

# News Release

## THE WATER CYCLE

MANOTICK, July 14, 2006 — What is the connection between your kitchen faucet, winter snow and clouds in the sky? To water specialists, they would say that all of those things are part of the water cycle. To regular people, it is not that obvious.

The water cycle is a fancy way of describing the constant movement of water in the environment. For example, rain falls onto the ground. But it doesn't stay there. The rain does one of many things when it touches down. It can run off the surface into a body of water like a lake, river or stream. It could filter into the soil and join the "ground water". It could evaporate directly back into the air. It might be taken up by some maple roots and travel through the tree for eventual return to the air. Or, if it's cold enough, it could freeze and lie for months as snow or ice waiting to flow again in the spring.

Let's say the rain runs into a stream which flows into your lake. During the warm summer months, huge amounts of water evaporate from the lake and become clouds again. When they're thick enough, new water droplets (rain) fall again somewhere else and the water cycle starts all over again.

People use the water cycle for many reasons: gardening, watering livestock, fishing on the lake and tourism. But the biggest and most important use is as a source of drinking water for towns and villages in the Mississippi and Rideau valleys.

In our area, we normally get about 850 mm of rain and snow each year. Generally speaking, about 200 mm of that falls as snow. Historically, the rains have been fairly predictable and regularly distributed across all months. But things are changing. Droughts, severe rainstorms, floods and irregular rainfall are becoming more common.

Through the Source Water Protection program, we are now mapping the quantity, quality and movement of water through the two watersheds. It is critical for us to know that the municipal drinking water supplies will be secure even in the face of changing climatic conditions. Understanding the water cycle in our valleys is the first step towards safe, clean and abundant drinking water for everyone.

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More information:  
Sommer Casgrain-Robertson  
Communications Specialist  
Mississippi-Rideau Source Water Protection Office  
(613) 692-3571 ext 1147  
[sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca](mailto:sommer.robertson@mrsourcewater.ca)

