



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Province-wide education blitz encourages Ontarians to learn what drinking water protection zone signs mean

NEWMARKET (October 5, 2021) Starting on October 7, Conservation Ontario and local source protection authorities and regions will launch a three-week public information campaign about drinking water protection zone signs. New education tools include a song, music video, social media posts and an online mapping application about signs across Ontario.

“If you’ve happened to see signs along your local highways saying ‘drinking water protection zone’ and you don’t know what they mean, our campaign will help to clear that up,” said Deborah Balika, Conservation Ontario’s Source Water Protection Lead.

Protecting Ontario’s water sources is a critical step in bringing safe municipal drinking water to Ontario residents. There are approximately 1,700 drinking water protection zone signs across Ontario. These signs are the most visible way for Ontarians to know where their municipal drinking water sources are most vulnerable and most in need of protection.

“This outreach program is a fun way to bring attention to the signs and spread the word about the importance of source water protection,” Balika said. “The Drinking Water Source Protection Road Sign Working Group, which includes multiple Conservation Authority staff, enjoyed creating fun, dynamic, and interactive new ways for Ontarians to find out about drinking water source protection and vulnerable areas around municipal wells and intakes. By the end of this campaign, we hope people will know more about these signs, about source water protection, actions that have taken place since 2006 to keep their water safe and clean, and how they can be part of this important work to protect public health.”

Drinking water protection zones are areas, around municipal drinking water sources, where extra protective measures help to reduce risk and keep drinking water safe and clean. Ontario’s municipal



drinking water sources include groundwater (underneath our feet in aquifers, drawn through municipal wells); and surface water (such as Great Lakes and rivers).

Drinking water source protection is one of several barriers, or 'lines of defence,' that help to protect drinking water in the Province. Other barriers of protection include monitoring, distribution, and the Three Ts (treatment; testing; and training of water operators).

Drinking water source protection is possible in Ontario through the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Local source protection committees include representatives of many interests. These committees have developed source protection plans at the local level and the plans have been approved by the Province of Ontario. The source protection plans include policies that reduce risk to our municipal drinking water sources in order to keep drinking water safe and clean for Ontarians.

To learn more about drinking water source protection in Ontario, please visit the Conservation Ontario source water protection webpage <https://www.protectingwatermatters.ca/> and the Province of Ontario source protection webpage <https://www.ontario.ca/page/source-protection>.

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