

An Evaluation of Water Resource Monitoring Efforts in Support of Agricultural Stewardship in Watersheds of the Great Lakes Basin

Submitted to Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Great Lakes Program, February 2009



The funding for this project was provided by the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. The views expressed in this report are the views of the Recipient alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.



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Executive Summary

On May 15, 2008 a multi-agency workshop was held to identify successful water resource monitoring initiatives, and to analyze how these programs can provide effective, relevant information for agricultural stewardship programming in Ontario's Great Lakes basin. Water monitoring programs provide information that is key to designing, implementing and evaluating agricultural stewardship programs. This report highlights outcomes from the workshop and recommendations for water resource monitoring, data sharing, information transfer and communication, as well as funding.

The workshop attendees were very positive about the value of multi-stakeholder groups coming together to discuss water resources and stewardship, as well as the need for ongoing opportunities to do this. Participants strongly recommended improved communication and information transfer on a practical level to meet the needs of practitioners of both watershed monitoring and stewardship programming.

It was recognized that more coordinated and targeted water resource monitoring is required to assess the benefits of ongoing agricultural stewardship programs and to address new and emerging concerns. Building on existing programs and partnerships was seen as an efficient approach. As such, current mandates and scales of existing monitoring activities can be improved to supply information for the effective design, implementation and evaluation of agricultural stewardship programs.





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Acknowledgement goes to the valuable contribution of the 32 participants in the May 15, 2008 workshop representing agencies and organizations committed to agricultural stewardship and water resource monitoring programs (see Appendix C for session participants).

This report was prepared for OMAFRA by Karen Maaskant, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, and Jo-Anne Rzakdi, Conservation Ontario.