

# SAVE OUR WATER .ca

## What we've won and the Next Steps

In the fall of 2016 the multinational water bottler Nestlé Waters purchased the Middlebrook Well for its water bottling operation when Centre Wellington, the local municipality, attempted to buy it for its drinking water needs. Nestlé wanted a permit from the Ontario government to extract 1.6 million litres a day or over half a billion litres a year from the same aquifer the township relies on for its own water use. This threat to the community made international news. The Middlebrook Well became the line in the sand for water bottling in Ontario.

The Province called a halt to new water permits for bottlers, imposed a moratorium that stretched over 4 years while they reviewed policy, and passed new legislation.

**Now, before a water bottling company can apply to the Province for a new water permit, the company first needs a resolution passed by the local host municipality in support of that permit.**

**This change is a real step forward for the whole province.**

But this is not the end of the story. A water bottler can still apply to take up to 379,000 litres per day without municipal support. This exemption is still too much. Save Our Water and the community plan to keep engaged and stay vigilant regarding this allowance.

**Save Our Water** is a group of residents who are determined that BlueTriton, the new owners of Nestlé Waters, will never be permitted to take water from the Middlebrook Well and that groundwater will be protected as a public trust, now and for future generations. People opposed to commercial water bottling for moral, environmental and economic reasons - farmers concerned about water for crops, business owners relying on water for production, students, young families, private well owners, seniors, faith groups, special interest groups - are appalled by the idea of monetizing a basic of life, water. They are also alarmed by harm to the planet from plastic pollution and climate change related to this industry.

## How You Can Help...

Contact Doug Ford - [doug.ford@pc.ola.org](mailto:doug.ford@pc.ola.org) and your MPP  
**Tell them we need water for future generations**

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. [@www.saveourwater.ca](https://www.saveourwater.ca)



The moratorium that ended on April 1, 2021 changed the rules for water bottlers in Ontario.

Go to  
[SAVEOURWATER.CA](https://www.saveourwater.ca)  
to find out more



# Water taking at the Middlebrook Well, if permitted, will **threaten** Centre Wellington's future water supply

Under Ontario's Places to Grow legislation, the County allocated the lion's share of its growth allocation to Centre Wellington's urban area. These Provincial and County targets mandated Fergus and Elora to double in population by 2041, triggering a water supply deficit and a search for new water sources. Few municipalities in Ontario face this same growth pressure.

## **We cannot grow without water!**

Three comprehensive studies of the township's aquifers and water system conclude:

- The Province's groundwater study has identified Centre Wellington at 'Significant Risk' for future water sources. This means that all consumptive water uses, such as for water bottling, are a 'Significant Threat' to the municipal water supply.
- Centre Wellington now knows it needs more wells to service its future growth than was previously assessed. We must grow from our present 8 wells to 12 wells.
- Historically, Fergus and Elora have had difficulty finding new well sites.
- The optimal source area for Centre Wellington's future water, for both the best quality and most abundant availability, lies west of Elora, where the Middlebrook Well is located.
- Any high-capacity well at Middlebrook eliminates the west side of Elora as a source for future municipal water.

**Commercial water taking at the Middlebrook Well will obstruct the expansion of Centre Wellington's infrastructure that is needed to provide drinking water to residents.**



For the health of the planet it makes no sense to pump this aquifer water, put it in plastic bottles, and truck it as far away as Newfoundland and B.C.

It also makes no sense in a water-vulnerable area to permit competition between a township mandated to grow and a large-scale water bottler.



## Consider a Future with BlueTriton (Nestlé) as your Neighbour...

Sure, there'll be new employment... Likely one part-time position will be created at the Middlebrook well.

The Township will keep about \$9,000 in property taxes on the 5 acre lot.

The volume at stake is up to 1.6 million litres of groundwater every day, close to the amount of water used in all of Elora daily from three municipal wells.

The Township will be forced to locate future wells in areas where there is less reliable quality and capacity, and at a higher cost.

A township with a water issue offers no incentive for business to invest in that municipality. The community needs businesses that create jobs and pay taxes where they use water.

Consider the damage to roads of water trucks each weighing 90,000 lbs! Roads designed to last 20 years will wear out in seven. The Township of Centre Wellington and the County taxpayers will pay for all road and bridge repairs

## And...

Suppose the commercial water extraction were to draw contamination into the aquifer. The Township assumes 100% of the risk.

What about the fee of \$503.71 per million litres that BlueTriton (Nestlé) will pay? This is a levy; it covers only a fraction of the cost of administering the permit. Yes. The taxpayer pays the rest.

For BlueTriton the water is free.

# Save Our Water Speaks up for the Fish!

At this perilous moment in the history of our planet, provincial decision makers are morally and ethically obliged to redefine water use in terms of how much water must remain in the ground to ensure that every creek, river, stream, wetland and aquifer remains capable of sustaining the intricately complex ecosystems dependent upon them.

There is no such thing as zero impact pumping. Current studies of Centre Wellington's groundwater show that cumulative impacts of water taking will negatively affect wetlands.

The ecological trade-offs permitting industry to extract large amounts of water from the watershed represent an existential threat to all creatures deriving life from that water. **Now is the time to declare that groundwater and all freshwater systems have critical ecological value, not just for you, me and our children, but for fins, feathers, furs, fields and forests. FOREVER.**

## Frequently Asked Questions ?

### What are you so worried about anyway?

Save Our Water wants a secure, long-term supply of water for our community and for the ecosystem, for generations to come. The population is slated to double in the Elora and Fergus area, and we see additional water taking for commercial exploitation as a serious and avoidable risk for our future. We believe water should be protected as a public trust.

### Isn't commercial water-taking just a drop in the bucket?

No. The amount proposed for extraction for bottling daily was almost the same amount of water used by the whole of Elora in a given day.

### Isn't there a vast supply of water in this area?

No. All of our municipal water comes from aquifers deep underground, not from rivers or lakes. Aquifers are recharged with rainwater over decades, and this is a finite amount. The Province's Tier 3 water budget study for Centre Wellington identifies this area at Significant Risk for water – the highest risk level.

### Who controls our water?

The provincial government issues permits for the taking of large amounts of groundwater. The municipal government is responsible for ensuring there is enough tap water and keeping that water safe for drinking. The federal government controls the exporting of bulk water out of the country. No one owns the water. It is shared by all living things.

### Where can I get more information?

Visit our website. Go to [saveourwater.ca](http://saveourwater.ca).

### How can I get involved? What can I do?

You can donate, join a parade or march, host a fundraiser, invite speakers to your group, or volunteer some of your time. Learn about the issue. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Share the message. Talk to your neighbours, friends and family. Write to politicians including your MPP, Premier Ford and David Piccini, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

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