

## Region to host well water info sessions in towns of Milton and Halton Hills

The Halton Region Health Department will host two Well Water Information Sessions next month for people who use private well water supplies.

The sessions are offered to give residents an opportunity to learn about protecting their well water's safety and maintaining their wells.

The first session will take place April 15 at the Limehouse Memorial Hall, 12389 Fifth Line, in Halton Hills. The second will be held April 22 at the Nassagaweya Community Centre, 11264 Guelph Line, in Brookville.

Residents can drop by anytime between 3 and 9 p.m. at either location.

The sessions will allow residents to talk to public health inspectors about well water quality concerns and learn about water treatment systems from local companies that can correct water problems.

They can also have their water tested for nitrate if they bring along one cup of water in a sterilized jar.

The Halton Region Health Department promotes regular well water testing for anyone using water from private wells.

Well water depots are located throughout Halton, where residents can pick up the proper sampling bottles and drop off water samples Monday to Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

In Milton, there's a well water depot at Town Hall, 43 Brown St. There's also one in Lowville at Conservation Halton, 2596 Britannia Rd. W.

It's advised that residents submit water samples for bacteria testing at least twice each year. It's free, and consultations with public health inspectors are always available.

## Water quality grants available to local farmers

Hamilton and Halton farmers are eligible to receive a 50 to 75 per cent grant toward the cost of selected water quality projects that reflect best management practices.

Funded through the Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative (AESI), the program has \$50,000 available to it, which will be administered by the Hamilton and Halton conservation authorities.

Money will be directed to qualified landowners for the implementation of selected best management practices to improve water quality in the Hamilton-Halton watersheds.

The initiative will help farmers respond to specific water quality concerns by providing financial and technical assistance.

Farmers can receive up to \$5,000 per project. The deadline is December 31.

The initiative is a \$10 million, three-year national program funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Working together, the Agricultural Adaptation Council and the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition deliver Ontario's portion of program funding. As well as water quality, the AESI will address soil health, wildlife habitat and biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions.

Local funds are being delivered through the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program, which assists and encourages private landowners to protect, enhance and rehabilitate creeks, streams and natural areas.

"The health of families and farm animals depends on clean water, as does the health of farm businesses and the rural economy," said Jo-Anne Rzdcki, watershed stewardship program coordinator.

The benefits of improved water quality include a safe and secure water supply, a healthy aquatic ecosystem, increased recreational opportunities, sustainable agricultural operations and a vibrant economy, Ms Rzdcki said.

Management practices eligible for AESI funding include: Milkhouse/milking parlour washwater treatment/disposal, constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment, clean water diversion, silo leachate control, farm animal restriction to watercourses, septic system repair, erosion control structures, fragile land retirement, buffer strip establishment, windbreaks and fertilizer, chemical and fuel storage/handling.

One eligibility requirement will be an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) deemed appropriate through peer review. For more EFP information, including dates of upcoming workshops in Halton, call Jonathan Watchurst at (519) 942-1181 or e-mail him at leap@aurocom.com. In Hamilton Wentworth, call Chris Thorpe at (519) 442-6710 or e-mail him at cthorpe@bfree.on.ca.

For more information about AESI, call (905) 648-4427, ext. 164, or (905) 336-1158, ext. 263.

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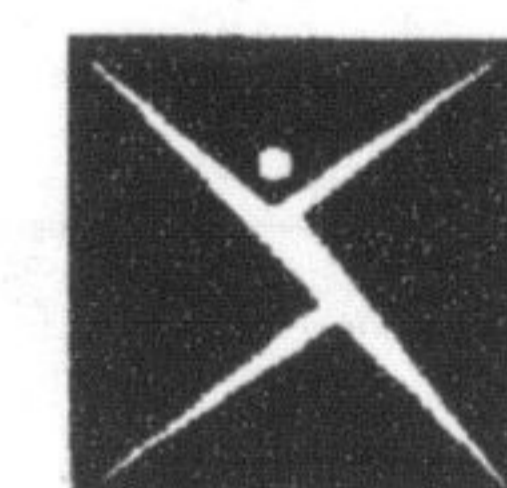
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