

Item 7.1

Section I – Items for the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority
Friday, April 30, 2021 Meeting

FROM: Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

RE: **ANNUAL REPORT (2020) – DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

KEY ISSUE

Endorsement of the Annual Progress Report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks that implementation progress of the Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Plan was progressing well, but short of target, between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Credit Valley-Toronto and Region-Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Region staff prepared a summary of the progress in 2020 with respect to implementation of the CTC Source Protection Plan;

AND WHEREAS the CTC Source Protection Committee endorsed the 2020 Annual Progress Report with comments;

THEREFORE, LET BE IT RESOLVED THAT the report entitled Annual Reporting (2020) – Drinking Water Source Protection Program be received;

THAT the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority (TRSPA) endorse the recommendation of the CTC Source Protection Committee to report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) that implementation progress of the CTC Source Protection Plan is progressing well, but short of target;

AND FURTHER THAT that Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff work with staff from Credit Valley Conservation Authority to submit the Annual Progress Report to the MECP with accompanying documents, as required.

BACKGROUND

The CTC Source Protection Plan (the Plan) came into effect December 31, 2015, providing a framework of policies to protect the quality and quantity of the source waters for municipal drinking water systems located in the CTC Source Protection Region. The objectives of the Plan are:

1. To protect existing and future drinking water sources in the CTC Source Protection Region; and
2. To ensure that existing activities cease to be, or do not become, significant drinking water threats, and that new activities never become significant drinking water threats.

Source Protection Authorities (SPAs) are required to submit annual reports on Plan implementation progress to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) under section 46 of the *Clean Water Act 2006* (CWA). The report on 2020 implementation progress will be the fourth such report since the Plan came into effect.

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Annual progress reports are prepared using data provided by municipalities and provincial ministries as required by the monitoring policies in the Plan and in accordance with section 81 of the CWA and section 65 of Ontario Regulation 287/07. Municipal and provincial reports are required to be submitted to the SPA annually by February 1st and reflect implementation efforts from the previous calendar year, January 1 to December 31, 2020.

Staff aggregate and evaluate implementation data to populate two reporting templates provided by the MECP: 1) a summary-level annual progress report and 2) a more detailed supplemental form. Staff summarized the content of these reports and presented this information to the CTC Source Protection Committee (Committee) on March 23, 2021. The Committee is required to review and comment on the extent to which, in its opinion, the objectives set out in the Plan are being achieved. Comments received from the Committee (Attachment 2) are being presented to the Credit Valley, Central Lake Ontario, and Toronto and Region Source Protection Authorities for endorsement in April 2021, prior to submission of the annual progress report to the Province by May 1, 2021.

RATIONALE

The MECP provides three standard options for Source Protection Committees to select from in commenting on the extent to which the objectives of the Plan are being achieved: 1) progressing well/on target; 2) satisfactory; or 3) limited progress. At Meeting #2/21 held on March 23, 2021, the Committee indicated that Plan implementation is progressing well, but short of target, consistent with the modified language used to describe 2019 implementation progress.

At the time the Plan was made effective in 2015, 10,583 significant drinking water threats were identified in the CTC Source Protection Region (CTC SPR). Since then, field verification has reduced that number to 6,077 significant threats. At the end of the current reporting period, only 362 (about 6%) significant threats remain to be addressed, down from 424 at the end of 2019. Further, 96% of legally binding policies to address significant drinking water threats have been implemented and all municipalities in the CTC SPR have established processes to ensure that land use planning decisions conform to the Plan.

As a result, the Committee determined that implementation of the Plan is progressing well overall. However, the Committee expressed concern regarding rising chloride and sodium concentrations in some municipal supply wells as well as the limited progress made in 2020 in negotiating risk management plans and inspecting septic systems.

Outstanding significant drinking water threats are predominantly associated with application of road salt; livestock grazing, pasturing, or outdoor confinement areas; and agricultural source materials. Of the remaining 362 significant threats, 360 are in the Credit Valley Source Protection Area (CVSPA), and 2 are in the TRSPA. The distribution of existing significant threats across the CTC SPR is as follows:

- Town of Mono - 6 threats,
- Township of Amaranth – 4 threats,
- Region of Peel – 10 threats (including those enumerated in 2019 for a new drinking water well in Alton),
- Region of Halton – 215 threats,
- Town of Orangeville – 95 threats,
- Town of Erin – 30 threats,
- Township of East Garafraxa – no threats.
- York Region – 2 threats

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Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of significant threats that remain to be addressed by municipality. As no significant prescribed drinking water threats were originally identified for the City of Toronto, that municipality does not appear in the figure.

