

# News Release

## HAPPY WORLD WATER MONITORING DAY!

MANOTICK, October 16, 2006 — Water quality monitoring is one of the key tools used to keep our water safe, healthy and clean for human consumption as well as for a healthy environment. Luckily, October 18 is World Water Monitoring Day giving us all a chance to think however briefly about the network of sampling sites and tests in our local watershed area.

Water quality monitoring is done at three levels. In our watershed, the City of Ottawa (and the Conservation Authorities in areas outside the city) frequently tests our streams, lakes and groundwater for trends or changes in chemistry or biodiversity. This testing is done to monitor the environmental health of our streams and rivers. It is much easier and less expensive to keep water clean in the first place than to treat it for removal of contaminants afterwards. Commonly, samples would be tested for dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, total nitrogen, clarity and possibly other characteristics. The City of Ottawa currently has about 90 baseline water sampling sites plus an additional number of sites (89 in 2006) routinely studied as part of other municipal work. Rideau Valley Conservation Authority tests 104 surface stations and 11 wells regularly plus an intensive sampling schedule on the 45 recreational lakes in the watershed.

Secondly, staff at all municipal drinking water systems carry out regular testing and distribution of drinking water to their citizens. The monitoring strategy is an important aspect in providing the multi-barrier type of drinking water treatment and distribution system. Municipalities are required to test drinking water for a broad range of characteristics including 84 different health-based parameters. This rigorous, daily checking is very important because the tested water is then distributed directly to people's homes for consumption.

The third level of water quality monitoring happens where individual families have private wells that draw water directly from a groundwater aquifer. In this case, it is up to the individual families to ensure that they take their own samples and get their water tested on a regular basis. It is recommended that private well water be tested for bacteria and nitrates three times a year and after major plumbing work. Bacterial testing for private wells is done free of charge by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Again, private well testing is critical because there is simply no other barrier between your family and the water they drink.

Each of us has a role to play in keeping our water safe and clean. For more information on keeping our source water clean or on how to go about testing your family well, please call the LandOwner Resource Centre at 613-692-2390 or 1-800-387-5304. For details on your municipal water testing program, call your municipality or check the website. Drinking water test results for the City of Ottawa and pick-up spots for private well sampling is on the city website at [http://city.ottawa.on.ca/city\\_services/water](http://city.ottawa.on.ca/city_services/water).

And Happy Water Quality Monitoring Day to you all!

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