



Ontario's Drinking Water Source Protection Act and Environmental Groups in the Policy Process

**Ontario Environmental Network
Annual General Meeting
November 20, 2004
Conservation Halton**



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Presentation Overview

Overview

Source Water

Walkerton

Watersheds

Water Laws - Ontario

Environmental
Groups

Summary

1. Overview
2. “Source Water”
3. Walkerton
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7. Summary

Source Water

Overview

Source Water

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Summary

- **Source water: All water that is used by humans, plants and animals**
- **Fresh water found in nature**
 - **Rivers**
 - **Lakes**
 - **Underground**

Water Use

Overview

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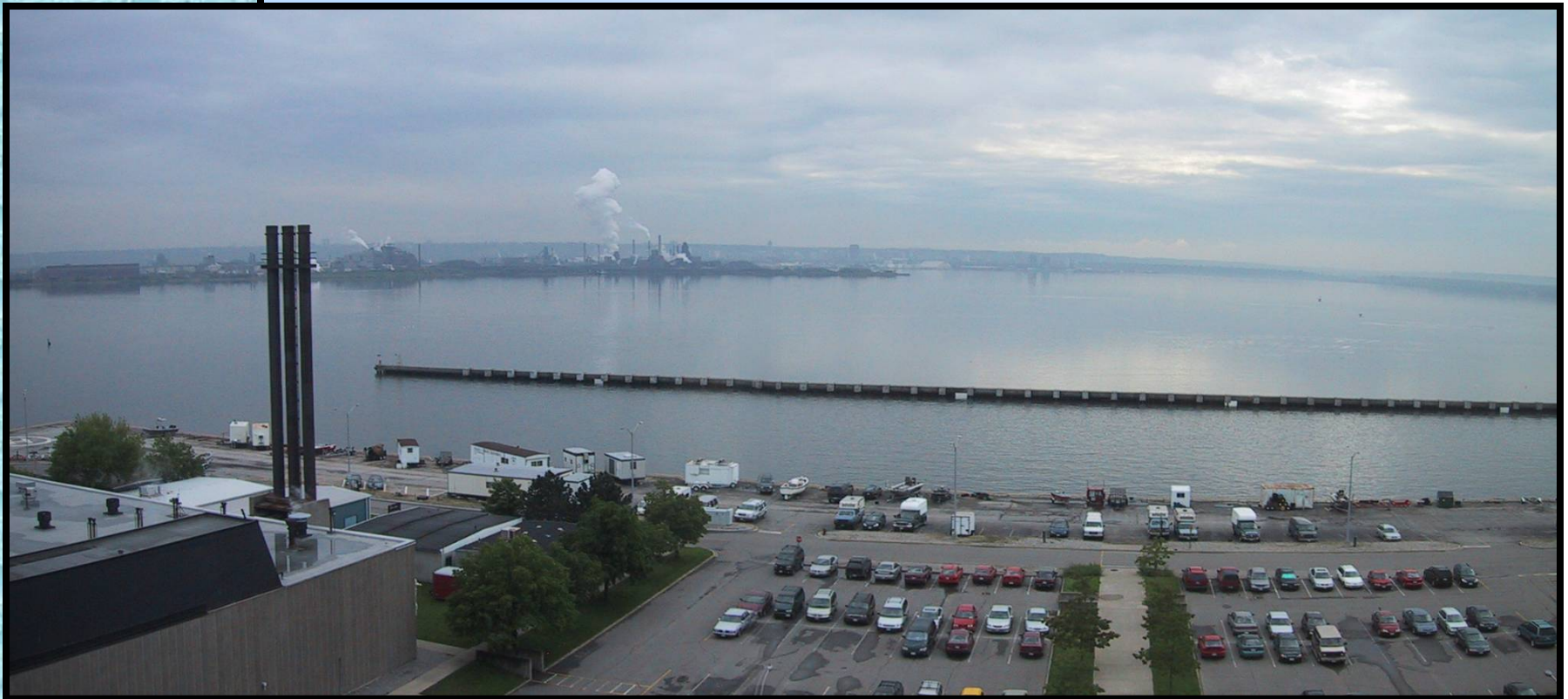
Environmental
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Summary

- **Public**
- **Industrial**
- **Water bottling**
- **Golf courses**
- **Farming**
- **Livestock**
- **Hydroelectric power**

Threats to Source Water

Polluting water leaves us all with less to use ...



