

Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee Communications Plan

Introduction

With the approval of the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Plan by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and its effectiveness as of December 31, 2015, the program has entered into its phase of implementation. The first annual progress report will be completed in 2018 and a work plan developed for adjustments to the plan to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its communities in protecting their sources of drinking water.

The Source Protection Committee has produced the assessment reports for the two source protection areas and developed the plan to ensure that existing and future water sources are protected. The role of the committee has now entered a stage of completing additional studies to better the scientific knowledge behind the plan; making additional amendments to the plan where necessary and monitoring the progress of the plan.

There is, however, another role that is important to the success of the plan that the committee can undertake. This involves the education and outreach that is necessary to support its implementation. To a great extent the plan involves education and outreach as a major component in the protection of drinking water sources.

A committee member is responsible for representing the sector from which they have been appointed and reporting back to that sector on the progress of the source protection plan. There is a greater role, however, that can be played by committee members for education and outreach that reaches the public bodies that implement the plan, the sectors that may be affected by the plan and the general public and younger generations. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has been encouraging the Chairs of the source protection committees and by extension the committee members themselves to develop communication plans. A "Campaign in a Box" toolkit has been provided and templates created to help develop education and outreach communication plans for the source protection committees across the province.

Attached is a recommended communication plan for the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee for the 2018/2019 fiscal year based on the template provided by the province. The 2018 year is significant in that there are provincial and municipal elections that will result in a turnover in representatives who need to be made aware of the program and its significance. In addition, there will be new appointments to the source protection authorities who must be educated on the plan and the key role that they play. The communication plan lays out the target audiences, strategic approaches, key messages and required resources to implement it in the upcoming fiscal year. Additional monies have been set aside in the program budget for the 2018/2019 period to allow for committee members to participate in the proposed education and outreach plan. A total of \$2,400 has been put in the budget to allow for up to 12 participation dates by different committee members. In addition approximately \$300 has been set aside for the necessary mileage expenses.

Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee Communications Plan

Objectives

- To help ensure the health of our citizens, our community's drinking water and local economy by protecting our vital drinking water sources
- To promote the importance of the fulfilment of the objectives of the source protection plan and its policies for the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region
- To raise general awareness of the importance of protecting the sources of our drinking water as a first step in a multi-barrier approach to safeguard the quality and quantity of our water sources
- To provide education and outreach to new local provincial government and new local municipal representatives following the June (provincial) and October (municipal) elections
- To re-engage the community in the strategies of the source protection plan and promote successes in implementation of the plan to date
- To ensure the public is aware of their role to play in drinking water source protection

Background

- Ontario's Clean Water Act, 2006, established the requirement for local source protection plans to be developed by local source protection committees
- The Halton-Hamilton source protection plan includes policies using tools such as education and outreach, land use planning and risk management to address local risks to drinking water sources
- The Minister of The Environment and Climate Change approved source protection plan for the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region came into effect on December 31, 2015 and can be found at: www.protectingwater.ca
- Other regulatory tools that help support the protection of drinking water (directly and indirectly) include the Safe Drinking Water Act, Environmental Protection Act, Municipal Act Nutrient Management Act and Provincial Policy Statement

Context

- The Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region is located at the western end of Lake Ontario and covers an area of 1,417 sq km of land and 720 sq km of Great Lakes waters
- Approximately 970,000 people live within the twelve municipalities comprising the source protection region
- The Region of Halton and City of Hamilton own and operate municipal water systems including five intakes in Lake Ontario (Hamilton -1, Region of Halton – 4) and three municipal well systems in Halton Region and three in Hamilton
- These municipal water systems supply about 95 percent of the population within the source protection region (92 percent from Lake Ontario and 3 percent from groundwater supplies)
- The Halton-Hamilton source protection plan includes 162 policies to address 21 prescribed threats and one local threat
- The plan sets out timelines for policy implementation ranging from two to five years from the effective date of the plan (December 31, 2015)

