

# Ogemawahj Tribal Council

## Tribal Council Report Phase II - Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) was retained by the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) to carry out an overall general assessment study of existing water and sewage facilities in First Nation communities with regard to the magnitude and scope of existing and potential problems in terms of health and safety risks.

In mid March and mid April 2001, a representative from OCWA traveled to five of the six communities within the Ogemawahj Tribal Council and met with the facility operators. A site visit of the sixth community was not required because it does not have communal services. At the community visits the Tribal Council Technical Services Advisor was also in attendance.

From interviews with the operators and the completion of questionnaires, information was collected by OCWA and compiled into individual Community Reports, included in Appendix "A". At the time of the visits, walkthrough tours of the facilities were conducted by OCWA and observations were recorded in the reports. This Tribal Council Report summarizes the findings from the Community Reports.

### Community Services

The Ogemawahj community is comprised of six communities. The Alderville and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island communities are located approximately 20 to 45 km south of Peterborough. The Chippewas of Georgina Island community is located on Georgina Island and is approximately 30 km north of Newmarket. The Chippewas of Mnjikaning community is located northeast of Orillia. The Moose Deer Point community is located approximately 30 km south of Parry Sound. The Beausoleil community is located on Christian Island, is accessible by ferry from Cedar Point, and is approximately 30 km northwest of Midland. Based on the Capital Asset Inventory System (CAIS) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) reports, the total on-site Ogemawahj population amounts to 1,731, and there are 831 houses of which:

- 72% of the houses are serviced by communal water systems, including in-ground distribution, 20% are serviced by individual wells, and the balance 8% are serviced by other means; and
- 100 of the houses are serviced by individual septic tanks. There is a communal sewage system in the Chippewas of Mnjikaning community to service the commercial and institutional establishments.

The water treatment facility in the Mississaugas of Scugog Island and Pottawatomi of Moose Deer Point have Class I facilities. Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Beausoleil (Christian Island), Chippewas of Beausoleil (Cedar Point), and Chippewas of Mnjikaning have Class II water treatment facilities.

The sewage treatment facility in the Chippewas of Mnjikaning community is a Class II facility.

### Risk Assessment

It was reported that one Boil Water Advisory had been placed on the Mississaugas of Scugog Island community, but deficiencies were corrected in 2002 and the Boil Water Advisory was removed. Multiple Boil Water Advisories have been placed on the Moose Deer Point community. There was a Boil Water

Advisory on Chippewas of Beausoleil (Cedar Point), but it has also been removed due to upgrades on the system in 2002.

OCWA's assessment identifies the water supply system for the following facility as high risk:

- Pottawatomi of Moose Deer Point because of boil water advisories, UV equipment malfunctions, and total coliform and E. Coli exceedances of treated water.

### **Definition of Risk**

High-risk issues may include non-compliance events, broken or malfunctioning equipment, lack of necessary monitoring equipment, inadequate sampling/testing/reporting, safety issues and lack of operator training. These items should be acted on immediately.

The report also identifies medium risk issues that should be attended to in the short term. These issues include design and capacity assessments, record drawings and manuals, water main valve and hydrant maintenance programs, and backup power supplies.

Long term planning objectives have also been identified in the report. These objectives are to ensure that a support structure is put in place to not only bring the facilities into compliance with approved operating standards, but also through operator training, testing and reporting protocols, planning and capital improvements, to maintain that level of operational excellence. This approach will ensure the long term health and safety of both the communities and the operators while also maintaining the value of the capital assets.

### **Recommendations**

The report recommends immediate action be taken on the high risk issues with attention being given to the medium risk issues. Concurrently, the long term planning issues should be formulated and implemented.

From OCWA's observations in the communities, it is recommended that consideration be given to further studies of the water distribution systems and the sewage collection systems. In addition the individual wells, septic systems and other individual services should also be reviewed on a continuing basis.

The information available through the CAIS and INAC reports was found to be not up to date and/or in agreement. It is recommended that these reports be updated and reconciled.

The foremost recommendation would focus on operator training programs together with a reporting structure to ensure both operating compliance and effective response to changing conditions.