



ConservationONTARIO
Natural Champions

Media Release

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES AND PROVINCE PARTNER TO PROTECT ONTARIO'S DRINKING WATER SOURCES THROUGH NEW PHASE OF STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR LANDOWNERS AND BUSINESSES

NEWMARKET, [January 26, 2011] 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 Rzaeki, 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," Rzaeki 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."

The second phase of the ODWSP is a voluntary program, similar to the earlier phase, but addresses specific local drinking water threats identified by Source Protection Committees through the Source Protection Assessment Reports. The program is being delivered by Conservation Authorities to landowners and businesses through an application process.

Phase one of ODWSP ran from 2007 – 2010 and funded many different stewardship projects delivered to landowners and businesses by Conservation Authorities as well the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) in conjunction with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA).

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

Spokespersons:

Jo-Anne Rzdaki, Watershed Stewardship Coordinator, Conservation Ontario

jrzadki@conservationontario.ca; 905-895-0716 ext 224

Dick Hibma, Chair, Conservation Ontario 905-895-0716