste into municipal drinking water.



ROAD SALT AND SNOW: Use or storage of winter salt on a property could impact the quality of municipal drinking water by increasing levels of sodium chloride. Melting snow that is stored on a property also has the potential to introduce salt, oil, grease and other contaminants into municipal drinking water.



GROUNDWATER DEPLETION: Activities or new developments on a property might prevent rain or snow from replenishing (recharging) an underground water supply, leading to a water shortage.

- 3. Know the vulnerable areas in a municipality:** Speak with a Risk Management Official or Inspector, or visit the website at ourwatershed.ca to view vulnerable area maps.
- 4. Collaborate with Risk Management Officials and Inspectors:** They are specially trained and have a wealth of knowledge about the Source Water Protection Program. They are therefore the best person to answer questions about source water protection.
- 5. Promote source water protection and use education and outreach materials:** These materials are meant to help officials engage with landowners, builders and developers about source water protection. They explain where drinking water comes from, the risks and how to manage or eliminate them.
- 6. Seek support:** The Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching/Black River, Nottawasaga Valley and Severn Sound Source Protection Authorities employ, or can draw upon, individuals with the expertise to help guide smart decision making for each municipality's drinking water protection.

ourwatershed.ca:

Access online resources including the Region's Source Protection Plan, Assessment Reports, and other materials (factsheets, brochures).

What's being done?

There are already many examples of stewards embracing source water protection:

-  Prior to the region's Source Protection Plan being approved, many landowners were already undertaking stewardship efforts: farmers installing livestock fencing, business owners reducing their use of hazardous materials, municipalities offering hazardous household waste collection, and more.
-  Each municipality uses zoning bylaws and its Official Plan to both protect vulnerable areas and ensure smart and sustainable development and land use.
-  Each municipality's Risk Management Official or Inspector has visited properties in vulnerable areas to inform landowners about risks that may affect municipal drinking water.
-  A number of landowners are collaborating with their municipality's RMO/RMI to develop Risk Management Plans.



Source water protection's focus

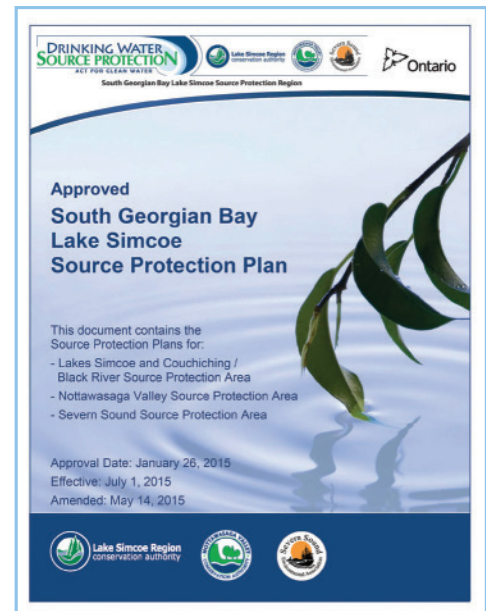
Source water protection is focused on 21 specific drinking water threats that are concerned primarily with public health, and only when these threats take place within a vulnerable area. Many activities do not fall under the oversight of our region's Source Protection Plan, and instead fall under other regulations.

For more information

Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching/Black River
Source Protection Authority
905-895-1281 (1-800-465-0437)

Nottawasaga Valley Source Protection Authority
705-424-1479

Severn Sound Source Protection Authority
705-527-5166



Find us online at ourwatershed.ca