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## **MEDIA RELEASE- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **CONSERVATION ONTARIO READY TO TAKE IMPORTANT NEXT STEP IN PROTECTING ONTARIO'S WATER**

NEWMARKET July 5, 2007 – With the Clean Water Act and its first set of regulations officially in force as of July 3, 2007, Conservation Ontario and its member Conservation Authorities are eager to start forming local Source Protection Committees.

“The Clean Water Act is essential to protecting Ontario’s drinking water sources”, said Dick Hibma, Chair of Conservation Ontario. “With the first set of regulations in place, those conservation authorities tasked with the role of forming local source protection committees can begin to recruit committee members.”

Over the summer and fall, 19 Source Protection Committees will be formed across the province and will, according to the new regulation, include local membership from municipalities, landowners, industry, business, First Nations, environmental groups and other stakeholders. Committee members will work together to build source protection plans and ensure their municipal sources of drinking water are properly protected.

“There are strong economic, public health and environmental benefits to ensuring clean and plentiful sources of drinking water,” said Hibma. “Our member authorities are eager to get to work now that the first set of regulations are in place.”

In addition to the regulation outlining the details of the Source Protection Committee formation, four other regulations came into effect this week. One of these includes the regulation that formally defines the boundaries of Source Protection Areas and Regions for which Source Protection Plans will be created and another that details the terms of reference each committee must create. Sixteen further regulations are scheduled to be drafted this fall and passed in late 2007 and early 2008.

Since the tragedy at Walkerton in May 2000, Conservation Ontario and its member Authorities have worked with the province and other stakeholders, including municipalities and the farming community, to provide expertise in developing the best approach to source water protection. Source water protection builds on past science and studies and links directly to the water management programs Conservation Authorities and their partner municipalities have been doing for years.

Conservation Ontario represents Ontario’s 36 Conservation Authorities, local, community-based environmental organizations that manage natural resources with a particular emphasis on water. Conservation authorities have a strong track record of partnering with municipal, provincial and federal governments in developing practical solutions to watershed issues.

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### **For More Information:**

[www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)

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