

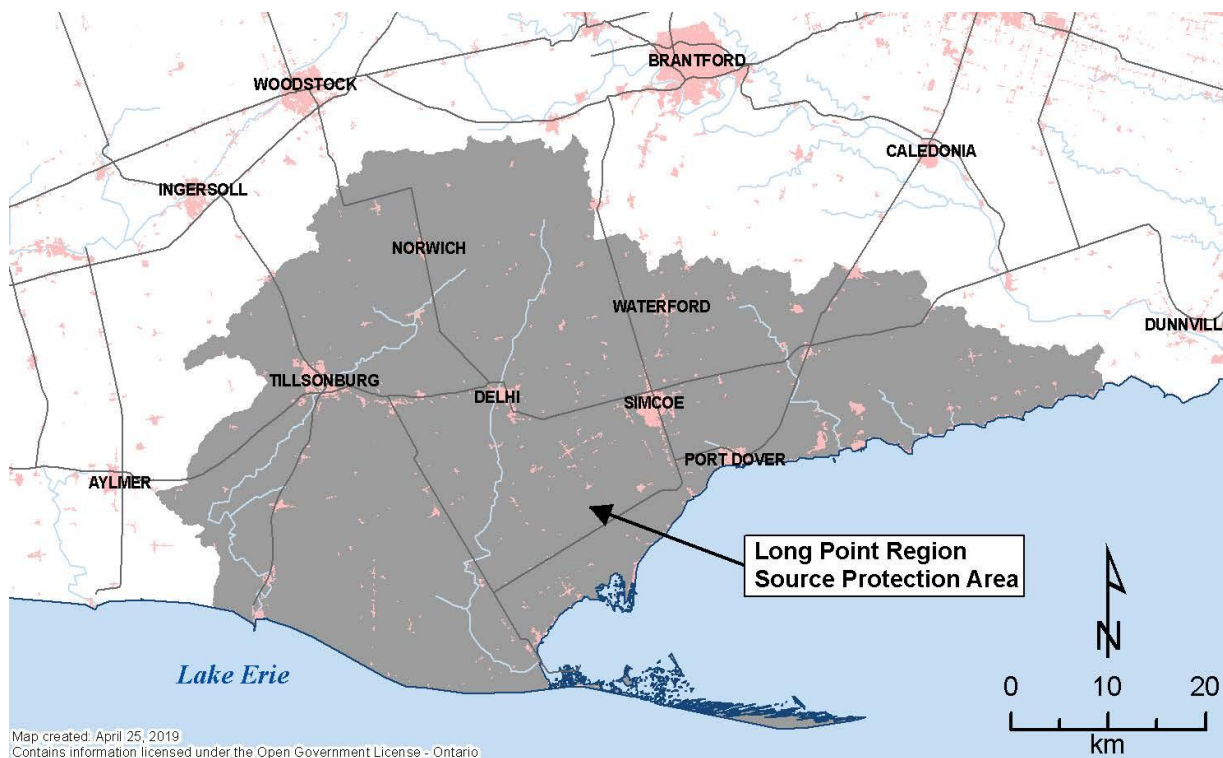
Long Point Region Source Protection Annual Progress Report 2025

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing our Source Protection Plan for the Long Point Region Source Protection Area, as required by the *Clean Water Act, 2006* and its regulations.

The Source Protection Plan (the Plan) is the culmination of extensive science-based assessment, research, consultation, and collaboration with local stakeholders and the provincial government. When policies in the Plan are implemented, it ensures that activities carried out near municipal wells and surface water intakes will not pose significant risk to the sources of our drinking water.

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



Map 1 Long Point Region Source Protection Area

II. A message from your local Source Protection Committee

P: Progressing Well / On Target – The majority of the Plan policies have been implemented and/or are progressing.

Each year, the Source Protection Committee considers information provided by policy implementors and rates the extent to which Source Protection Plan objectives are being achieved. A key component to the Committee's approach is that the overall rating for meeting Plan objectives is determined by the percentage of policies that are implemented or in-progress.

