

December 5, 2016

Hullcar Aquifer Inter-Ministry Working Group Updates

Core Ministry Team Members:

Director Lead:
Christa Zacharias-Homer
Ministry of Environment
Deputy Director, Regional
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Technical Team Lead:
Orlando Schmidt
Ministry of Agriculture
Regional Manager, Coast
and Interior

Goals of the Inter- Ministry Working Group:

- * To ensure safe drinking water for the residents of Hullcar Aquifer and Steele Springs Water District
- * To build public trust and demonstrate collaboration among Ministries
- * To determine possible sources of nitrate in the Hullcar Aquifer
- * To foster sustainable economic development for the local agrifood sector

Environmental Impact Assessments

Two of the Environmental Impact Assessments required by the issuance of Pollution Prevention and Abatement Orders are complete. The next one is to be submitted mid-December. These reports are being reviewed by the Inter-Ministry Working group and will be available for public viewing on the Hullcar Aquifer Ministry website as the reviews are completed.



Post-Harvest Nitrate Study

Sampling for the first part of the Post-Harvest Nitrate Study is complete. The first part describes 40 fields over or near the Hullcar Aquifer 103 with respect to their levels of post-harvest nitrate, a measure of the soil nitrogen not used by the most recently harvested crop. Sampling started on September 30 and ended on November 4, 2016. The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture is currently drafting a progress report to share interpretations of these results in December 2016. Results will help determine the amount of nitrate that *can* leach from cropped fields over the 2016/17 winter and indicate to growers whether nitrogen can be managed more efficiently on the sampled fields. However, results will not indicate the extent to which nitrate leaching occurred prior to sampling, nor the extent to which nitrate leaching *will* occur over the winter of 2016/17. The second part of the Post-Harvest Nitrate study involves monitoring soil nitrate in closer detail in 4 of the 40 fields, to help determine how much of the post-harvest nitrate remains or leaches between the 2016 and 2017 growing seasons in the area over the Hullcar aquifer.

Draft Phase I Integrated Monitoring Study Complete

The Inter-Ministry Group has received and reviewed a draft of Golder's Phase I report. Comments on the draft have been sent to Golder to include in a final report which will be posted to the Hullcar Aquifer Ministry webpage.

Phase II field assessment is underway with the installation of groundwater monitoring wells, and surface and groundwater sampling in irrigation and domestic wells. Phase II draft report is expected to be complete in February 2017.



Upcoming Public Information Sessions

Stay tuned for more information regarding Public Information Sessions in the new year.

Over the last few months, a significant number of scientific studies and analysis have been conducted to better understand the source, movement and persistence of nitrates in the Hullcar Aquifer 103. These results will be presented in an interactive format in the Hullcar Valley in the new year. Dates and location will be determined soon.

Upcoming dates of interest:

December 12	Next Steele Springs water sample
December 12	Environmental Impact Assessment Due
January TBD	Technical Communications Working Group Meeting
Early 2017	Public Information Sessions

More info can be found at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/site-permitting-compliance/hullcar-aquifer>



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