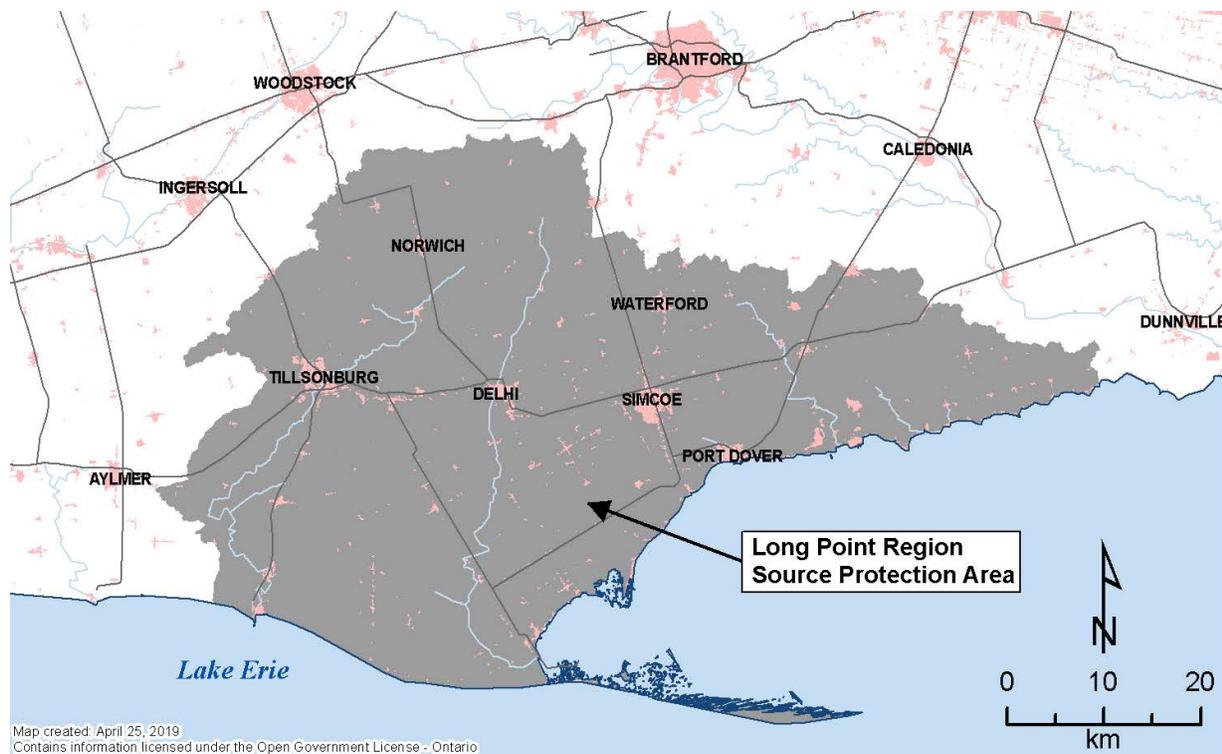


Source Protection Annual Progress Report

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing the source protection plan for the Long Point Region Source Protection Area, as required by the Clean Water Act and regulations.

We acknowledge and recognize the tremendous efforts made by our local municipalities, stakeholders and Source Protection Committee in the development of the Source Protection Plan and implementation of Source Protection policies.



II. A message from your local Source Protection Committee

PS: Progressing Well / Short of Target – Implementation of the source protection plan is progressing well but remains short of target in achieving the plan’s objectives.

701 significant drinking water threats have been identified in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area since the original source protection plan approval or approval of amendments that include new or revised protection zones. The percentage of overall progress made addressing the threats is 51%. This is a decrease compared to the 2020 annual reporting period percentage (68%). The significant difference between the 2020 and 2021 results is in part due to errors in the 2020 results from Norfolk County, which were corrected in the 2021 annual reporting period. 99% of all legally binding plan policies that address significant drinking water threats are implemented or in progress, or implemented because policy outcome(s) were evaluated and no further action(s) were required.

