

What is source water?

Source water is water from any natural source. There are two types of source water: surface water and groundwater.



Surface water includes oceans, lakes, rivers, streams, ponds and springs. About 80% of Ontario residents get their drinking water from surface water.

Groundwater is source water that collects below the ground within openings in soil, sand and rock, in aquifers. An aquifer can yield a tiny trickle of water or a body of water as large as a lake.

The government of Ontario is undertaking initiatives to protect our drinking water and to strengthen the infrastructure of treatment plants and pipes that supply it.

To learn more about the *Clean Water Act*, investments in water infrastructure, and efforts to protect the Great Lakes, visit www.ene.gov.on.ca/water or call

1-800-565-4923

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Protecting water at its source

Protecting our environment.



Protecting our environment.



All water is connected. It must be protected.

Water is our most precious natural resource. But our water supply is finite and very sensitive to contamination from human activity. Access to safe, clean water is necessary for the health of our families, the ecosystem and the economy. Each of us must do our part to protect and preserve the quality and quantity of our water, particularly at its source. Every time we use it we must never forget: all water is connected and we are all connected to water.



Threats to our source water

Most water contamination is the result of human activity. Agriculture, industry and urban development can all adversely affect the quality and quantity of our surface and groundwater.



Water contamination can happen in one of two ways.

Point source pollution enters the water system at a specific place from an identifiable source. This includes industrial discharges, oil and chemical spills, wastewater discharges from municipal sewage treatment plants and septic systems, or leaking storage tanks.

Non-point source pollution is caused when rain or snow runs over land and picks up natural and man-made pollutants before entering a body of water or an aquifer. Examples include agricultural runoff (manure, pesticides and fertilizers) and urban runoff from streets and sidewalks (oil, salt, pesticides, pet droppings, chemicals, litter).

The *Clean Water Act*

To prevent our drinking water from being polluted at its source, Ontario passed the *Clean Water Act*. This legislation will help prevent contamination, to reduce the risk to our health or the need for costly cleanup.

It takes a village...

or a town, or a hamlet – this issue affects every Ontario resident. All communities can play a part in keeping pollutants from entering our lakes, rivers and aquifers. Every community will consult and develop its own individualized plan to protect its drinking water source because no two watersheds are the same. Local municipalities will be able to protect their drinking water sources by:

- identifying threats to water quality and quantity
- taking action on existing and potential threats
- involving the whole community in finding effective solutions

