

November 21, 2019

These past few weeks, coordinator Paul Baines has been following water issues in the news, while also participating in a grassroots review of Ontario's bottled water permit policy.

A network of water groups have been trying to limit Nestlé's access to groundwater for years. Led by groups such as the Wellington Water Watchers, this network (which our Blue Communities project is a member of) has been raising awareness about the impacts of the bottled water business and asking for a science, ethics, and rights-based approach for sustainable and just water policy.

Attached is a 2-page information sheet with a [4-page version available on our website](#). These past two weeks have seen major shifts in bottled water policy. Two weeks ago, water protectors were asking for public support to extend the current moratorium on new bottled water permits. One week ago, we found out that the ban would be lifted at the end of 2019, allowing for growth in the industry including a third well for Nestlé near Elora Ontario. The pressure was on to let Jeff Yurek (our Minister of Environment, Conservation, and Parks) know that there are far too many unresolved issues to grant new permits. The moratorium was needed to address water flow science, plastic pollution, the rights, consent, and jurisdiction of Indigenous nations, as well as a groundswell of public opposition. None of these issues have been addressed since the ban started 2 years ago. Then, just days ago, the Provincial government announced it would add another nine months onto the ban. See below for submitting your comments about this extension.

What happened during these two weeks? Environmental Defence launched a petition that gathered 10,000 signatures. The Council of Canadians also launched a petition that gathered 10,000 signatures. Save Our Water in Elora launched a letter writing campaign and Wellington Water Watchers held 4 high profile public events (called All Eyes on Nestlé tour) in four cities and launched a campaign organizing people to phone Minister Yurek (MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London).

Paul Baines will be writing a blog post about his experience at the All Eyes on Nestlé talk in Guelph last week and a follow-up full-day workshop on strategy with an international network of organizers highlighting the damage of the bottled water industry and Nestlé in particular. [You can see the entire Guelph event in this video link](#). This tour also included stops in Toronto, Waterloo, and Hamilton. Maybe you were there? If so, share some of your thoughts and Paul will include them in his blog post. Email him at: blue.communities.now@gmail.com

These past two weeks have also seen an explosion of stories about Canada's lead crisis in tap water and the growing amount of Trihalomethanes (THMs) in our waters, highlighting Tottenham, just north of Toronto.

This update will close with quick links to an upcoming water event in Toronto, a water award to a grade 6 student, and a comedy sketch video about politics of Land Acknowledgements.

Lastly, our project Coordinator has been invited to speak about our Blue Community at several upcoming events. November 27/28 at several Catholic schools in Sudbury. January 11th at the Villa St. Joseph in Cobourg. April 25th in Hayriver, Northwest Territories for the Catholic Women's League. August in Orillia for the SAIL Call to Action event.

Coming in the mail for you are new Water is Life stickers. See the attached image for a peak at the design and in the coming days watch for a package of these arriving at your house.

[Canada's Tap Water Lead Crisis](#)

[Lead water crisis reveals federal government's inaction on water issues](#)

Earlier this week, an investigative report by several media outlets revealed dangerously high levels of lead in tap water across Canada. This investigation took a combined effort from 120 journalists, working at nine universities and 10 media organizations across the country. They reported that millions of Canadians are exposed to this neurotoxin through the aging lead pipes that distribute water from municipal water treatment plant to households across 11 cities.

How does lead get into our drinking water? The water leaving municipal treatment plants is lead-free, but lead enters the water through the network of antiquated lead pipes. These aging pipes are part of the crumbling water and wastewater infrastructure problem that plagues municipalities across the country. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities estimates that municipalities need \$50 billion to upgrade their water and wastewater infrastructure in poor or very poor conditions.

[Listen to this interview at the Big Story Podcast:](#)

A massive Canada-wide investigative project revealed that a third of Canadian homes and schools tested had dangerously high levels of lead contamination in drinking water. While that fact itself is shocking, the reality that it took a team of reporters and scientists months to unearth it is perhaps more troubling. Why is there no central process for testing and reporting contaminants in drinking water? Why do so few people have access to this information? Where was the breakdown in government oversight? And now that we know...what do we do about it?

[How to solve the lead crisis in Canada](#)

What are the next steps to ensure safe drinking water across Canada? First, a single health-based water quality standard and standardized monitoring protocols must be adopted. Second, it is important to identify where lead pipes are present, so consumers can

be informed of the health hazard and their removal can be planned. Third, corrosion control and other strategies to avoid unnecessary water lead exposure must be implemented. Finally, monitoring results and progress of corrective actions must be transparent and shared in real-time, along with appropriate public health guidance.

