

Clear



*from the ground
to the glass*



10 Points
to Purity

*what we'll do
and when we'll do it*

The health of Islanders, our environment and our economy are all dependant on maintaining the high quality of our water. We are fortunate in Prince Edward Island to have an abundant supply of clean, clear drinking water. As Premier, I am pleased to present this Drinking Water Strategy to protect and enhance this valuable resource now and for the future.



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who is responsible?

As Minister for the Environment, my office is responsible for PEI's drinking water. At the Water Resources Division, we have a team of professionals responsible for the management, protection and enhancement of water resources.

Ultimately though, every Islander has a personal responsibility for protection of our groundwater, since over half the population (57%, the highest proportion in Canada) depend on private wells.

We have reviewed our water policies and developed a comprehensive strategy for protection of our drinking water. The Drinking Water Strategy features an action plan that focuses on "*Ten Points to Purity*", including commitments on "what we'll do and when we'll do it".



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Chester Gillen'.



how pure is our water supply?

Water for every Islander from North Cape to East Point comes from a single “aquifer system”, subdivided into individual groundwater flow systems similar to surface watershed areas. The high quality of our water has been substantiated by independent research.

how vigilant are we in protecting our drinking water?


Standards & Testing

Standards for assessment and testing are based on the national *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. Drinking water is tested on a regular basis in every community served by a municipal water system.

Islanders benefit from a high level of attentive, hands-on management by qualified professionals. We have access to a thorough testing service provided by certified registered technologists at the Provincial Water Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories.

Certification

Operators delivering water to more than 95% of the population served by municipal systems are already certified by the Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Voluntary Certification Program.



can we be certain of our groundwater quality?

Islanders can rely on objective data from the study of municipal wells conducted by the Sierra Club of Canada and the University of Waterloo:

“The results of the survey suggest that drinking water supplied by municipal groundwater wells across PEI is generally of good quality. The fact that the waters sampled are considered to be ‘young’ or ‘recent’ waters (i.e. generated within the last several decades) makes the results even more promising since these waters were recharged during recent decades when extensive use of industrial and agricultural chemicals has taken place. In particular:

- *There were no detections of pesticides.*
- *Inorganic concentrations exceeded levels above those noted in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (GCDWQ) in only two communities, both for lead.*
- *PCE (a solvent) was detected in only one of the wells sampled, at trace levels.*
- *None of the water samples contained levels of trichloroethanes above those noted in the GCDWQ.*

The lack of organic contamination detected in this survey differs from results of more general groundwater quality surveys conducted in this and other countries.”

“ A Survey of the Quality of Municipal Supplies of Drinking Water from Groundwater Sources in PEI ”, Sierra Club of Canada / University of Waterloo, January 2000.

what causes the problems we sometimes hear about?

While it is true that “*drinking water supplied by municipal groundwater wells is generally of good quality*” (*Sierra Club/U. Waterloo Study*), we have to take care of this resource. We need to pay special attention to what goes into groundwater and how we extract it.

Most drinking water problems relate to issues with how we handle water, from well construction through to wastewater treatment.

what are we doing to protect our drinking water for now and the future?

Our ten point strategy uses a “multi-barrier” approach to protecting drinking water from the ground to the glass, including source protection, system design and operation, and monitoring and reporting.

10 Points to Purity

private supplies

- 1 We will invest in public information materials** on planning, construction and maintenance of wells and sewage disposal systems and installation of treatment devices. These will be available through well drillers, sewage contractors and PEI Access sites. **By fall, 2001.**
- 2 We will expand the current Homeowner’s Kit** encouraging owners to keep records for well construction, pump specs, logs of water sampling and equipment repair. **By fall, 2001.**
- 3 We will invest in a field manual** for technical staff to use in site suitability assessment for sewage disposal systems. **By fall, 2001.**
- 4 We will revise regulations governing water wells and sewage disposal systems,** with emphasis

on safety, proper grouting, setbacks from possible sources of contamination and replacement of antiquated and failing septic tanks. **By spring, 2002.**

5 We will update the “site assessment” handbook for use by developers in water and sewer servicing. **By spring, 2002.**

municipal supplies

6 We will develop water monitoring and public reporting regulations for central water supply and wastewater treatment systems, updating guidelines established in 1999. **By spring, 2002.**

7 We will develop Standards and Guidelines for supply, storage, distribution and maintenance of water systems. **By fall, 2002.**

8 We will enforce mandatory certification for water supply and wastewater operators, upgrading from the current voluntary certification. **By spring, 2003.**

9 We will achieve full accreditation by the Standards Council of Canada for our Provincial Water Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories. **By spring, 2003.**

10 We will work with municipalities and land owners in development of a strategy for municipal wellfield protection. **By spring, 2004.**



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