



CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan approved

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AYLMER – A plan to protect the sources of municipal drinking water in the Catfish Creek watershed has been approved by the province, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and Oxford County announced today.

The plan was approved by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment on Sept. 19, 2014.

The Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan outlines the policies and programs that will protect two municipal wells serving 500 residents of Brownsville in South-West Oxford Township. The Brownsville water system is owned and operated by Oxford County.

The plan will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2015. The plan and its associated documents are available at www.sourcewater.ca

The source protection planning process began in 2006 when the Ontario government passed the Clean Water Act to protect the sources of municipal drinking water throughout the province. The Act was passed in the wake of the Walkerton tainted water tragedy.

The development of the Catfish Creek plan was led by the Lake Erie Region Source Protection Committee, one of 19 created across the province. The committee also developed plans for the Kettle Creek, Long Point Region and Grand River watersheds.

The development of the plan also included an extensive public education and consultation process stretching over six years.

Craig Ashbaugh, chair of the committee said he's "pleased the Catfish Creek plan has been formally approved for implementation."

"Staff of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and Oxford County have put a lot of effort into ensuring Brownsville residents will continue to have access to safe, high-quality municipal drinking water.

He also commended staff at the Grand River Conservation Authority who managed the process, oversaw the scientific studies and helped develop the policies.

Sally Martyn, Chair of the Catfish Creek Source Protection Authority said: "We are very thankful to have the plan finished and approved. It has been a lot of hard work and taken a long time but is well worth the effort.

The staff working in the Lake Erie Source Protection Region have done an excellent job. Being a small conservation authority made it much easier to complete the plan with all the needed scientific data for the two municipal wells in our area. The health and well-being of the citizens is now being protected."

Oxford County Warden Don McKay says Oxford has a long history of groundwater protection and partnership with local conservation authorities.

"The success of the Source Protection Committee in bringing together municipalities, businesses, farmers and others to define a plan that protects our local water supplies is an achievement that will extend far into our future," said McKay.

Oxford County Water Services Manager Deborah Goudreau said completing the Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan is a key step in meeting the county's obligations under Ontario's Clean Water Act.

"As the County's first approved source protection plan, the Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan marks an important new chapter for us, one with several more to follow as we work with our partners to complete protection plans for Oxford's other watersheds," said Goudreau.

The Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan was submitted to the ministry for approval on April 10, 2014. Before approving the plan, the ministry reviewed it to ensure it met the objectives of the Clean Water Act.

A range of approaches will be used to manage human activities which could pose a threat to the water supply. For example, the plan contains policies for the use and storage of manure and the maintenance of private septic systems in areas near the Brownsville wells.

Now that the ministry has approved the plan, Oxford County, Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and other agencies will continue to prepare to implement the plan in 2015.

For further information:

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