

March 04, 2024

**Subject: Guelph / Eramosa Township 2023 Risk Management Official and Municipal Annual Reports**

For reporting purposes, Guelph / Eramosa Township is subject to the Grand River Source Protection Plan (based on watershed or Conservation Authority boundaries). Under Section 81 of the Clean Water Act and Section 65 of O. Reg. 287/07, an annual report must be prepared by a Risk Management Official and submitted to the appropriate Source Protection Authority (Conservation Authority) by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Under Section 45 of the *Clean Water Act*, a public body, including a municipality, must comply with monitoring and reporting policies designated by a Source Protection Plan and provide a municipal annual report by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. For Guelph / Eramosa Township, the Risk Management Official and Municipal Annual Reports for 2023 were submitted to the Grand River Source Protection Authority by February 1, 2024. This Council report summarizes the contents of the submitted reports.

**Summary of Key Aspects**

The Wellington County municipalities continue to implement source protection under the Wellington Source Water Protection partnership, [www.wellingtonwater.ca](http://www.wellingtonwater.ca). In 2023, progress continued in the implementation of source protection in the municipality. A summary of key aspects of the Risk Management Official Report and Municipal Report are provided below.

**Development Review**

In 2023, there were 62 development applications reviewed by source protection staff. This included 17 development review notices issued per Section 59 of the Clean Water Act within the municipality and staff comments on an additional 45 applications. There were 483 local municipal and County development applications (notices and comments) reviewed County wide by source protection staff. This included 93 Section 59 notices issued and staff comments on 390 additional development applications. Comments can range from relatively quick reviews to more lengthy and involved comments over a period of months. This represents a County wide increase in both the total number of development applications reviewed in the previous year (425) and an increase compared to the five year average of 366 development applications. Within the municipality, there was an increase compared to the five year average of 48 applications reviewed. In addition to the notices and comments provided, other applications were screened out by building or planning staff following Risk Management Official Written Direction provided by Wellington Source Water Protection.

As part of the review process, 11 Drinking Water Threat Disclosure Reports and Management Plans were required pursuant to the County Official Plan for primarily industrial and commercial site plan or subdivision agreements. These documents provide disclosure of activities proposed on properties related to chemical, fuel, waste and / or winter maintenance activities. Where required these activities are managed through Risk Management Plans or other Management Plans to ensure protection of groundwater and municipal drinking water.

### **Threat Verification and Inspections**

Analysis continued on the threat verification data collected in previous years on residential, agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional activities identified as potential significant drinking water threats in the approved Assessment Report. Staff complete a variety of tasks to remove or confirm and then mitigate activities identified as potential significant drinking water threats in the approved Assessment Reports. These threat activities are existing and the analysis can involve desk top interpretation of air photos or GIS data, phone calls, review of municipal records, windshield surveys, site inspections by Risk Management staff and if confirmed, then mitigation through septic inspection, prohibition and / or negotiation of risk management plans. The percentage of threat activities that still require action to either remove or confirm / mitigate the threat activities is 36%. The remaining threat activities in the municipality are a mixture of agricultural, commercial and industrial and the large overall numbers of threats are a function of having both City of Guelph and Township wellhead protection areas present in the Township.

To support this threats analysis and to determine compliance, 337 inspections were conducted in the Township in the reporting year. There were 50 inspections were conducted for compliance purposes (prohibition) with no contraventions found. There were 287 inspections conducted for threat verification or risk management plan purposes in the Township in the reporting year with no contraventions found. County wide, 953 inspections were conducted in the reporting year with 19% of inspections (182) being prohibition compliance inspections, 1% (9) being RMP compliance inspections and 80% (762) of inspections conducted for threat activity verification or risk management plan negotiation purposes. Overall, the inspections were generally related to manure application and storage prohibitions, to verify farming or winter maintenance activities or related to chemical / fuel handling and storage. Inspections were higher this year related to the need for confirmation of existing activities related to recent Assessment Report updates.

### **Risk Management Plans**

One Risk Management Plans was agreed to in 2023 and 3 are in the process of negotiation for the municipality. Cumulatively, there are 5 Risk Management Plans (RMPs) complete in the

Township and 81 Risk Management Plans complete within the County wide. County wide, the number of Risk Management Plans in progress is 33.

### **Education and Outreach**

The following is a summary of the Education and Outreach results, County wide, for 2023.

In total, 40 education and outreach daily events were completed this reporting year. Fourteen of the events were training sessions for municipal staff on general source protection topics and more detailed training on how it relates to municipal planning, building, sewage, roads and risk management operations. There were over 100 attendees cumulatively at the training. Fifteen events supported a variety of municipal and public events including Fall Fairs, Home Show, winter maintenance contractor outreach (in collaboration with the City of Guelph) and other community and school events. In support of the mandatory septic inspection program, staff managed and assisted in the delivery of six Septic Social Events to educate and answer questions from residents about the program.

