

Source Protection Annual Progress Report

South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region



On the Implementation of the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan

Reporting period January 1 to December 31, 2025

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2025 Source Protection Annual Progress Report

Introduction

This annual report briefly summarizes the progress made in implementing the source protection plan for the Lakes Simcoe & Couchiching Black River, Nottawasaga Valley and Severn Sound source protection areas, as required by the *Clean Water Act* and its regulations for the 2025 calendar year.

Protecting the sources of our drinking water is the first step in a multi-barrier approach to safeguard the quality and quantity of our water supplies. The source protection plan is the culmination of extensive science-based assessments, consultation with the community, collaboration with local stakeholders and the province, and research. The implementation of the policies contained in the source protection plan ensure that activities carried out in the vicinity of municipal drinking water supply wells and lake-based drinking water intakes do not pose a significant risk to those supplies.



A Message from your local Source Protection Committee

Our source protection committee was asked to provide a progress score on achieving source protection plan objectives this reporting period, with three progress scores to choose from as follows:

- **Progressing Well/On Target** – The majority of the source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing
- **Satisfactory** – Some of the source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing
- **Limited progress** – A few of source protection plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing

The progress score selected for achieving source protection plan objectives this reporting period is **Progressing Well/On Target**.

All municipalities submitted their 2025 annual reports to the Source Protection Authority. Risk management officials report 286 active risk management plans in the Source Protection Region, with 13 being new in 2025. A total of 689 septic system inspection and 87 risk management inspections were completed this reporting year. Five more municipalities completed Official Plan updates in 2025.

Our Watershed

The South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region contains four watersheds and spans over 10,000 km², from the Oak Ridges Moraine in the south to the Canadian Shield in the north and is comprised of the Black-Severn, Lake Simcoe, Nottawasaga Valley and Severn Sound watersheds. The region contains portions of the Niagara Escarpment, Oak Ridges Moraine, Oro Moraine, Peterborough Drumlin Fields, Simcoe Uplands and Lowlands and the Canadian Shield. The region includes:

- 4 watersheds
- 52 municipalities
- 3 First Nations communities
- 108 drinking water systems
- 289 municipal supply wells
- 16 municipal surface water intakes
- More than 50,000 private wells

All told, the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe region has about one third of the municipal drinking water systems in the province.

The region is complex and diverse in terms of geology, physiography, population, and development pressures, with many, often conflicting, water uses including drinking water supply, recreation, irrigation, agriculture, commercial and industrial uses, as well as ecosystem needs.

These differences represent a significant challenge for the development of a source protection plan because of the associated variability of available information upon which to base the technical work, the differing stresses on water resources related to development pressure and population growth, and the differences in the nature, density and locations of threats to the quality and quantity of water resources.

To learn more, please read our assessment reports and source protection plan.

At a Glance: Progress on Source Protection Plan Implementation

Source Protection Plan Policies and Addressing Significant Risks

The South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Committee included 129 policies in their source protection plan to address 22 prescribed threats, protect sources of drinking water and monitor the progress of policy implementation.

Since the source protection plan took effect, 99% of the original existing drinking water threats have been addressed, and any remaining have extenuating circumstances and plans to address them in place. Progress has been made more recently addressing new threats, and threats associated with amendments to the Plan. Risk Management Inspections are also an ongoing focus for Risk Management Officials.

The progress score for implementing Plan policies is progressing well/on target.

Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

Of the 52 municipalities (upper, lower and single-tier) within the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region, 43 of these are subject to one or more source protection plan policies. The remaining nine municipalities do not have vulnerable areas where policies apply.

Planning departments and building officials are screening applications for locations within vulnerable areas where threats to drinking water sources are possible and policies may apply.

Municipalities in our source protection region are also required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the local source protection plans the next time they undertake an Official Plan review under the Planning Act. All 43 of the municipalities that are subject to source protection plan policies have amended or are in the process of amending their Official Plan to conform with the source protection plan for our region.

