



## TOWN OF MINTO

MEETING DATE:

March 18, 2025

REPORT TO:

Mayor and Council

SERVICE AREA:

Public Works (Water)

SUBJECT:

PW 2025-008, 2024

Source Protection Annual Report

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council of the Town of Minto hereby receives report PW 2025-008 2024 Source Water Protection Annual Report, prepared by the Risk Management Official, for information purposes.

### **BACKGROUND:**

For reporting purposes, the Town of Minto is subject to two Source Protection Plans (based on watershed or Conservation Authority boundaries): Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Plan and the Saugeen Valley, Grey Sauble, Northern Bruce Peninsula Plan (Saugeen). In 2024, all Source Protection Plans were in effect.

Under Section 81 of the Clean Water Act and Section 65 of O. Reg. 287/07, an annual report must be prepared by a Risk Management Official and submitted to the appropriate Source Protection Authority (Conservation Authority) by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Under Section 45 of the *Clean Water Act*, a public body, including a municipality, must comply with monitoring and reporting policies designated by a Source Protection Plan. This includes the submittal of an annual municipal report by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Risk Management staff submitted both reports, as required, by the statutory deadline for the Town.

### **COMMENTS:**

#### **Development Review**

In 2024, there were 33 development applications (notices and comments) reviewed in the municipality. There were 4 review notices issued per Section 59 of the Clean Water Act within the municipality and staff comments were provided on an additional 29 applications that did not require development review notices. There were 495 development applications (notices and comments) reviewed County wide in 2024. This included 85 Section 59 notices issued and staff comments on an additional 410 development applications, County wide. This includes 144 comment memos including 63 requests for drinking water threat disclosure reports and / or management plans. This represents a County wide increase in the total number of development applications reviewed from the five-year average of 416 development applications in the County. For the Town, the number of development reviews is in line with the five-year average of 31. The review of development applications within wellhead protection areas is a key component of implementing the Clean Water Act as this ensures the municipality is in compliance with requirements relating to future activities that may pose a risk to municipal drinking water. In addition to the notices and comments provided, other applications were screened out by

building or planning staff following Risk Management Official Written Direction provided by Wellington Source Water Protection. Comments were also provided on one provincial instrument within the Town in 2024.

### **Threat Verification and Inspections**

Analysis continued on the threat verification data collected in previous years on residential, agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional activities identified as potential significant drinking water threats in the approved Assessment Reports. Staff complete a variety of tasks to remove or confirm and then mitigate activities identified as potential significant drinking water threats in the approved Assessment Reports. These threat activities are existing and the analysis can involve desk top interpretation of air photos or GIS data, phone calls, review of municipal records, windshield surveys, site inspections by Risk Management staff and if confirmed, then mitigation through septic inspection, prohibition and / or negotiation of risk management plans.

As a result of this analysis, staff currently estimate approximately 43% of threat activities in the municipality still require action to either remove or confirm / mitigate the threat activities while 57% have been either removed or confirmed and mitigated. Note that the percentages are weighted equally between Source Protection Authorities to provide an overall municipal percentage. This percentage has changed from 2023 due to the approval of the Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan. The outstanding threat activities relate to the newly enumerated winter maintenance activities within the wellhead protection areas.

To support this threats analysis and to determine compliance, 21 inspections were conducted in the municipality in 2024 with 20 for compliance purposes (prohibition) with no contraventions found and 1 for threat verification or risk management plan negotiation purposes. County wide, 309 inspections were conducted in the reporting year with 94% of inspections (292) being prohibition compliance inspections, 1% (3) being RMP compliance inspections and 5% (14) of inspections conducted for threat activity verification or risk management plan negotiation purposes. Overall, the inspections were generally related to manure application and storage prohibitions or related to chemical / fuel handling and storage.

### **Risk Management Plans**

There are 18 Risk Management Plans agreed to cumulatively within the Town. There are 94 Risk Management Plans in place County Wide. The remaining Risk Management Plans within the Town relate to winter maintenance activities.

### **Education and Outreach**

The following is a summary of the Education and Outreach results, County wide, for 2024. In total, 56 education and outreach daily events were completed this reporting year. Sixteen of the events were internal training sessions for municipal staff on general source protection topics and more detailed training on how it relates to municipal planning, building, sewage, spills, roads and risk management operations. There were over 100 attendees cumulatively at the training. Six of the events were external training sessions including training other Risk Management Officials / Inspectors in the Province and industry groups such as property managers. Eleven events supported a variety of community events including Erin septic social, Environmental Assessment and municipal open houses, Aberfoyle Fall Fair and large community events such as Party in the Park, Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, Centre Wellington Home

Show and Puslinch Showcase. Staff also presented at four professional conferences in this reporting year.

