

October 21, 2016



Hullcar Aquifer Inter-Ministry Working Group Updates

Core Ministry Team Members:

Director Lead:

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Deputy Director, Regional
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Technical Team Lead:

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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

Steele Springs Nitrate Sampling

The Ministry of Environment sampled SSDW overflow on Monday October 17, 2016. This sample collection was coordinated with a similar sample taken by Brian Upper, Co-Chair, SSWB. The Ministry sent its sample to ALS Laboratory, and SSWB sent its sample to CARO Analytics. This is commonly referred to as ‘field split sampling’. This is when samples from the same source are taken at the same time in two different containers. The purpose for this split sample is to verify quality assurance/quality control between samples and laboratories.

Post -Harvest Nitrate Study

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture is in the midst of a new project with the short title, “Post-Harvest Nitrate Study.” The main objectives of this project are twofold: 1) to describe the distribution of 40 fields over Hullcar Aquifer 103 with respect to post-harvest nitrate levels, a measure of the soil nitrogen not used by the recently harvested crop, and 2) to better understand whether nitrate moves down within the 0-90 cm depth from the post-harvest period to May 2017. The approach is adapted from previous soil nutrient studies with similar objectives*. Currently, 32 of 40 fields have been sampled to address objective (1). The sampling crew (contractor) is waiting for ‘nature to cooperate’ before they can sample the other eight fields. ‘Benchmark’ sampling has also begun to address ‘Objective 2’. Soil nitrate has been and will be monitored at selected sites at multiple depths down to 90 cm. The Ministry is providing oversight with the contractor’s activities, and plans to report findings in December 2016 and July 2017.

*Soil Nutrient Studies <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/soil-nutrients/nutrient-management/technical-reports/soil-nutrient-studies>

Integrated Monitoring Study

The Integrated Monitoring Study is well under way in Hullcar Valley. Phase I Report is near completion and the contractor is now working on Phase II. Phase I, the information collection phase was very successful in working with the various agencies, SSWB and the landowners working on environmental impact assessments. The cooperative arrangements included sharing of historic data, sample collection, sample locations and sharing of current sample results.

Planning of Phase II, the Field Assessment stage, has been completed with field work starting soon. The cooperative arrangements continued in this phase with the Integrated Monitoring Contractor, the landowners and their contractors sharing sampling locations and sample data at common locations of interest. This has allowed each party to add additional sites or sample collection to further understand the Hullcar Aquifer. The cooperative arrangements will also extend to the soil samples collected by the landowners, the Integrated Monitoring Study contractor and the Ministry of Agriculture's Post Harvest Soil Nutrient Study.

Did you know?

If you suspect pollution or observe pollution occurring, it should be reported to the RAPP Line. The Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) hotline is a toll free tip line and online service that also allows you to report known or suspected violations of fisheries, wildlife, or environmental protection laws anonymously and without risk of confronting the offender.

Potential violations can also be reported online at:

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm>
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More info can be found at:

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

Upcoming dates of interest:

October 31	Inter-Ministry Working Group Meeting
October 31	DRAFT Environmental Impact Assessment Reports due for Grace-Mar and H.S. Jansen & Sons.
November 2	Technical Communications Working Group Meeting



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