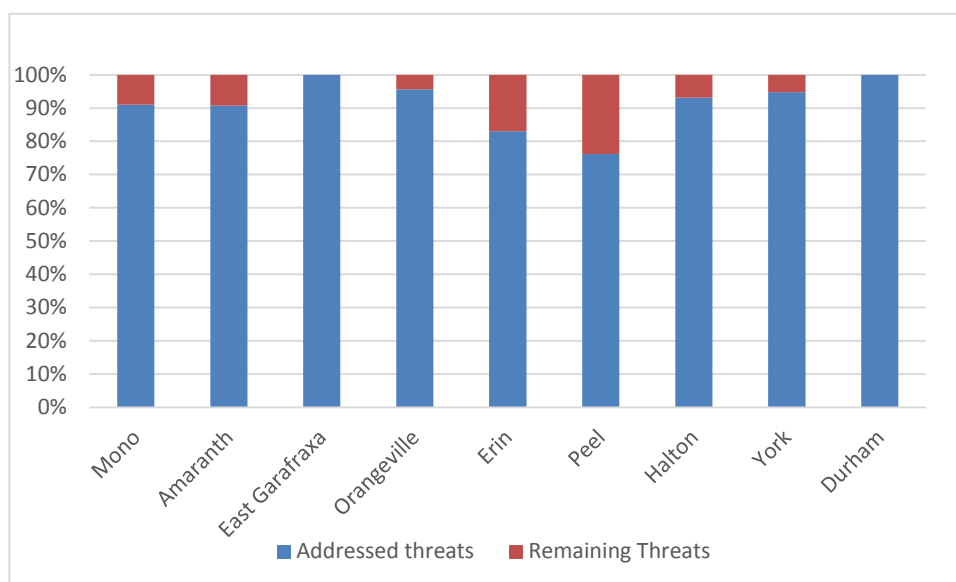


Figure 1: Proportion of significant drinking water threats that remain to be addressed as of December 31, 2020.

Most of the outstanding significant threats will be addressed through risk management plans (RMPs) negotiated with property owners and businesses by municipal Risk Management Officials. Following a request by the Committee in 2020, the MECP approved a 3-year extension to the December 31, 2020 deadline to complete RMPs for existing significant threats. Municipalities have prepared work plans to achieve the new December 31, 2023 deadline. Implementation challenges identified by municipal staff include the time-consuming nature of the threat verification and RMP negotiation process, the priority placed on RMPs initiated through the land use planning and building permit process, and additional complexities in negotiating agricultural RMPs (seasonal availability, multiple threats, regulatory burden).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic constrained the ability of municipal risk management officials to engage property and business owners, conduct site visits, and perform RMP and septic system inspections. With continued pandemic impacts, substantive effort will be required to complete an estimated 205 RMPs by the December 31, 2023 deadline.

For these reasons, the Committee concluded progress in achieving the Plan's objectives falls short of target.

The plain-language annual progress report (Attachment 1) includes a more complete summary of Plan implementation progress by implementing body and policy tool. The annual report is accompanied by comments provided from the Source Protection Committee to the TRSPA (Attachment 2). The TRSPA may, at its discretion, submit its own supplementary comments.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 2 – Manage our regional water resources for current and future generations

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FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funding has been provided to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (as the lead Source Protection Authority in the CTC SPR) through a transfer payment agreement with the MECP for the April 1, 2020 to March 3, 2021 provincial fiscal year. At Meeting #2/20, held on January 29, 2021, through Res.#SPA6/20, the [TRSPA endorsed](#) the transfer of the lead Source Protection Authority responsibilities from TRCA to Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The Province is in the process of negotiating a new agreement for April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 with CVC that will cover expenses for the CTC SPR. The financial resources to support TRCA staff time to advance and maintain the Drinking Water Source Protection Program are provided through these agreements.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Following endorsement of the annual progress report by the Credit Valley, Toronto and Region, and Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Authorities, staff will submit the annual progress reporting results to the MECP by May 1, 2021. Additionally, staff will post the annual progress report (Attachment 1) on the CTC website (www.ctcswp.ca).

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Date: April 12, 2021

Attachments: 2

Attachment 1: CTC Source Protection Region 2020 Annual Progress Report

Attachment 2: Correspondence from Douglas Wright, Chair, CTC SPC