



Media Release – For Immediate Release

Minden the final stop for drinking water protection workshop

(Minden, Ontario, February 29, 2008) Minden is the final stop for a workshop on drinking water protection, taking place this Thursday, March 6th at the Royal Canadian Legion (Hwy 35 and 21). More than 40 people have already attended in Fenelon Falls and Little Britain.

Property owners will have an opportunity to learn how septic system and well improvements, runoff protection and pollution prevention are the best ways to protect private and municipal drinking water supplies, in addition to finding out about grants that are available for eligible projects.

Money has been made available through the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Source Protection Early Actions Stewardship Fund. This fund is part of the government's commitment to safe drinking water, in conjunction with the Clean Water Act that was initiated after seven people died and many others became ill from contaminated drinking water in Walkerton, Ontario in 2000.

Projects that are eligible for the grants must be within 100 metres of a municipal wellhead or 200 metres of a municipal surface water intake, which is the end of a pipe that draws water from a river or lake. The grants could cover as much as 70% of the costs of each eligible project or an amount up to \$20,000. Small businesses may also be eligible for pollution prevention review grants that cover up to 100% of the cost or an amount up to \$12,000.

Mark Majchrowski, Kawartha Conservation Director of Watershed Management, Robert Romberg, Minden Hills Environmental and Property Operations Manager, Tom Reddering from the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, and Brenda Ibey from Well Aware, will go into detail about drinking water distribution, how property owners can protect their drinking water and how to access the grants.

Clarke Watson of G. Hart and Sons Well Drilling Ltd. and Nicole Tuyten from the Haliburton Stewardship Council will also be on hand to answer questions and connect landowners with other funding programs.

"Our actions on the land have the potential to affect the quality of the water that flows into our homes," says Majchrowski. "People can learn where their drinking water comes from, where it goes, how to protect it and if they can receive grant money for protection projects."

Some of the key points explained in the workshop include the following:

- Septic systems that are not maintained can cause contamination of drinking water sources and lead to serious environmental and health problems. It is necessary to repair, upgrade or replace part or all of faulty or malfunctioning septic systems.
- Unsealed, abandoned wells and improperly sealed or maintained house, business, institutional and farm wells provide a direct link between surface pollutants and groundwater. Pollutants that get into these wells go down through the earth right into the groundwater. Identifying and sealing these wells by a licensed professional reduces the risk of contamination to groundwater and watersheds.
- Water runoff after a heavy rainfall can carry sediments and pollutants from lawns, driveways and farm fields into unsealed wells, rivers, lakes and water intakes (the end of pipes in lakes and rivers). Well-vegetated stream banks and buffer strips such as tall grass around sealed wells reduce the amount of contaminants and sediment that reach drinking water sources.

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"The provincial government is recognizing that we each have a stake in good drinking water, and must take steps to reduce the risks by addressing potential threats," says Majchrowski. "This is an opportunity for the public to become involved in the future of our water quality and quantity. No matter where you are located, whether or not you are close to a municipal water intake or wellhead, it is important to take steps to protect vulnerable ground and surface water resources."

Property owners who are unable to attend the workshop are encouraged to contact Sasha Lambrinos at Kawartha Conservation for more information about how to protect their drinking water. She can be reached at slambrinos@kawarthaconservation.com or 705-324-2271 ext. 224. Information can also be found at www.trentsourceprotection.on.ca.

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For more information or to arrange interviews, contact Brent Kulba, Kawartha Conservation Communications Specialist, (705) 328-2271 x 220, bkulba@kawarthaconservation.com

***Kawartha Conservation** is a watershed-based environmental organization focused on providing abundant clean water within a healthy landscape. It is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario providing natural resources management. The natural boundaries of the Kawartha Watershed intersect the City of Kawartha Lakes; Township of Scugog; Township of Brock; Municipality of Clarington; Township of Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Township of Cavan-Monaghan.*

www.kawarthaconservation.com

Background

Simple things you can do to protect your drinking water quality and quantity:

- Maintain your septic system by having it checked every 2-3 years and make any needed repairs
- Take hazardous waste, such as paint, to a hazardous waste disposal facility instead of pouring it down the drain
- Switch to environmentally friendly soap, cleaner, detergent and bleach, and use only as much as you need
- Save water and keep soap out of storm sewers by washing your car at a car wash, which uses less water than washing it at home and properly disposes of used, soapy water
- Have well water tested once every season to identify any problems and ensure good water quality
- Have all wells on your property capped or sealed by a professional to prevent contaminants from getting into them
- Use less water by installing conserving devices on shower heads, taps and appliances
- Use less water by installing a rain barrel to collect water for the lawn and garden
- Use environmentally friendly alternatives to dangerous chemical pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides
- Clean up pet waste regularly to prevent contaminating water runoff into storm sewers and streams
- Mow the grass 3 inches or greater to help reduce rainwater runoff and absorb contaminants
- Maintain a permanent grass buffer at least 3 metres around sealed wells to prevent contaminants from reaching the wellhead
- Leave a 5 metre buffer strip near the water's edge to reduce erosion and absorb contaminants before entering the water