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Province of Ontario approves source protection plan amendments for Maitland Valley, Ausable Bayfield source protection areas

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) has approved the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Source Protection Authorities' amendments to source protection plans to reflect recent changes in six area municipal well systems: Benmiller, Blyth, Dungannon, Molesworth, Ripley, and Varna. The Ministry also approved revisions to two source protection plan policies. The Ministry approved the amendments and revisions on January 31, 2019 and they took effect on February 5, 2019.

"The approved changes to wellhead protection area mapping and source protection plans reflect improvements that local municipalities have made to their drinking water systems," said Matt Pearson, Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee (SPC). "Wells have been added or replaced to ensure communities continue to have reliable drinking water. The plan amendments ensure municipal water supply continues to be protected through the drinking water source protection program."

The provincial approval follows a public notice period held from January 3, 2018 to February 8, 2018. Consultation included direct notification to landowners in the affected areas plus two Open House sessions held in Blyth and Varna in January of 2018. The local source protection region submitted the proposed amendments to the source protection plans, to Ontario's environment ministry, on February 16, 2018 for review.

Drinking water sources in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region include groundwater, drawn from aquifers underground, and water drawn from Lake Huron. The source protection plans set out policies that use a variety of tools to protect municipal drinking water sources from contamination. These tools include education, risk management planning, prohibition and land use planning. Policies in the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Source Protection Plans first came into effect on April 1, 2015.

Visit the region's local website at sourcewaterinfo.on.ca or the Province of Ontario web page at ontario.ca/page/source-protection to find out more. These web pages provide information about source protection plan policies, mapping of municipal wells and water resources, activities that could contaminate drinking water in certain circumstances and that require risk management, and positive actions you can take at home and work to help keep our drinking water safe and clean.

The Notice of Approval of the amended assessment reports and source protection plans for the Ausable Bayfield source protection area and Maitland Valley source protection area is also posted on Ontario's environmental registry at <https://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>

If you have questions about the approved changes, please contact Program Co-Supervisor Mary Lynn MacDonald at 1-888-286-2610 or Program Co-Supervisor Donna Clarkson at 1-519-335-3557.

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