

# Groundwater Overview

South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region



[ourwatershed.ca](http://ourwatershed.ca)

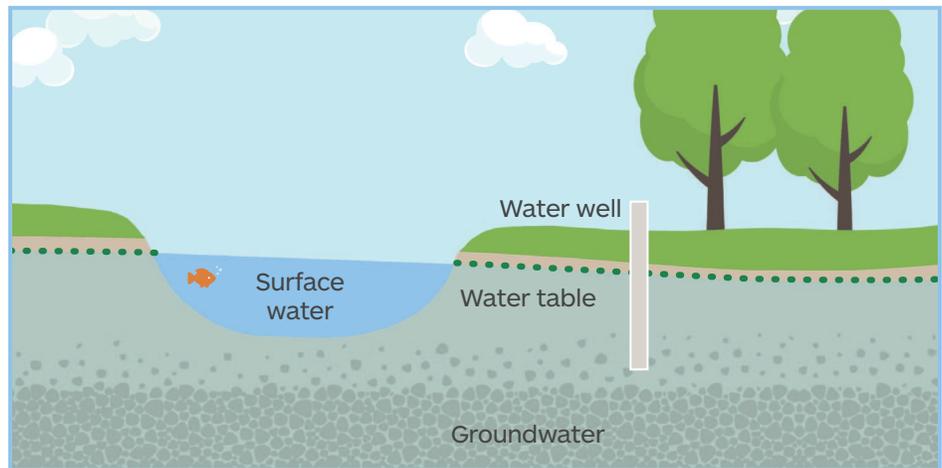
**Water**  
*is life.*  
**Protect**  
**Yours.**

*Groundwater is a significant source of our drinking water. But all water is connected: low groundwater supplies affect surface water. We all have a stake.*

A large number of Canadians rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water: more than 33% of people living in urban areas, and more than 70% in rural areas. Source water protection is a provincial program that helps to protect this drinking water source. The South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region's Source Protection Plan contains policies that work to ensure our municipal **groundwater** supplies do not become depleted.

### **What is “groundwater”?**

*Groundwater is water found underground that flows or collects in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock.*



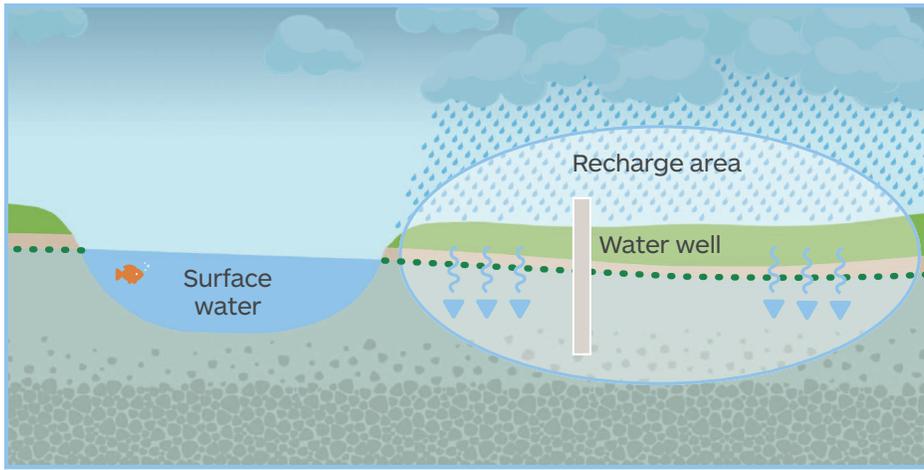
## **How do we ensure an adequate supply of groundwater?**

If groundwater is removed for drinking or other purposes, it must be replenished (recharged). Recharge is a very slow and natural process in which rain and snow seep into the ground and back into an underground water source through a **recharge area**.

### **What's a “recharge area”?**

*A recharge area is where the ground is “permeable” – rain and snow soak into it to replenish underground water supplies. Recharge areas include forested land, grassed areas and other natural surfaces that are characterized by permeable subsurfaces.*





## Why is recharge important?

If water is taken from groundwater sources – **and it is not recharged** – it can lead to drinking water shortages or even water bans.

## Who is affected in our region?

We are **all** vulnerable if groundwater supplies become depleted. While many of us rely on groundwater as our source of drinking water, groundwater and surface water (lakes and rivers) are all **connected**. This means that low *groundwater* supplies in our region can also impact *surface water* supplies.

## What activities might prevent groundwater recharge?

Any activity that puts a hard, largely impermeable surface over a previously natural surface can prevent recharge. Pavement is one of the most common examples of a hard surface that doesn't allow water to soak back into the ground.

## What are the alternatives?

Reducing the use of pavement, or using permeable pavement that allows rain and snow to soak back into the ground, are preferred alternatives. The use of “rain gardens” and shallow trenches that catch rainwater will also allow it to accumulate and seep back into the ground naturally.

## What do you need to do?

- Know which properties in your municipality are in a recharge area: visit [ourwatershed.ca](http://ourwatershed.ca) to view maps of your region.
- Understand and promote awareness of groundwater sources and affected areas in your municipality: engage with landowners, builders and developers on maintaining recharge areas.

## 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](http://ourwatershed.ca)**