

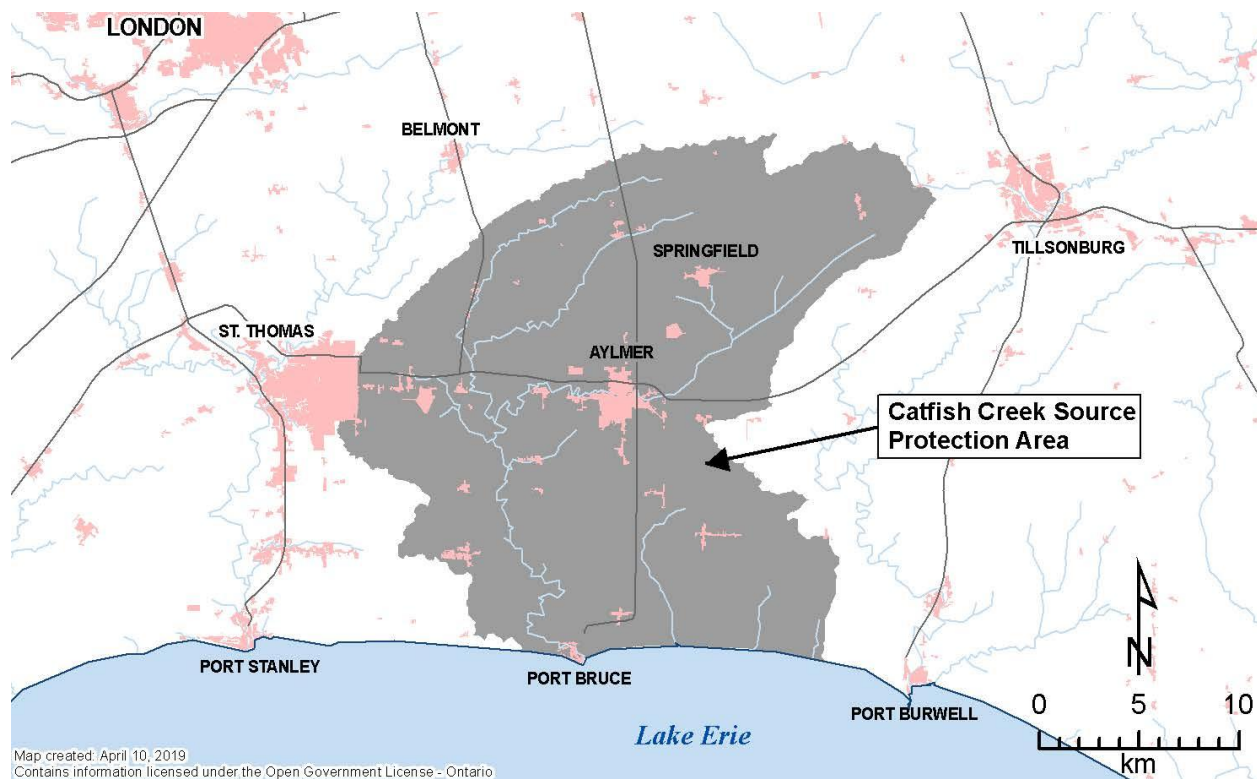
Catfish Creek Source Protection Annual Progress Report 2025

I. Introduction

This annual progress report outlines the progress made in implementing our Source Protection Plan for the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area, as required by the *Clean Water Act, 2006* and 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 Catfish Creek 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 for the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area.

III. Our Watershed

The Catfish Creek Source Protection Area (watershed) includes Catfish Creek and its tributaries. These watercourses drain an area of about 490 square kilometres in Elgin and Oxford Counties before entering Lake Erie at Port Bruce.

Much of the land of the Catfish Creek watershed is used for agriculture. The City of St. Thomas and the Town of Aylmer are the major urban areas, with other settlements at Springfield and Port Bruce.

The watershed has one municipal drinking water system in the village of Brownsville in the Township of Southwest Oxford. The system is comprised of two wells serving about 500 people. The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System also provides municipal water to a number of communities in the watershed, including the Town of Aylmer and Port Bruce and Copenhagen in the Township of Malahide.

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

1. Source Protection Plan Policies and Addressing Significant Risks

P: Progressing Well / On Target

All legally binding Plan policies that address significant drinking water threats (100%) are implemented.

2. Municipal Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well / On Target

One municipality (Oxford County) in the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area has vulnerable areas where significant drinking water threat policies apply. Oxford County completed the review and update of their Official Plan in 2022 to ensure it conforms to the Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan. No further updates to the Official Plan were required to conform to the Section 36 of the Catfish Creek Source Protection Plan approved in 2024.

Municipalities continue to screen development applications for locations within vulnerable areas where threats to drinking water sources are possible and Plan policies may apply.

3. Septic Inspections

P: Progressing Well / On Target

In the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area, there are nine on-site sewage systems that require inspections every five years in accordance with the Ontario Building Code. None of the systems were due to be inspected by the local municipality during 2025.

4. Risk Management Plans

P: Progressing Well / On Target

One Risk Management Plan has been negotiated in the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area since the Plan came into effect in 2015. There are currently no Risk Management Plans needed or pending.

In 2025, a total of 44 inspections were carried out for activities prohibited under Section 57 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006* and 11 inspections were carried out for an activity requiring a Risk Management Plan under Section 58 of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. All activities inspected were found to be in compliance with Part IV policies.

5. Provincial Progress: Addressing Risks on the Ground

P: Progressing Well / On Target

Ontario ministries review 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 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 the review and make any necessary changes to previously issued approvals. Ministries have completed review of previously issued Provincial approvals in the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area for both the original Source Protection Plan (effective 2015) and the comprehensive Section 36 update (effective 2024).

In 2025, there were no new prescribed instrument applications that required a detailed review for source protection in the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area.

6. Source Protection Awareness and Change in Behaviour

There have been no measurable or quantifiable outcomes reported for the 2025 annual reporting period.

7. Source Protection Plan Policies: Summary of Delays

Not applicable to the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area.

8. Source Water Quality: Monitoring and Actions

No issues have been identified in the local science-based assessment report regarding the quality of the source(s) of municipal drinking water in the Catfish Creek Source Protection Area.

9. Science-based Assessment Reports: Work Plans

No work plans were required to be implemented for the Catfish Creek Assessment Report for the 2025 annual reporting period.

10. More from the Watershed

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