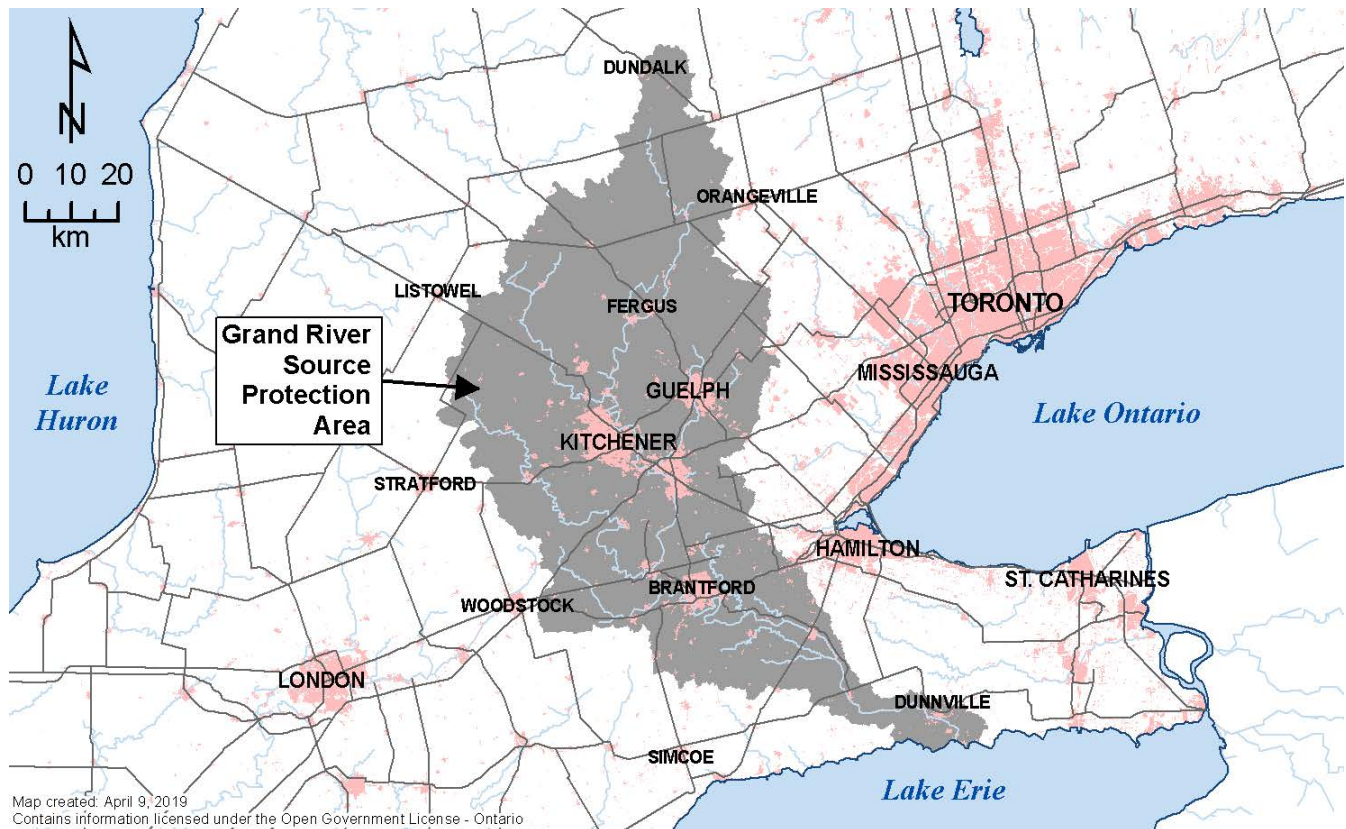


2020 Source Protection Annual Progress Report

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing the source protection plan for the Grand River 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

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

9847 significant drinking water threats have been identified in the Grand River 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 in addressing threats is 27%*; this is an improvement over the 2019 annual reporting year (21%). The percentage of overall progress made is a reflection of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and progress for municipalities that have a large number of significant threats. For these municipalities, implementation may be phased over many years given the large number of properties and limited staff resources. Some municipalities have opted to prioritize properties and activities with the highest potential for impact.

Ninety-eight percent of legally binding plan policies that address significant drinking water threats are implemented, in progress, or implemented because policy outcome(s) have been evaluated and it is determined that no further action(s) is required.

*Note: Haldimand County did not submit its 2020 annual reporting requirements on time due to municipal staffing changes. The above figures do not include any data from Haldimand County. Lake Erie Region staff are in discussions with Haldimand County to ensure that their annual reporting will be completed and data submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

III. Our Watershed

To learn more, please read our Grand River Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan.