As of December 31, 2025, **100%** of legally binding Plan policies that address significant drinking water threats are implemented or in progress for the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

The primary consideration is whether forward progress is being made on policy implementation and whether implementing bodies have processes in place for addressing significant drinking water threats. All municipalities in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area have internal processes in place to ensure planning decisions conform to the Plan and are managing or prohibiting new threats as appropriate. Similarly, provincial ministries continue to implement standard operational procedures to address significant threats regulated under provincial approvals.

Previous annual reports quantified the number of significant drinking water threats identified and managed within the Source Protection Area. While the number of threats are still considered, it is not the primary measure for rating overall progress. The reason for this is that year-over-year comparisons of threat counts can be misleading. Several factors affect the number of identified threats and whether they are reported as managed, such as Plan amendments (can result in addition or removal of vulnerable areas and threats), changes in property ownership, and updates to the Technical Rules for identifying threats.

III. Our Watershed

The Long Point Region Source Protection Area (watershed) is drained by more than 30 creeks and tributaries. These creeks drain an area of 2,782 square kilometres in portions of Brant, Elgin, Haldimand, Norfolk, and Oxford 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 groundwater sourced municipal drinking water systems in the communities of Delhi, Simcoe and Waterford and surface water sourced municipal drinking water systems (Lake Erie intakes) in the communities of Port Dover and Port Rowan. Haldimand County and Elgin County each have one municipal-

residential drinking water system within the watershed, the former of which is a surface water system (Lake Erie Intake) and the latter of which is a groundwater system. 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 and Addressing Significant Risks

P: Progressing Well / On Target

Of the legally binding Plan policies that address significant drinking water threats, 100% 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

P: Progressing Well / On Target

Eight municipalities in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area have vulnerable areas where significant drinking water threat policies apply. Planning departments and building officials are screening applications for locations within vulnerable areas where threats to drinking water sources are possible and Plan policies may apply.

Five municipalities are required to review and update their Official Plan to ensure it conforms with the Source Protection Plan the next time they undertake an Official Plan review under the *Planning Act, 1990*. As of December 31, 2025, the Municipality of Bayham, Norfolk County, Oxford County, Haldimand County, and the Township of Malahide have confirmed that their Official Plans conform to the Source Protection Plan.

3. Septic Inspections

P: Progressing Well / On Target

There are 73 on-site sewage systems in the Long Point Source Protection Area that are significant drinking water threats and require inspection every five years in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.

Of the 47 systems that were due for inspection in 2025, 39 (83%) of the inspections were completed. None of the systems inspected required any remedial action (e.g. maintenance work).

Norfolk County will work with landowners to obtain additional information to complete outstanding inspections. Where landowners refused entry, compliance orders are being sought. There are only two septic systems in the Municipality of Bayham that require inspection. These two systems were not inspected in 2025 as a result of staffing changes and will be inspected in 2026.

4. Risk Management Plans

P: Progressing Well / On Target

The Long Point Region Source Protection Plan contains policies that require the development of Risk Management Plans to manage certain drinking water threats. All Plan policies that require a Risk Management Plan have been reported as implemented or in progress.

A total of 20 Risk Management Plans are in place in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area. In 2025, three new Risk Management Plans were agreed to that manage four significant drinking water threat activities.

There is no timeline for establishing Risk Management Plans in the Lake Erie Source Protection Region. Municipalities continue to prioritize areas and properties that pose the highest risk when establishing Risk Management Plans. Additionally, significant effort is spent on conducting inspections to verify whether perceived threats are actually occurring on the ground. If threats are determined to no longer exist, Risk Management Plans are revoked. This impacts the cumulative total of reported Risk Management Plans in place each year.