Trihalomethanes (THMs) in Our Waters

Tottenham

[They complained for years about their water — and were told it was safe. Now Tottenham residents know it's been tainted all along \(with a short video\)](#)

For more than 15 years, politicians and health officials in the township of New Tecumseth have known the tap water in Tottenham, population 5,000, contained suspected carcinogens called Trihalomethanes (THMs), which studies have linked to pregnancy complications, spontaneous abortion, growth retardation, gastrointestinal disease, some cancers and damage to the heart, liver, kidneys and central nervous system.

In Ontario, provincial data shows that since 2016, more than 80 communities have exceeded the provincial limit of 100 ppb, including North Bay, Innisfil, Kawartha Lakes and Timmins.

EVENT

Toronto:

KAIROS Canada is pleased to invite you to a public launch of the Mother Earth & Resource Extraction: Women Defending Land and Water Info Hub (also known as MERE Hub) on Nov. 27 at Ryerson University from 5:20 p.m. onwards.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2683698375031584/>

WATER NEWS

[Climate change and outdated water policy, infrastructure threaten Canadian freshwater](#)

“Canada is not a sustainable water society,” said Corinne Schuster-Wallace, co-author of the report and a professor of water-related human health at the University of Saskatchewan. “We have challenges and they are going to get worse if we don’t do something about them.”

[CANADA: Scientists say fresh water under threat](#)

Overall, water quality is slowly degrading. While 112 of 175 Canadian river monitors showed good or excellent water quality, the changes that have appeared show more declines than improvements. Little is known about many watersheds. Quality data only exists for 67 of 167 sub-watersheds in Canada. Of those, almost two-thirds are rated fair or poor.

Lake Simcoe

[Shanty Bay girl named watershed heroine](#)

Nari Hwang, a Grade 6 student at Shanty Bay Public School, won the Ernie Crossland Young Conservationist Award. Living on the north shore of Lake Simcoe's Kempenfelt Bay, Hwang has made art out of garbage and plastics to bring awareness to the amount of

plastic garbage found in rivers, oceans, lakes and streams, and the negative effect these items have on the environment throughout the world. Hwang is passionate about protecting Lake Simcoe from pollutants and plastics and keeping the lake healthy. She is an avid blogger on her site, Make Clean Water Happen, where she offers tips on reducing one's impact on the environment.

Hamilton

[Hamilton city council, staff have kept a 24-billion litre sewage spill secret](#)

A confidential city report shows councillors have known since January that 24 billion litres of untreated sewage escaped undetected over a four-year period from a massive sewer overflow tank into Chedoke Creek, which runs along Highway 403 into Cootes Paradise. The watery sewage — enough to fill 10,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, or an area of 12 square kilometres to a depth of two metres — seeped out of the tank because a gate had been left partially open for more than four years.

MORE ON THE BOTTLED WATER INDUSTRY

[Ontario proposes to extend water bottling moratorium by 9 months](#)

The moratorium on new and expanded permits to take water for bottling was put in place by the former Liberal government in 2017 after bottled water giant Nestle purchased a well near Guelph that the township of Centre Wellington wanted for its future drinking water supply. The Progressive Conservative government extended it last year, and with the new expiry date of Jan. 1, 2020 looming, the Tories are looking to push that back to Oct. 1, 2020.

[Proposal to extend the current moratorium on water bottling permits](#)

This consultation closes at 11:59 p.m. on: December 18, 2019

More on Nestlé

[Nestlé Says It Can Be Virtuous and Profitable. Is That Even Possible?](#)

In September, Nestlé inaugurated the Institute of Packaging Sciences in Lausanne, which has a goal to ensure that all of the company's packaging will be recyclable or reusable by 2025 and that none of it will end up in landfills or floating in the Pacific. Activists say recycling is not a solution. Experience shows that even recyclable packaging usually winds up being thrown away. Poorer countries lack the necessary infrastructure. The solution is to make packaging reusable, said Graham Forbes, global project leader for Greenpeace's plastics campaign. "If they want to remain viable in the future, they need to embrace the direction young people want to go, which is away from throwaway culture," Mr. Forbes said.

[The fight to stop Nestlé from taking America's water to sell in plastic bottles](#)

Ultimately, the debate's particulars lead back to a question at the heart of issue: should water be commodified and sold by private industry, or is it a basic human right? Former Nestlé chief executive and chairman Peter Brabeck labeled the latter viewpoint "extreme" and called water a "grocery product" that should "have a market value". He later amended

that, arguing 25 liters of water daily is a “human right”, but water used to fill a pool or wash a car shouldn’t be free. At its current pace, the world will run out of freshwater before oil, Brabeck said, and he suggests privatization is the answer.

Comedy

[Land acknowledgement | Baroness von Sketch Show](#)