The Grand River Source Protection Area (watershed) covers an area of approximately 6,800 square kilometres, and contains 39 upper, lower and single-tier municipalities and two First Nations bands.

The residents of the Grand River watershed receive drinking water supplies from both private and municipal supplies. 50 municipal systems and one First Nation system provide water to 865,538 residents in the watershed.

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 majority (98%) of legally binding plan policies that address significant drinking water threats are implemented, in progress, or implemented because policy outcome(s) have been evaluated and it is determined that no further action(s) is required.

2. Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

Twenty-two municipalities in the Grand River Source Protection Area have vulnerable areas where policies addressing significant drinking water threats apply.

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Twenty-nine municipalities in the Grand River Source Protection Area are required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the Grand River Source Protection Plan the next time they undertake an Official Plan review under the Planning Act. Eleven Official Plan amendments have been completed, fourteen are in process, and four have not been started.

3. Septic Inspections

P: Progressing Well/On Target

1372 on-site sewage systems in the Grand River Source Protection Area require inspections in accordance with the Ontario Building Code during the five-year inspection period (2018-2022). Three-hundred twenty-three systems were inspected in 2020. COVID-19 public health measures impacted progress on the number of systems inspected. Municipalities are, however, on track to ensure that most, if not all systems, are inspected by the end of the current inspection cycle. Inspection results found 9% required minor maintenance work, e.g., pump out, etc., and 5% required major maintenance work, e.g., tank replacement, etc.

4. Risk Management Plans

P: Progressing Well/On Target

Fifty-eight risk management plans were established in 2020. Since the Grand River Source Protection Plan took effect, 194 risk management plans have been established in the Grand River Source Protection Area.

One-hundred ninety-five inspections have been conducted by a Risk Management Official / Inspector for prohibited or regulated activities in 2020. Four inspections were in contravention with section 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 one was in non-compliance with the contents of the risk management plan.

COVID-19 public health measures contributed to slower progress on risk management plan negotiations and inspections in 2020.

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 Grand River 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. Grand River 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 91% of previously issued provincial approvals in the Grand River Source Protection Area.

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

Twenty-one Drinking Water Protection Zones signs have been installed in the Grand River Source Protection Area since the Source Protection Plan took effect.

The following positive outcomes have been reported by municipalities in the Grand River Source Protection Area:

- landowners are generally more open to participating in the Source Water Protection process when they understand the reasons and importance of source protection plan policies; promotes a sense of engagement
- increased awareness of the Source Water Protection Program at properties where threat verification inspections have been completed. Positive outcomes include increased spill protection and increased risk management for waste disposal and fuel handling
- progressive reduction in per capita water consumption
- members of the public are not as apprehensive when discussing the Source Water Protection Program; may indicate a better baseline understanding of what the program is and what the goals are

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Delays in implementing source protection plan policies have been noted in the City of Brantford, Township of Perth East, and the Region of Waterloo.

Summary of rationale for delays:

- threats verification for different types of properties, e.g., commercial, industrial and agricultural, prioritized over others due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions
- lack of eligible properties, e.g., delayed implementation of an incentive policy due to a lack of properties that would be eligible to receive the municipal incentive
- municipality has not yet discussed or created a plan to implement a policy

Actions planned to implement policies:

- municipality to increase threats verification work for existing threat activities that may be taking place on properties as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions are loosened or removed
- municipality will continue to evaluate the requirements of the local incentive program and implement the policy as warranted
- initiate discussions in 2021 to develop a plan of action to implement a policy

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

Municipalities have monitoring and treatment systems in place to ensure that municipal drinking water meets the requirements under Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002.

At the end of 2020, there were sixteen drinking water systems or wellfields in the Grand River Source Protection Area with identified drinking water issues. Fourteen of those 16 systems have an Issue Contributing Area(s) (ICA). The majority of the systems reporting increasing concentrations / trends; however, one system (Wilmot Centre, Region of Waterloo) reported decreasing concentrations / trends. For those systems or wellfields where there are no improvements, municipalities will continue to collect data to monitor the issues.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

A s.36 order was received from the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in June 2020 regarding updates to the Grand River Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan.

Examples of tasks that are included in the proposed Section 36 workplan:

- growth and infrastructure changes, e.g., new drinking water supply well(s) to be brought online
- results of environmental monitoring programs, e.g., review of monitoring data to evaluate existing or the potential for Issues identified at municipal drinking water wells
- technical rule changes, e.g., review and consider Phase II Technical Rule changes for

incorporation into the assessment report and source protection plan
- policy effectiveness, e.g., revise policies related to the application of salt to improve plowing and salting practices

10. More from the Watershed

To learn more about the Grand River Source Protection Area visit,
<http://www.sourcewater.ca>