Point Sources of Pollution

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Summary

- Pulp and Paper mills
- Mines
- Chemical plants
- Pharmaceutical plants
- Dry cleaners
- Sewage treatment plants
- Landfills
- Contaminated wells

Non Point Sources of Pollution

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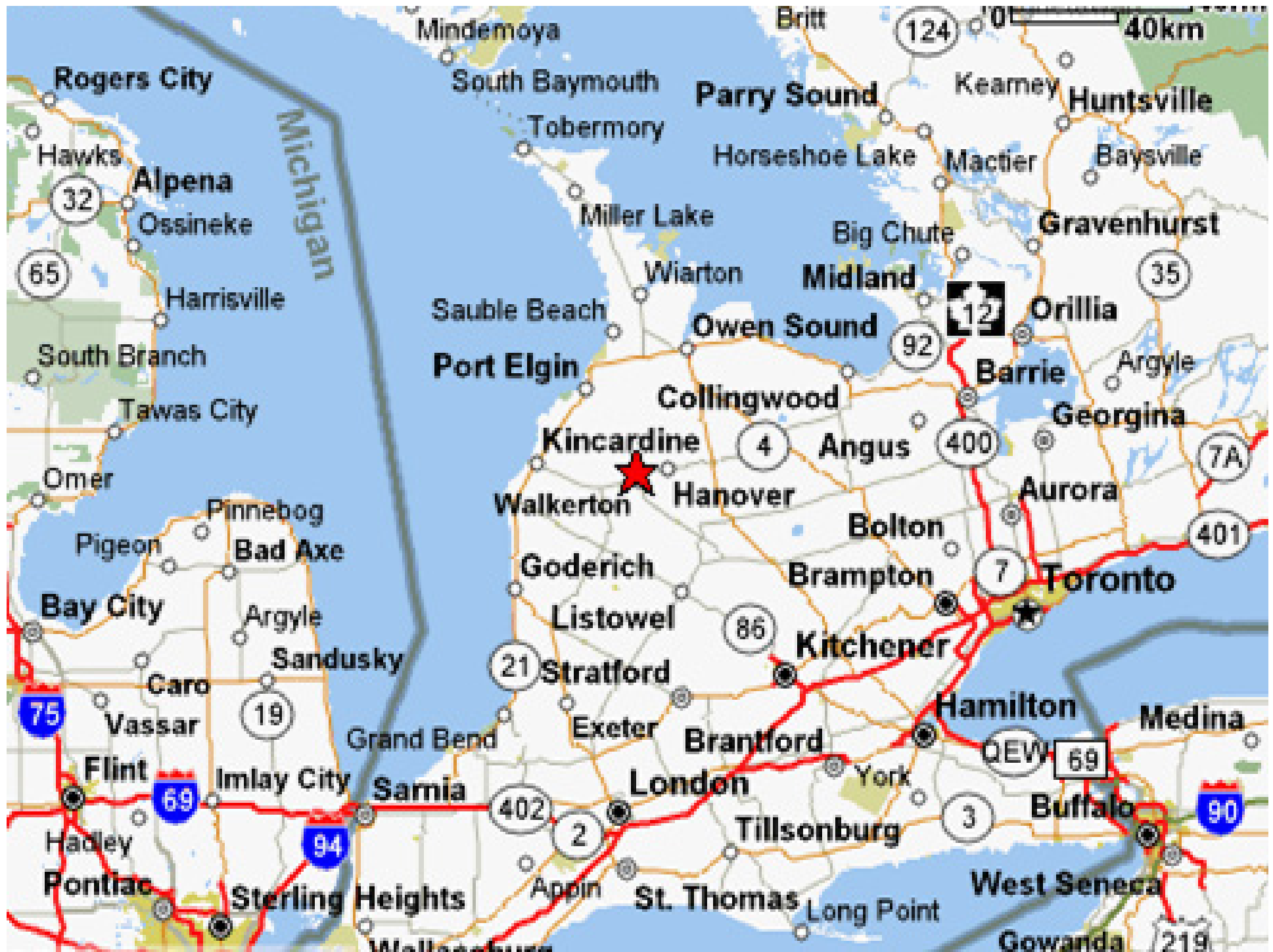
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Summary

- **Agricultural runoff**
- **Urban runoff**
- **Pesticides**
- **Road salt**
- **Boating & Shipping**



Before Walkerton

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Summary

- Ontario had a diverse mix of general legislation, regulation, standards, objectives and guidelines
- Members of the public rarely informed about problems with drinking water supply

Walkerton Tragedy

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Summary

- Spring 2000 (May 24 long weekend)
- Drinking water in Walkerton, Ontario contaminated
- Deadly bacteria:
 - *Escherichia coli* O157:H7
 - *Campylobacter jejuni*

Walkerton Tragedy Outcomes

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Summary

- 7 deaths
- 2300 illnesses
- “Legacy of Walkerton”
- Decreased economic development
- Commission to investigate cause

Walkerton Inquiry Recommendations

Overview

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- 121 Recommendations
- Primary Recommendation – a Multi-Barrier Approach to Protecting Water
 - **1st barrier:** Watershed approach to protection
 - **2nd barrier:** Optimization treatment processes
 - **3rd barrier:** Efficient filtration
 - **Final barrier:** Adequate, standardized disinfection

Why a Watershed Approach?

