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Old, unused private wells in York Region eligible for program

The Rural Clean Water Program (RCWP) offers assistance with upgrading or decommissioning of old and unused private wells that are located in York Region within Toronto and Region Conservation's (TRCA) jurisdiction.

Upgrading or decommissioning an old well is important. Unsealed abandoned water wells and improperly sealed or maintained drinking water wells can potentially provide a direct link between surface pollutants and groundwater. Identifying, and upgrading or decommissioning these types of wells will reduce the risk of contamination to drinking water sources.

?The program's purpose is to protect York's groundwater sources,? said Nadine Abrams, coordinator, Rural Clean Water Program, Toronto and Region Conservation. ?Contamination such as bacteria can easily enter an old well through cracks in the casing or through a broken lid. Old wells, especially those at ground level, provide a direct path for contamination to reach the groundwater table. I encourage any resident who owns a private well to consider applying for program funding to assist with upgrading or decommissioning their well; it's easy to do and you're protecting your family's health and the health of York Region's source water.?

The program is funded by the Region of York and assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. The program is administered by TRCA and each request is evaluated prior to the start of any work. A well upgrade or decommissioning must be carried out by a qualified and licenced well contractor. By law, it is a requirement that a well upgrade or decommissioning is in accordance with Ontario Regulation 903 (standard well abandonment requirements).

If you are a resident of York Region living within TRCA and you have an older or unused well on your property and you would like to upgrade or decommission it, you are eligible for assistance.

Assistance is not available to land developers or for any work that is beyond the standard requirements of a typical well upgrade or abandonment process. For example, flowing wells, wells that are collapsed or require the removal of a large quantity of debris or wells with strong or visible evidence of contamination would not be eligible.

For questions or for more information on the technical and financial assistance offered through the Rural Clean Water Program, please contact Toronto and Region Conservation at 416-661-6600 ext. 5349 or visit www.trca.on.ca/get-involved/stewardship/pri