The municipal progress score is progressing well/on target.

Septic Inspections

An estimated 2,116 septic systems are required to be inspected as part of each 5-year inspection cycle. A total of 689 on-site sewage systems have been inspected in accordance with the Ontario Building Code in 2025, 27 of which required some remedial action. Many municipalities have plans to complete their round-three inspection in 2026 or 2027.

The progress score for the septic inspection program is progressing well/on target.

Risk Management Plans

In 2025, 13 new risk management plans were completed to address new threats or threats associated with amendments to the plan. Risk Management Officials now report a total of 286 active risk management plans in the Source Protection Region. More will be required in the future as plan amendments continue.

Risk Management Official/Inspectors completed 87 inspections for regulated activities in 2025. No compliance issues were noted in the inspections this year.

The progress score for establishing risk management plans is progressing well/on target.

Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

Ontario ministries are reviewing applications for new or amended and previously issued provincial approvals (i.e. prescribed instruments, such as environmental compliance approvals under the Environmental Protection Act) where they have been identified as a tool in our plan to address activities that pose a significant risk to sources of drinking water. The provincial approvals are being issued, denied, amended or revoked, where necessary, to conform to plan policies. Our policies set out a timeline of five years from the date the source protection plan took effect (July 1, 2015) to complete the review of existing activities and make any necessary changes to previously issued approvals. The timeline for new or amended prescribed instruments is outlined in the Plan as the day the Source Protection Plan took effect. The ministries have reported 100% completion of previously issued provincial approvals in our source protection region and have a review protocol in place to screen all new applicable approval applications.

The progress score for the addressing risks using prescribed instruments is progressing well/on target.

Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

The City of Orillia worked with their fire department to raise awareness of the importance of source water protection and the impact spills can have in vulnerable areas. They are also working to develop a salt management plan. Municipalities in the Nottawasaga Valley watershed were engaged in presentations on source water protection and the role of risk management officials. City of Barrie staff attended municipal events, such as Drinking Water Week and Communities in Bloom, as well as using social media, for education and outreach.

Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Of the 129 policies included in the Source Protection Plan, all (with the exception of one) are currently being implemented or are in the process of being implemented. The only policy that has had no progress made to date is the non-legally binding policy on transport pathways (TP-1). This policy only applies to one municipality in the Severn Sound Source Protection Area. Within this area there are numerous significant drinking water threats and managing these threats through the use of legally binding policies has been the main priority to date. This policy will continue to be considered in future work plans.

Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

City of Barrie - Barrie Well Supply - Central Well Field Issue Contributing Area for: Sodium and Chloride

- An increasing concentration/trend has been observed.
- Risk management plans are being developed for large users of salt to ensure best practices are implemented for storage and application. The City of Barrie staff follow Smart About Salt practices.

Town of Penetanguishene - Robert Street West Supply Well Issue Contributing Area for: Trichloroethylene

- No change in concentration/trend..

Township of Brock – Cannington Well Supply – Arena Well Field Issue Contributing Area for: Trichloroethylene

- A decreasing concentration/trend has been observed.

Township of Brock – Cannington Well Supply – Emerging Issue for: Nitrate

- An increasing concentration/trend has been observed. The potential Issue is
- is going through the Plan amendment process as of 2025/early 2026.

Township of Severn - Coldwater Well Supply Issue Contributing Area for: Trichloroethylene

- No change in concentration/trend.

Tiny Township - Lafontaine Well Supply Issue Contributing Area for: Nitrate

- No change in concentration/trend.

Tiny Township - Georgian Sands Well Supply Issue Contributing Area for: Nitrate

- No change in concentration/trend.

Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

No work plans were required to be implemented for our assessment reports.

More from the Watershed

To learn more about the South Georgian Bay-Lake Simcoe Protection Region, visit:

www.ourwatershed.ca

Education and outreach are an important part of implementing source protection. Source protection authorities, municipalities and Risk Management Officials within the region continue to engage the community through site visits, social media, and workshops.