Progress addressing significant drinking water threats has been impacted by several factors outside of the control of implementing bodies. This includes a recent source protection plan update in 2020 that increased the number of significant drinking water threats (approximately 10%), an increase in the number of development reviews in 2020 and 2021 that subsequently increased the workload for municipalities, and most significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing bodies have reported that COVID-19 public health restrictions impeded their ability to address significant drinking water threats in the 2020 and 2021 annual reporting periods, including septic system inspections and establishing risk management plans. The extent to which the objectives of the source protection plan have been achieved during this reporting period has been amended from "Progressing Well / On Target" to "Progressing Well / Short of Target", to reflect the influence of these factors. Implementation of the source protection plan is progressing well but remains short of target in achieving the plan’s objectives regarding the number of septic system inspections and the development of risk management plans.

III. Our Watershed

To learn more, please read our Long Point Region Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan.

The Long Point Region Source Protection Area (watershed) is drained by 10 major watercourses that empty into Lake Erie. They drain 2,780 square kilometres in portions of Elgin, Norfolk, Oxford, Brant and Haldimand counties.

The watershed has ten municipal drinking water systems. Three systems are located in Oxford County in the communities of Dereham Centre, Oxford South (communities of Norwich, Otterville and Springford) and the Town of Tillsonburg, all of which are

groundwater systems. Norfolk County has five municipal drinking water systems in the communities of Delhi, Port Dover, Port Rowan, Simcoe and Waterford. Haldimand County and Elgin County each have one municipal-residential drinking water system, within the watershed. There are also two other municipal drinking water systems serving Long Point Region residents that are sourced outside of the watershed: Mount Elgin and the Bayham Distribution System.

IV. At a Glance: Progress on Source Protection Plan Implementation

1. Source Protection Plan Policies

P: Progressing Well/On Target

For implementing bodies that have submitted a status update / annual report to the source protection authority, the vast majority of legally binding policies (99%) that address significant drinking water threats are implemented, in progress or implemented because policy outcome(s) have been evaluated and no further action(s) are required.

2. Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

Eight upper/lower and single-tier municipalities (County of Oxford, Town of Tillsonburg, Township of Norwich, Township of South-West Oxford, Norfolk County, Haldimand County, Township of Malahide and Municipality of Bayham) in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area have vulnerable areas where significant drinking water threat policies apply.

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Five municipalities in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area are required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the Long Point Region Source Protection Plan the next time they undertake an Official Plan review under the Planning Act. Two Official Plan amendments have been completed and three are in process/updates underway.

3. Septic Inspections

PS: Progressing Well / Short of Target

94 on-site sewage systems in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area require inspections in accordance with the Ontario Building Code every five years. 65% of the systems that were due to be inspected in the 2021 annual reporting were actually inspected (26 out of 40 systems). Inspection results found

46% required minor maintenance work, e.g., pump out, etc. No systems required major maintenance work, e.g., tank replacement, etc.

COVID-19 public health measures significantly impacted progress on the number of systems inspected in the 2021 and in the previous 2020 annual reporting periods. Risk Management Officials were not able to inspect some septic systems that were due for inspection, and subsequently delayed those inspections to a future annual reporting period. As a result, the progress on septic system inspections during this reporting period has been amended from "Progressing Well / On Target" to "Progressing Well / Short of Target", to reflect the impact of public health measures.

4. Risk Management Plans

PS: Progress Well / Short of Target

Four risk management plans were established in the 2021 annual reporting period. Since the Long Point Region Source Protection Plan took effect, five risk management plans have been established in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area. Five percent of risk management plans have been established to date in relation to the ones still needed/pending to manage existing significant drinking water threat activities. 37 inspections have been conducted by a Risk Management Official / Inspector for prohibited or regulated activities in 2021. No inspections were in contravention with section 57 or 58 of the Clean Water Act (i.e., person engaging in a drinking water threat activity without a risk management plan as required by the source protection plan), and no inspections were in non-compliance with the contents of a risk management plan.

