

Municipal Newsletter

May 2025

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

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1. Retired hydrogeologist from Wingham is new environmental representative



A retired hydrogeology geoscientist from Wingham is the newest member of our committee working to protect drinking water sources in the Maitland Valley and Ausable Bayfield areas. Joy Rutherford has been named the new Environment Sector representative on the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Committee (SPC). She was appointed in February 2025 and took part in her first committee meeting March 26, 2025.

Matt Pearson is SPC Chair. He said Joy brings a range of valuable skills to the committee table. “Joy’s combination of strong interpersonal skills and technical expertise will benefit the committee’s work greatly,” he said. “Her links to the environmental community will enhance the connection of the committee’s work to this sector.”

Joy has lived and worked in Huron County for many years. She has experience in projects related to municipal and private wells and groundwater monitoring and research. The Wingham resident has Professional Geoscientist Certification (P.Geo) and a Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) in Physical Geography from the University of Waterloo.

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

Before Joy retired, she worked as a Senior Hydrogeologist and Project Manager at R. J. Burnside and Associates Ltd. in Wingham between 2006 and 2021.

As a volunteer, Joy has been a contributor to Water Wise events educating local private well owners about testing their water, protecting their source of water, and maintaining their wells and septic systems. She is also a member of the Huron County Clean Water Project Review Committee. She has experience in dairy farm management with family-owned Fairlaine Farms. Apart from her work and volunteer work, she is an avid piper and instructor with Teeswater Highlanders Pipe and Drum Band.

2. Drinking water source protection region submits 2024 Annual Progress Report to Province of Ontario

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Source Protection Committee approved the 2024 Annual Progress Report for submission to the Province of Ontario. The 2024 report is the eighth annual report submitted by the region since 2017, and documents the achievements made together with municipalities, agencies and ministries to implement the locally developed source protection policies.

You may view or download this report on the local source protection website's documents web page (<https://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca/documents/>).

Implementation of plan policies is progressing well and on target, according to the SPC. The committee said all policies are implemented or in progress.

Eighty per cent of significant threats to drinking water (SDWTs) have been addressed, according to the report. The report states that this compares to 100 per cent in the previous year but explains this is because of risk-level definition changes in new provincial technical rules as well as new or revised wellhead protection areas. No issues have been identified, in terms of the quality of the sources of municipal drinking water, according to the progress report.

3. Walkerton Clean Water Centre to host webinar – 25 Years of Reflection: Honouring the Past, Protecting the Future

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) is hosting a free webinar, *25 Years of Reflection: Honouring the Past, Protecting the Future*. It is delivered live from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. noon on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 and participants will earn 2.5 on-the-job training hours.

To learn more, or to register, visit <https://wcwc.ca/registration> or contact WCWC at 866-515-0550 or training@wcwc.ca

Open to operators and managers of drinking water systems and the public, the webinar provides an opportunity to reflect on changes in the water industry over the past 25 years and learn about future directions. Topics include source protection, standards and technology, water systems, and oversight.

Speakers include former Associate Chief Justice of Ontario Dennis O'Connor; and representatives from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP); the Ontario Municipal Water Association; and WCWC.

Twenty-five years ago this month, in May 2000, the municipal water supply in Walkerton was contaminated with *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 and *Campylobacter jejuni*. Seven people died and 2,300 people became ill. Subsequent to this water contamination event, the Province of Ontario has made many improvements to improve protection of Ontario's municipal drinking water through the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* and the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Ontario has implemented recommendations of the Inquiry, into the events of May 2000 and related issues, by The Honourable Dennis R. O'Connor. Risks to Ontario's drinking water have been reduced through measures including drinking water source protection and the multi-barrier approach – with barriers of defence and protection, including drinking water source protection; securing the distribution system; monitoring programs; responses to adverse conditions; and the Three Ts (Testing of water; Treatment of water; and Training of water operators).

Learn more about the webinar here:

[25 Years of Reflection: Honouring the Past, Protecting the Future](#)

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