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Summary

- A watershed is an area of land from which all water drains into a common waterbody such as a lake or river.
- Conservation authorities:
 “what we do on the land affects our water”
- Therefore, carry out activities in the watershed in ways that cause least amount of harm to environment

What is a Watershed-based Source Protection Plan?

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Summary

- Terms of Reference
- Multistakeholder (public involvement)
- Define area; Define threats; Define goals
- Map the area
- Rank threats
- Create plan to address threats
- Implement plan
- Monitor and report progress
- Review Plan

Source Protection Principles

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Summary

- **Sustainability** - Water is essential for health and ecosystems
- **Land uses** – Plans must consider historical, existing, future land uses
- **Comprehensive** – Plans must take a precautionary approach
- **Information** – Plans must always use best available information

What are Ontario's Water Laws?

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Summary

- **2002**
 - **Safe Drinking Water Act**
 - **Sustainable Water & Sewer Systems Act**
 - **Nutrient Management Act**

Safe Drinking Water Act (2002)

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Summary

- **Regulates drinking water and drinking water treatment systems**
- **Intended to address many of the recommendations from Walkerton**
- **Important component of Ontario's overall framework for protecting drinking water**

Sustainable Water & Sewage Systems Act (2002)

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Summary

- requires municipalities to assess the full costs of their water:
 - \$ source protection costs
 - \$ capital and operating costs
- requires plans for municipalities to charge appropriate rates and generate enough money to pay for adequate sewer and water systems

Nutrient Management Act (2002)

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- Standards for nutrient (manure) management on farms
- Farms prepare nutrient management plans

Drinking Water Source Protection Act (2005)

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Summary

- Proposed June 2004 by MOE
- Government consultations Summer 2004
- Two committees advise Minister of the Environment:
 - **Implementation Committee** - advise on how to implement and fund source protection
 - **Technical Experts Committee** - advise on technical aspects of protecting water
 - CELA sits on the Implementation Committee and observes at the Technical Experts Committee

Environmental Groups & Water Policy

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- CELA active in the Walkerton Inquiry for 2 years
- CELA in partnership with Environmental Defence helped organize 30 environmental groups in Ontario to form a united front on what these groups expect from the Ontario government with respect to water protection

Environmental Groups & Water Policy

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- **Smaller groups can get involved at the local level as more information becomes available for their watershed**
- **Membership on local Source Protection Planning Committees**
- **Continue to voice concerns to Ministry of Environment at the policy level**

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- Water becoming most important resource
- Must protect water we have now, in terms of **quality** and **quantity**
- Conservation and environmental practices help, but we need **provincial legislation** to make these practices mandatory
- Drinking Water Source Protection Act should provide a good framework for better water protection in Ontario

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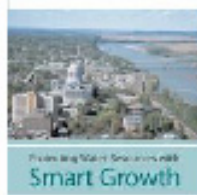
WHAT IS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION?

Source water protection means protecting the systems (including watersheds, rivers, lakes and aquifers) on which we ultimately depend for water.

Many of our water sources are being depleted through over-consumption, wasteful practices, and a lack of understanding about how much water is available. They are also being degraded by toxic pollution and the destruction of natural areas.

Protecting the quality and quantity of water at its source is the only way to ensure it stays safe and healthy for the people and environments that depend on it.

FEATURES



[Protecting Water Resources with Smart Growth](#)

This new report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency compiles 75 policies designed to protect water resources and implement smart growth.

LATEST NEWS



Federal committee to study Annex agreements ... [more](#)



Provincial Council on drinking water requests public input ... [more](#)



New legislative session means busy fall for water protection ... [more](#)



Environmental community releases Statement of Expectations on source water protection ... [more](#)

<http://www.thewaterhole.ca>

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- CELA in the Courts
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- Who We Are
- Objectives

Assessment Process

Collection of materials regarding Sutcliffe v. Ontario (Minister of the Environment)

Water Source Protection

Collection of materials about protecting drinking water sources

Energy Costs and Low Income Ontario Residents

Collection of materials related to energy conservation and affordable electricity pricing in Ontario

Nuclear Phase-Out

News & Events

29 2004
Women contaminated with toxic flame retardants

Sep 28 2004
Report Undermines Protection of Public Health, Safety and Environment, Groups Say

Sep 9 2004
Mohawks and Residents' Group take Napanee Dump Battle to the Supreme Court of Canada

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