The remaining five days of events was for the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. Staff participates and Wellington Source Water Protection / County of Wellington is a sponsor for the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival. For 2023, the Festival offered a virtual Festival but was also back in-person for four days at the Guelph Lake Conservation Area for the first time since 2019. Links to the virtual Festival content are available here <https://www.youtube.com/@watereducation4640> . The Children's Groundwater Festival is an excellent way to reach Grade 2 to 5 and high school children (and their parents) and deliver water protection messages including source protection. Registration for the 2023 both virtual and in-person Festival was 6,489 students and teachers with views of the videos continuing after the Festival. Registrations from Wellington County was up to 23% from 11% in 2022, likely due to the Festival location being within the County. Staff continue to participate on the organizing committee and various sub-committees including serving as co-chairs.

In addition to events, development reviews and inspections continued and included educational material being provided directly to the proponents generally regarding the threats present, the process (development review, RMP negotiations, prohibition etc.), property specific mapping, and general Source Water information. Where necessary, stickers and metal tags were provided to proponents listing the Spills Action Centre number and that their location is located within a vulnerable area for municipal wells. Updates were made to the Wellington Source Water Protection website [www.wellingtonwater.ca](http://www.wellingtonwater.ca) , and staff continue to update and maintain ten fact sheets on specific topics and other print media (i.e. post cards to direct applicants to mapping). Throughout the year, social media posts on a variety of topics were either posted or re-shared by our municipalities' corporate channels. Often the content of these posts was from the Conservation Ontario social media calendar or in partnership with

the local Conservation Authorities. Four newspaper ads were also run during the year on topics related to water conservation, salt and fertilizer use.

### **Plan Amendments, Policy and Technical Work**

In 2023, all five Source Protection Plans within the County were at different stages of amendments. Staff reviewed, provided comments and in some cases assisted Conservation Authority staff in authoring portions of the various amendments. Staff also provided support to the County's Official Plan Municipal Comprehensive Review, provided support to a number of water supply and / or water supply master plan projects related to water systems within or adjacent to the County, were involved in technical studies related to wellhead protection area updates and new well locations, contaminated sites management and participated in a provincial working group on annual reporting metrics. In 2023, agreements were reached with the City of Guelph and Region of Waterloo related to cost recovery for County and Townships related costs to protect the City and Region's municipal water supply. As required by the agreement, the City of Guelph annual report for 2023 was submitted by March 1, 2024 to the City of Guelph.

### **Tier 3 (Water Quantity) Studies**

Tier 3 (water quantity) technical studies continue for Guelph and Guelph / Eramosa. The Guelph / Eramosa Township Director of Public Works, the Risk Management Official and the County Manager of Policy Planning participates on the project team, representing Guelph / Eramosa, Puslinch, Erin and the County. In 2023, work continued on drafting policy requirements, largely focused on policy related to provincial approvals specifically permits to take water and Aggregate Resources Act approvals. Discussions led by the Grand River Conservation Authority and including the City of Guelph, Provincial Ministries and neighbouring municipalities, will continue in 2024 on the remaining policies with an anticipated submittal to the Province in 2024.

### **Septic Inspections**

The septic inspection program occurs on a five year cycle. The second round of inspections was scheduled to start in 2020, however, was postponed due to the COVID pandemic, therefore, the septic inspection program occurred in 2023. If a septic system is present within well head protection area with a vulnerability score of 10 or within an issues contributing area for nitrates, a septic inspection is required every 5 years. In the municipality, 412 properties are within these areas and require a septic inspection every five years pursuant to both the Ontario Building Code and the Clean Water Act. In 2023, 92% or 366 septic inspections were completed with 14 properties exempt for this round of inspections. There are 32 properties that are outstanding and staff will coordinate with the Building Department regarding next steps in 2024 including potential compliance actions. Following the first round of septic inspections, the Township has

received clear legal direction on the steps to be taken to ensure owners comply with the septic inspection program.

For the completed inspections, there was a 60% remedial action rate with 172 properties requiring minor remedial actions such as tank pump outs or lid repairs and 46 properties requiring major remedial actions often related to tank integrity or leaching bed obstructions. County wide the remedial action rate was similar with a 57% remedial action rate. This is much higher than the previous round of inspections and staff will be reviewing the data with the Building Departments and consultants to determine why this has occurred.

For further information, please contact Kyle Davis, Risk Management Official, 519-846-9691 ext 362 or [kdavis@centrewellington.ca](mailto:kdavis@centrewellington.ca)

Respectfully submitted,

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Risk Management Official