- Education and outreach policies are to be implemented within two years of the effective date of the plan; prescribed instrument policies within three years and risk management plans within five years. Official Plans have been amended or are being reviewed for inclusion of source protection requirements
- The main threat categories within the source protection region relate to septic systems and road salt applications
- The implementation of the source protection plan has overall been progressing well
- It is recognized over the next year that there will be changes in representation at the provincial, municipal and conservation authority level as the result of elections and appointments. It is very important that the momentum of the source protection program not be lost and that these representatives are fully aware of its significance and importance
- The local conservation authorities do have limited staff resources and it is important that the Chair and committee members take an active role in the education and outreach for the program

Target Audiences

The Chair and committee members have identified target audiences to further the objectives of the Halton-Hamilton source protection plan :

- New local MPPs following the June 2018 provincial election;
- New local council representatives following the October 2018 election;
- SPA's following appointment of new members;
- Pertinent implementation agencies and organizations such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission;
- Reaching the general public through television, newspapers, other print media and digital media;
- Targeting local service clubs and business and industry organizations;
- Targeting local agricultural associations through direct meetings and attendance at agricultural fairs or farm markets;
- Targeting local youth organizations.

Strategic Approach/Tactics

The Chair and source protection committee members are proposing the following approaches to reach the target audience:

- Preparation of PowerPoint presentation(s) and videos outlining the history of the Clean Water Act and the source protection initiatives pertaining to the Halton-Hamilton source protection region. Presentations will be of varying length and detail to suit target audiences;
- Presentations to newly elected local MPPs either as a group or one on one;
- Presentations to newly elected local councils;
- Presentations to newly appointed members of the two SPAs;
- Inclusion of articles in local MPPs and municipal councillors news letters;
- Presentation to the Niagara Escarpment Commission;
- Participation on Conservation Halton's local cable program (outreach to approximately 150,000 people) to reach general public regarding the source protection program;
- Presentation to selected service clubs, business/industry organizations and local youth organizations;
- Preparation of media releases on the implementation progress of the source protection plan;
- Attendance at agricultural fairs or farmers' markets within Hamilton and Halton to reach the agricultural community;
- Inclusion of articles in local Federation of Agriculture newsletters.

Key Messages

The proposed communication plan will provide for the following key messages:

- Outreach to the general public about the importance of source protection and drinking water and the progress of the source protection plan;
- Education to the MPPs, municipal partners and SPA about the importance of the program and their obligations in the program's implementation;
- Outreach and education to business, industry and agricultural organizations about the protection of drinking water and the specific threats within the source protection region;
- Outreach to the younger generation about the importance of protecting our drinking water supplies.

Resources

For necessary resources:

- There are numerous presentations available relating to the Clean Water Act and source protection program that will be brought together to create the proposed presentations that will be used in the various meetings;
- Contact has been made with Conservation Halton to appear on a local TV cable program;
- Assistance will be sought from the two conservation authorities, Conservation Ontario and the Ministry of The Environment and Climate Change for additional resource materials and contact information relating to specific groups;
- Collaboration will be looked at with those CAs having jurisdiction within the Niagara Escarpment Planning area;
- Assistance will also be sought from the Ontario Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs for resource materials.

Communication Plan: Chair/Member Participation

	Chair	SPC Member	Approximate Time Frame
Engagement			
MPP Presentation	X	X	Post June 2018
MPP Presentation	X	X	Post June 2018
Council Presentation Halton	X	X	Post October 2018
Council Presentation Hamilton	X	X	Post October 2018
Council Presentation Puslinch	X	X	Post October 2018
SPA Presentation Halton	X		Post February 2019
SPA Presentation Hamilton	X		Post February 2019
NEC Presentation	X		Post January 2019
Cogeco TV Grindstone	X	X	Fall 2018
Presentations			
Service Club/Business/Industry/Youth Group	X		Prior to March 31 2019
Service Club/Business/Industry/Youth Group	X		Prior to March 31 2019
Service Club/Business/Industry/Youth Group	X	X	Prior to March 31 2019
Service Club/Business/Industry/Youth Group	X	X	Prior to March 31 2019
Agricultural Fair, farmers' market Halton	X	X X	June to September 2018
Agricultural Fair, farmers' market Hamilton	X	X X	June to September 2018