In 2025, Risk Management Officials completed a total of 237 inspections to achieve compliance or to verify threats for activities designated under Section 58 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Zero cases of contravention or non-compliance were reported. An additional 218 inspections were carried out for activities prohibited under Section 57 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Zero cases of contravention were reported.

Risk Management Plan negotiations are complex and lengthy processes. In some cases, landowners voluntarily address threat activities on their property; however, executing the formal agreement is a challenge. Under Section 61 of Ontario Regulation 287/07, a landowner may request an exemption from a Risk Management Plan if their provincial approval already includes source protection risk management measures. Risk Management Officials must wait to receive this statement of conformity before reporting a threat as addressed, even if the risk to drinking water is being managed.

To manage future threat activities, municipalities have screening processes in place to ensure development applications are reviewed for potential threat activities and for the applicability of Plan policies.

5. Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well / On Target

Ontario ministries review applications for new or amended provincial approvals (i.e. prescribed instruments, such as Environmental Compliance Approvals issued 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 source water.

The Province has established Standard Operating Policies to ensure that approvals take into account the science generated through the Drinking Water Source Protection Program and policies in the Source Protection Plan. Provincial approvals are issued, denied, amended, or revoked to conform to Plan policies. Where necessary, conditions are added to approvals to ensure that the activity does not pose a significant threat to sources of drinking water.

The Plan sets a timeline of three years to complete a review of previously issued approvals and make any necessary changes to address source protection requirements. In 2021, the Technical Rules for identifying threats was updated. Most ministries have completed a review of previously issued approvals under the 2021 Technical Rules; however, some branches within the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) are still completing this process. In 2025, there were no newly identified existing instruments that required a review for source protection.

MECP also reported three new Environmental Compliance Approval applications that underwent a detailed review for source protection in 2025. The three applications were determined not to be significant drinking water threats and/or did not have source protection implementation requirements.

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

To raise awareness about the protection of local drinking water sources, source protection signs have been installed on Provincial highways and municipal roads surrounding vulnerable areas. Oxford County installed four new signs in 2025 and paired their installation with a social and traditional media campaign.

Municipalities across the Long Point Region Source Protection Area continue to establish and implement education and outreach programs, which contribute to enhancing awareness of source water protection.

In addition, a nitrate study completed as part of a research initiative in the Municipality of Bayham has made a positive difference in the nitrate concentrations observed in the municipality's drinking water sources.

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Not applicable to the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

Drinking water quality Issues have been identified for nitrate at the Richmond Community Water System, Simcoe Well Supply, Oxford South Water System, and Tillsonburg Well Supply. In 2025, most of these systems have reported an increasing concentration/trend; however a decreasing concentration/trend was reported at the Simcoe Well Supply. Issue Contributing Areas (WHPA-ICAs) have been delineated for all nitrate Issues in the Long Point Region Source Protection Area.

Municipalities continue to implement risk management strategies to address threat activities associated with WHPA-ICAs. All municipalities have monitoring and treatments systems in place to ensure that municipal drinking water meets the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. Oxford County reported that water from wells with increasing nitrate concentrations are blended with other wells to ensure that drinking water meets safe standards.

Municipalities have used the results of ongoing monitoring to determine where further investigation is needed and to conduct assessments to identify sources and/or explain concentration variability. Continuous, long-term monitoring will help determine if implementation of Plan policies and other actions are improving raw water quality for these systems. For example, the Municipality of Bayham indicated that while nitrate concentrations appear to increase between 2024 and 2025 for the Richmond Water Supply wells, the long term trend is a decreasing concentration since monitoring first began in 2014.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

An order was received from the Ministry in June 2020 (revised June 2025) providing for a comprehensive review and update to the Long Point Region Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan under Section 36 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Examples of tasks in the workplan include incorporation of:

- Growth and infrastructure changes (e.g. new drinking water supply wells)
- Technical Rule changes

- Transport pathway updates
- 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)

The Section 36 update is currently underway and is expected to be submitted to the Ministry for approval in 2026.

10. More from the Watershed

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