

Water Well Improvement Program

Background

Most rural Ontarians rely on well water for their private water supply. When wells are old, not properly maintained, or poorly installed, they can be direct pathways for groundwater contamination; this poses a significant risk to drinking water sources and human health. Decommissioning and upgrading these wells can reduce this risk by limiting these direct pathways.

This program is designed to provide incentive funding for decommissioning and upgrading private wells within the Saugeen watershed. By participating in this program, you are helping to protect our local aquifers and drinking water sources.

Did you know in Ontario, if a well is not being used or maintained for future use as a well, the owner is required under R.R.O 1990, Regulation 903: WELLS of the *Ontario Water Resources Act* to plug and seal the well. The Water Well Improvement Program is here to help applicants fulfill this obligation.

General Eligibility

To be eligible for funding under this program, applicants must:

- Be a resident of Ontario
- Be the registered owner of a property within the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (SVCA) watershed or if your project is on rented land, you must submit a letter from the property owner giving you permission to undertake the project
- Voluntarily undertake the well decommissioning or upgrade project
- Comply with R.R.O 1990, Regulation 903: WELLS of the *Ontario Water Resources Act*
- Hire a licensed well contractor, who will provide you with an updated Well Record upon completion of the project

Funding is limited to well decommissioning and upgrade projects that will improve or protect our groundwater sources. New wells or well upgrades that will not provide protection for our groundwater sources are not eligible for funding.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the project meets all legal requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Local municipal bylaws
- Provincial and regional highway setbacks

- Drainage Act
- Federal and Provincial Acts
- Canada Farm Building Code
- Ontario Building Code
- Planning and regulation policies of your local conservation authority

Well Head Upgrade Eligible Projects

- Installing a pitless adaptor and filling drilled well pits
- Grading and permanently seeding soil surface to divert water away from well head
- Sealing annular space around well casing
- Upgrading or replacement of casing
- Extending well casing to 16" (40 cm) above finished ground level
- Installing proper well head caps (vermin proof)
- All other upgrades will be reviewed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis

Well Decommissioning Eligible Projects

- Improperly abandoned or unused drinking water wells

How To Apply

Please complete the well decommissioning or upgrade application form available on our website: www.saugeenconservation.ca/well. If you require assistance or prefer a non-digital application, please contact our Environmental Technician at 519-364-1255 ext. 279.

Once an application has been received, SVCA's Environmental Technician will review the application. A confirmation email should be returned within 5 business days of submitting an application, noting whether the application is complete or if additional information is required.

Applications for work completed retroactively will not be accepted.

Site Visits and Proof of Work

All well upgrade projects will require a site visit, before and after, from SVCA's Environmental Technician. For decommissioning projects, a site visit is not required, however before and after photographs are needed before payment will be issued.

Application Process and Timeline

- The application period will open August 12, 2022, at 12:00 pm
- The application period will close September 16, 2022, at 11:59 pm
- Initial review to ensure all applications are complete, will close September 23, 2022
- The Review Committee will meet the week of October 3-7, 2022
- Successful applicants will be announced October 14, 2022
- All projects must be completed by October 31, 2023

Complete applications will be presented to the Review Committee for evaluation. The Review Committee is made up of a member of the SVCA, a representative from the local Drinking Water Source Protection office, and a representative from an Ontario water agency. The Review Committee will approve funding based on potential benefit. Projects with higher potential to improve groundwater quality will be considered first for funding. Please note that funds are limited.

Funding

Approved well head upgrade projects are funded at 80% up to a maximum of \$5,000 per well. Approved decommissioning projects are funded at 100% of up to \$2,500 per well.

All labour and material costs incurred from retaining a licensed contractor are eligible under this program. Personal expenses (i.e., use of personal equipment) will not be considered.

Well upgrades in buildings or the replacement of well pumps and/or water purification treatment systems are not eligible for funding.

Funding will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate. Funding may be combined with other sources provided the total does not exceed 100% of the project expense.

Any applicant who proceeds with a project before it has been approved by the Review Committee has no assurance that financial assistance will be provided.

Completion Period

All projects must be completed by October 31, 2023.

Licensed Well Contractors

A directory of licensed well contractors in Ontario can be found here:
www.ontario.ca/page/find-licenced-well-contractors

Thank you for your interest in keeping drinking water sources safe.

Please reach out with any questions you may have to:

Water Well Improvement Program

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www.saugeenconservation.ca/well

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