

# News Release

## THE WATER BUDGET

MANOTICK, August 15, 2006 — Can you imagine taking care of your family without knowing your budget? Knowing how much money is coming in each month, how much you need to spend on various essentials, and how much you can reasonably save for a rainy day? Not knowing would be an invitation to disaster because of the temptation to overspend.

The same holds true for taking care of our local water resources in the Mississippi and Rideau valleys. Specialists in the Source Water Protection program are, for the first time, accounting for and tracking the amounts of water we have to work with in our watersheds. How much water do we get from rain and snow? Where is the water? How does it travel through the valley? How much is stored underground and where? How much do we lose in evaporation and through plants? How much water is now being taken from our rivers, streams, lakes and groundwater reserves? What are the trends?

And it's just like the household budget. The amount coming in to start the process (your income) must equal the total of everything going out (your expenses) plus any change in storage (your savings). Generally, the amount of precipitation equals the amount evaporated or transpired (through plants) plus the surface and groundwater flow out (where the Mississippi and the Rideau join the Ottawa River) plus any water takings plus any change in storage in groundwater, soil moisture or surface volume.

By analysing all this existing information, water specialists will soon understand the “big picture” of our water supplies. More work has to be done to understand local important details such as how each municipal drinking water source gets replenished by new water and how long it takes, seasonal shortages and normal in-stream ecological needs for water, how changing climate may affect our municipal water supplies and how much we need for future drinking needs and how much can be used for other purposes.

With this basic information in hand, the future Source Protection Committee made up of local citizens will be better equipped to guide the development of a Source Protection Plan for municipal water systems in the valleys.

A water budget is one of the main tools needed to effectively manage our water resources into the future. Stay tuned for the results of this important project. The first phase of the conceptual water budget is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

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