The relatively low percentage of risk management plans that have been established to date in relation to the ones still needed / pending is a reflection of the large number of significant drinking water threats (97) on the landscape that still require a risk management plan, increased threat numbers as a result of recent source protection plan updates, limited staff resources and the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 public health measures significantly impacted progress on the number of risk managements plans established in the 2021 and in the previous 2020 annual reporting periods. Risk Management Officials had to delay risk management plan negotiations with property owners to a future annual reporting period. As a result, the grading for progress on risk management plan policy implementation during this reporting period has been amended from "Progressing Well / On Target" to "Progressing Well / Short of Target", to reflect the impact of public health measures.

5. Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Ontario ministries are reviewing applications for new or amended and previously issued provincial approvals (e.g., Environmental compliance approvals issued under the Environmental Protection Act) where they have been identified as a tool in the Long Point Region Source Protection Plan to address activities that pose a significant risk to source water. The provincial approvals are either being issued, denied, amended, or revoked, where necessary, to conform with plan policies. Long Point Region Source Protection Plan policies set out a time line of 3 years to complete the review and make any necessary changes to previously issued approvals, the timeline for new or amended PIs has been in effect since the approval date of our plan. Thus, while ministries are implementing a review protocol to screen all (100%) applicable approval applications, they have completed this for 100% of previously issued provincial approvals in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

12 Drinking Water Protection Zones signs have been installed in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area since the Source Protection Plan took effect. Both Oxford County and Norfolk County have reported an increase in public understanding of the Source Water Protection Program and its goals. Members are more familiar with the program, and landowners more willing to participate in the Source Protection process.

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Delays in implementing source protection plan policies have been noted for the Municipality of Bayham and the Counties of Oxford, Norfolk and Haldimand. The majority of these delays are related to a non-legally binding liquid hydrocarbon pipeline policy that includes the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) as one of its implementing bodies. Lake Erie Source Protection Region staff are currently working with liquid hydrocarbon pipeline regulators, including the OEB, to ensure implementation of the policies moving forward.

The delays are primarily the result of an implementing body not yet formally integrating source protection into their organizational procedures or not yet creating a plan to implement a particular policy. To ensure implementation progress in the 2022 annual reporting period, implementing bodies will develop a process to formally link the Source Protection Program to their organization's internal processes and discuss options to implement policies with local boards and committees.

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

The Richmond, Simcoe (Cedar St. and Chapel St.), Tillsonburg and Oxford South (Otterville) drinking water systems have identified nitrate drinking water Issues. Nitrate concentrations/trends are decreasing at the Richmond Community Water System. There is not enough data for the Simcoe, Tillsonburg and Oxford South systems to make a determination about concentrations/trends.

Oxford County (Tillsonburg and Oxford South drinking water systems) is monitoring nitrate levels with a continuous nitrate analyzer at Tillsonburg wells with identified nitrate issues.

The Municipality of Bayham (Richmond drinking water system) is continuing to monitor nitrate concentrations for the two overburden wells on a monthly basis, and the raw water is being treated to remove nitrate from the water supply before delivery to end users.

Norfolk County (Simcoe drinking water system) monitors the well supply on an on-going basis, and will continue to do so into the next reporting period. Additional monitoring is completed for the Simcoe well supply for sodium due to previous results above half of the maximum acceptable concentration.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

An order was received from the Ministry on December 17, 2019 regarding the Section 36 workplan for updates to the Long Point Region Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan. Examples of tasks that are included in the Section 36 workplan:

- growth and infrastructure changes, e.g., new drinking water supply well(s) to be brought online;
- technical rule changes, e.g., review and consider Phase II Technical Rule changes for incorporation into the assessment report and source protection plan; and
- transport pathway changes, e.g., consider any identified transport pathways for incorporation into the assessment report and source protection plan.

The work will be incorporated into a future s.36 Long Point Region Source Protection Plan update. The plan update is expected to be completed and submitted to the Ministry for review and approval in 2024.

10. More from the Watershed

To learn more about the Long Point Source Protection Area, visit the [Lake Erie Source Protection Region website](#).