There were thirteen school events including classroom visits, participation in Palmerston Agricultural Awareness Day and Grand River Agricultural Society's Pizza Perfect. School programming included elementary, Grade 8 and college students. Wellington Source Water Protection / County of Wellington is a sponsor for the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. For the second year in a row, the Festival was held in Wellington County, this year at Guelph / Eramosa's Marden Park and 74 staff from our municipalities participated to ensure the Festival was a success. The Festival ran for 5 days plus a sixth day as a virtual Festival. Links to the virtual Festival content are available here <https://www.youtube.com/@watereducation4640>. The Children's Groundwater Festival is an excellent way to reach Grade 2 to 5 and high school children (and their parents) and deliver water protection messages including source protection. Registration for both virtual and in-person Festival was over 6,000 students and teachers with many County schools participating. Staff continue to participate on the organizing committee and various sub-committees including serving as co-chairs.

In addition to events, development reviews and inspections continued and included educational material being provided directly to the proponents generally regarding the threats present, the process (development review, RMP negotiations, prohibition etc.), property specific mapping, and general Source Water information. Where necessary, stickers and metal tags were provided to proponents listing the Spills Action Centre number and that their location is located within a vulnerable area for municipal wells. Updates were made to the Wellington Source Water Protection website [www.wellingtonwater.ca](http://www.wellingtonwater.ca), and staff continue to update and maintain ten fact sheets on specific topics and other print media (i.e. post cards to direct applicants to mapping). Throughout the year, social media posts on a variety of topics were either posted or re-shared by our municipalities' corporate channels. Often the content of these posts was from the Conservation Ontario social media calendar or in partnership with the local Conservation Authorities. Four newspaper ads were also run during the year.

### **Policy Updates**

In 2024, four Source Protection Plans in the County were undergoing amendment: the Grand, Halton-Hamilton, Saugeen and Credit. Staff reviewed, provided comments and in some cases assisted Conservation Authority staff in authoring portions of the various amendments. Staff provided support related to mapping amendments required to the Saugeen Valley Assessment Report. In 2024, amendments to the Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan were approved by the Province and are now in force.

### **Technical Updates**

In 2024, there are a number of water supply and / or water supply master plan projects related to water systems within or adjacent to the County. With provincial funding, an initial phase of a joint groundwater modelling project began in 2024 in the Township of Wellington North, Town of Minto and Township of Mapleton. Staff worked with the Township / Town hydrogeologists on the initial data organization required to support future groundwater modelling for new well supplies and to update existing wellhead protection areas. In 2024, Source Protection, Water Services staff and the Township hydrogeologist supported the Ontario Geological Survey in drilling three new monitoring wells in northern Wellington County. Support was also provided to new well investigations in Harriston, Palmerston, Moorefield, Erin and Centre Wellington to incorporate source protection factors into site selection criteria. Other technical work included an assessment of multi-aquifer penetrating wells and potential transport pathways within the County. This work was completed by consulting hydrogeologists and the next steps will be implemented in 2025.

**Official Plan Amendments**

The initial County Official Plan Amendment for source protection was completed in 2016. Due to changes and updates in various Source Protection Plans since 2016, further updates are required to the Official Plan. The County initiated this Official Plan Amendment in 2024 and public consultation closed in January 2025.

**Sewage Projects and Septic Inspections**

Staff continued to provide support for the implementation of the municipal Consolidated Linear Environmental Compliance Approval for both wastewater and stormwater for the Town. There are annual assessments required for these approvals that assess source water protection implications and requirements for wastewater and / or stormwater projects within wellhead protection areas. These assessments are required every 12 months and Source Protection staff completed one assessment in 2024 as required.

The septic inspection program occurs on a five-year cycle. All required septic inspections in the Town were completed in 2023 and were not due in 2024.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Current staffing and resources

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Goal 5: Deliver services in an open, accountable, and transparent manner while providing an outstanding working environment for our employees and community

**PREPARED BY:** Kyle Davis, Risk Management Official

**RECOMMENDED BY:** Gregg Furtney, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)