



SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Ministry of the
Environment,
Conservation and Parks



February 2019

Indigenous Drinking Water Projects Office

Who We Are and What We Do

The Indigenous Drinking Water Projects Office is in Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and we support Indigenous communities in providing safe drinking water on reserve.

IDWPO:

- Undertakes assessments of First Nations drinking water and wastewater systems across Ontario
- Provides advice into the design, construction, operations and maintenance of drinking water systems
- Increases access for First Nations to technical and engineering expertise that exists throughout the ministry
- Builds relationships with Indigenous communities in the province including Tribal Councils and Political Territorial Organizations
- Collaborates with Canada and First Nations on a Trilateral process to address long-term drinking water advisories on reserve
- Coordinates with ministry and First Nations organizations to facilitate training and certification opportunities, in line with Ontario standards, for operators of First Nations drinking water system
- Supports source protection planning in First Nations communities

Indigenous Drinking Water Projects Office

What Are We Doing?

Sustainable Infrastructure



- Assessing existing and proposed infrastructure against Ontario's regulatory framework
- Providing design advice on Trilateral Project Teams
- Supporting development of Operations & Maintenance Business Plans
- Providing advice on Maintenance Management Strategies
- Supporting source protection pilot training program and developing online resources

Operator Training & Certification



- Operators – Entry Level Course and practical exams
- Workshops for Managers and Community Leaders on managing Drinking Water Systems
- Identifying operator training gaps through partnership with First Nation technical representatives and other government partners (Trilateral Working Group)

First Nations Drinking Water

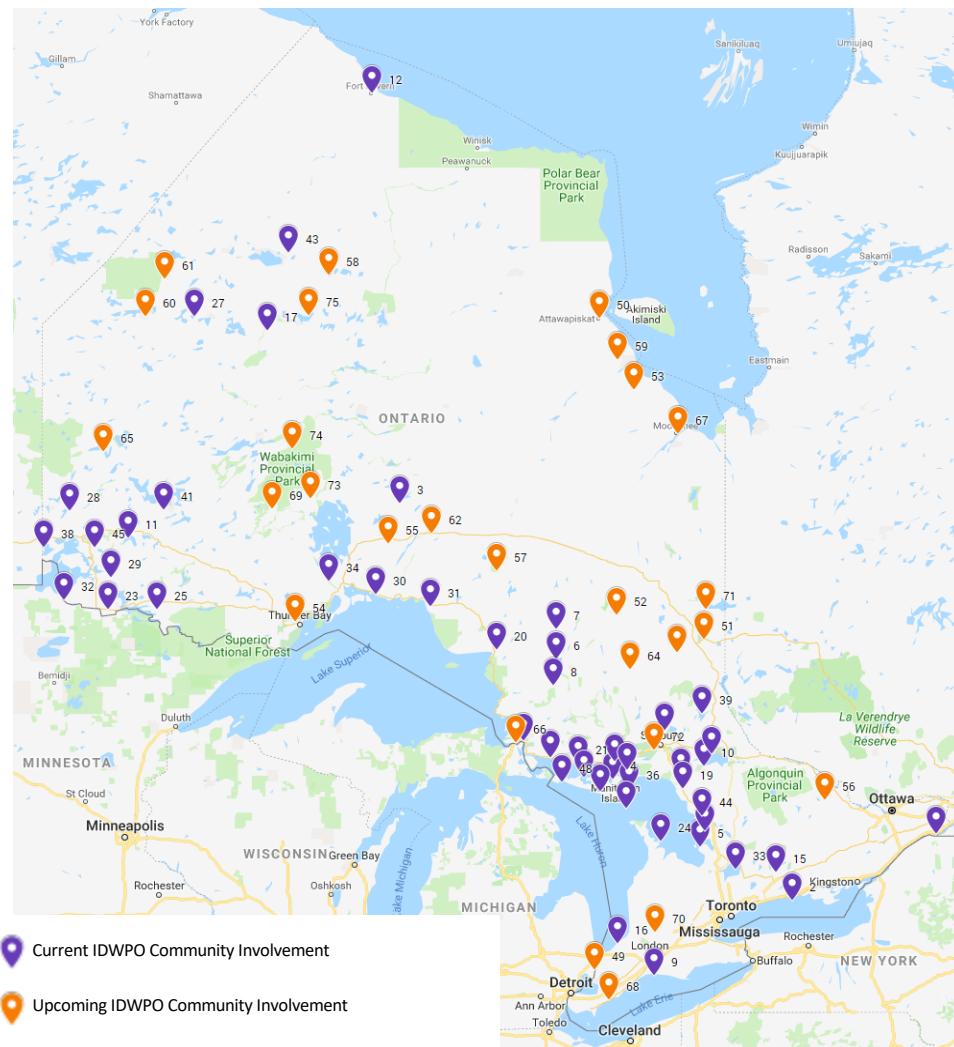
The Regulatory Context

IDWPO has built relationships with Indigenous communities across the province and have been asked to assess systems through the municipal regulatory framework

- Ontario's First Nations are not required to follow the provincial regulatory framework.
- The federal government has a protocol for safe drinking water in First Nations communities; however, this protocol is a guideline and there are no legislated standards that apply to drinking water systems in First Nations communities
- In lieu of any legislated standards for drinking water on reserve, the federal government recommends that the protocol be used in accordance with legislated provincial regulations, if they are more stringent

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Where Are We Working?



IDWPO conducts in-depth on-site assessments of existing drinking water systems with a focus on treatment equipment and processes to identify gaps between the current system and Ontario's municipal regulatory framework.

Reports identifying risks to the system and recommendations to address those risks are provided to community leaders and operators to facilitate discussions with the federal government around funding requirements and to support the development of long-term infrastructure plans in their member communities.

- As of February 2019 assessments have been completed in 56 communities

Ontario's Regulatory Context

What is in Place for Municipalities

Ontario's Regulatory Framework for Municipalities	Purpose
Municipal Drinking Water Quality Management Standard	A resource to support the effective management of Drinking Water Systems
Municipal Drinking Water License	Approval to construct, operate, maintain and manage a Drinking Water System
O. Reg 248	Provides training and certification requirements for water and wastewater systems
Annual Compliance Inspection (O. Reg. 170)	To ensure that the Drinking Water System meets all regulatory requirements
Clean Water Act	Outlines requirements for the development of Source Water and Well Head Protection Plans

Assessments

What Have We Seen?

The summary of common findings from on-site visits with operators and Tribal Council Representatives highlighted that the lack of a framework with clear, achievable requirements hampered their ability to ensure communities continually received safe drinking water:

- Insufficient resources has led to some key equipment (meters, pumps, data recorders, online analyzers, etc.) not being installed and/or being out of service.
- An assessment of the required level of primary disinfection should take place
- Systems should incorporate water quality monitoring and testing which includes alarms, chlorine, turbidity and community lead sampling
- Some systems are lacking backup equipment for critical processes (such as chlorine pumps)
- Majority of systems do not have an operator certified to the level of the system
 - Some systems had neither an Overall Responsible Operator (ORO) or an Operator-In-Charge (OIC)
- Operators identified:
 - the need for more training on sampling and monitoring procedures
 - Site-Specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be developed and maintained.
- Preventative maintenance programs for critical treatment equipment were not in place
- Wellhead Protection and Source Water Protection plans not available

Conclusion What Have We Heard?

In conclusion, we have heard that:

- Clear, achievable requirements are necessary to effectively manage, operate and maintain drinking water systems.
- Sustainable, site-specific resources are critical
- Applying the municipal framework is one pathway to support providing sustainable safe drinking water systems in First Nations Communities.



IDWPO

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