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# Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program

Greater Sudbury residents who own property near a municipal well or surface water intake have the opportunity to help protect local drinking water supplies by applying for funding under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP).

The ODWSP was established under the *Clean Water Act* 2006 to provide financial assistance to property owners in areas that may be affected by the Act. Coordinated locally by the Nickel District Conservation Authority, the program provides funding for early-action projects that assist in protecting municipal water supplies from contamination.

Funding under the program is available in four key areas: Well Decommissioning and Upgrading, Septic System Inspections and Upgrades, Runoff and Erosion Protection and Pollution

Prevention Surveys for Small Businesses.

The eligible area for funding under the Drinking Water Stewardship Program includes homes, properties and businesses located within the two-year time-of-travel\* around a municipal well or within 200 metres of a drinking water intake. Property owners and businesses within these areas will receive an information package in the mail this summer informing them of their eligibility for funding.

Projects eligible under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program that began after September 19, 2006, can be funded retroactively. The application deadline is August 30, 2009, and eligible projects must be completed by September 30, 2009.

\*Time-of-Travel is the length of time it takes ground-water to travel a specified horizontal distance.

## Terms of Reference Approved

The Greater Sudbury Source Protection Area Terms of Reference were approved by the Minister of the Environment on June 8, 2009.

The Terms of Reference document provides:

- Information on and maps of our sources of municipal drinking water
- Information on the *Clean Water Act*, 2006
- Requirements for developing a source protection plan
- Estimated timelines until 2012

- An outline of responsibilities for developing the plan.

The Terms of Reference can be viewed on our website or the Environmental Bill of Rights website at [www.ebr.on.ca](http://www.ebr.on.ca)

The Source Protection Committee is now working on the Assessment Report, which includes a threats inventory and assesses risks to municipal drinking water sources. Members of the community will have an opportunity to comment on the Draft Assessment Report before it is submitted in June 2010.

# Monitoring Blue-Green Algae on Ramsey Lake

The second largest city-contained lake in the world, Ramsey Lake plays an integral role in the lives of Greater Sudbury residents. As a major source of the municipality's drinking water, Ramsey is home to approximately 1,000 residential properties, beaches, boat launches and, last September, a blue-green algae bloom.

Blue-green algae (*cyanobacteria*) are microscopic bacteria, low numbers of which are commonly present in water bodies. Certain conditions can cause the population to multiply rapidly, forming a large mass called a "bloom." Factors contributing to a bloom can include warm temperature, sunlight, phosphorus and nitrogen.

The cause of last year's bloom on Ramsey Lake was not determined, although several factors were identified that could have contributed to it. In response to the need to better understand blue-green algae in Ramsey Lake, the Nickel District Conservation Authority is implementing a two-year Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program on Ramsey Lake

to help better understand the causes of the blooms.

Through a partnership with the biology department at Laurentian University, Anoop Naik, a field technician who recently joined the Drinking Water Source Protection team, and Masters student Jaimee Bradley, will conduct the monitoring work on Ramsey Lake. Their work includes sampling for general water quality and chemistry at key locations across the lake. Jaimee's Masters studies and thesis will focus on blue-green algae in Ramsey Lake.

In addition to the monitoring program, the Ramsey Lake Algae Watch Program will be launched on a trial basis this summer. Through this program, residents living near Ramsey Lake will be provided with the knowledge required to help monitor the lake for blooms and report any potential blooms. The information provided by Ramsey Lake "Algae Watchers" will assist the monitoring team in their work and enable residents to become more conscious of their lake and its health.

The Algae Watch Program is being launched on a trial basis for Ramsey Lake only; however, residents on all lakes within Greater Sudbury are encouraged to monitor their lake and take an active role in protecting it from risks for current and future uses.

More information about the Algae Watch Program will be posted on [www.sourcewatersudbury.ca](http://www.sourcewatersudbury.ca)



Anoop and Jaimee collecting water samples in Junction Creek.

## 2009 Canadian Water Attitudes Study Highlights

The 2009 Canadian Water Attitudes Study, commissioned by RBC and Unilever Canada, surveyed over 2,000 adult Canadians in February. The survey, in its second year, looks at Canadians' awareness, perceptions and habits related to freshwater.

Some highlights of the poll include:

- Canadians think they use an average of 66 litres of water each day. Actual average usage is 329 litres.
- Ninety-five per cent believe that it is important to conserve freshwater on a daily basis.
- While 68 per cent of Canadians drink their tap water, only 41 per cent drink it directly from the tap without filtering or boiling first.
- Sixty-six per cent believe that Canada is at risk of freshwater supply shortages.
- Canadians believe the biggest threats to Canada's freshwater supply are runoff pollutants from land to water (19 per cent), mass export of water to the U.S. (17 per cent), illegal dumping of toxins (12 per cent) and mismanagement of water by municipal, provincial and federal governments (12 per cent).
- Freshwater is ranked as the country's most important natural resource by the majority of Canadians (53 per cent), ahead of forests (20 per cent), agriculture/farmland (14 per cent) and oil (eight per cent).
- Water (20 per cent) is the third most concerning environmental issue, behind climate change (43 per cent) and air pollution (21 per cent), that Canadians are most concerned about.

To view more survey results, visit <http://www.rbc.com/environment/bluewater/articles/20090317-waterstudy.html>