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Centreton test well part of provincial system  
*Core samples will be sent to Geological Survey of Canada, as research team  
drills down to bedrock*

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Four hundred and thirty feet down and still drilling: That was the status of the Conservation Authorities Moraine Coalition's (CAMC) test well site just north of Centreton last Wednesday.

The plan is to drill until they hit bedrock, which is expected to happen between 600 and 650 feet. "But it could be deeper, or it could be shallower," said hydrogeologist Steve Davies, senior technical co-ordinator for CAMC, who is overseeing the operation. How long it will take is also hard to predict, although they expect to finish this week. At the beginning, they were going down 100 feet a day, but now it's only about 60 to 70 feet a day. "It gets slower as you go deeper," Davies said, explaining that the drilling operation becomes more complicated, and with hundreds of feet of pipe in the ground, sections can get stuck overnight and require several hours of work to loosen them up before drilling can resume the next morning. "The drilling crew is working 12 to 13 hours a day to keep the pipes freed up," he said.

As against the "brute force" type of drilling used for residential wells, this is a more delicate operation, which Davies compared to diamond drilling. The equipment brings up five-foot lengths of core, which are analyzed and catalogued at the site, and then packaged to be sent to the Geological Survey of Canada's warehouse in Ottawa.

The core samples taken last Wednesday were moraine till, which looked to the untrained eye like so much grey clay, but according to Davies, it's the original material laid down by the glacier. "We're looking at the last 100,000 years of geological time (with this bore hole). The water from the bottom of the well will be equally old, and it will be studied as well, he said.

"We have essentially no information about aquifers below 200 feet (the deepest level of most water wells) in this area," Davies said, explaining that aquifers at depth (as far down as bedrock) have an effect on water at the surface.

This well is the second (the first was in Toronto) of between five and 10 wells CAMC hopes to drill. In addition to providing geological and geophysical (subsurface structure) information, the well will become part of the provincial groundwater monitoring network, which was initiated by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment in co-operation with conservation authorities. According to a press release from Lower Trent Conservation, it will now have 11 monitoring wells within its local network.

The \$50,000 cost of the drilling operation is being shared by MOE, the Ministry of Northern Affairs and Development (Ontario Geological Survey) and CAMC, which is a coalition of four large municipalities (Peel, York, Durham and Toronto) and nine conservation authorities with jurisdiction on the Oak Ridges Moraine, and was formed to provide a comprehensive policy, planning and management approach to sustaining the water and natural heritage resources of the entire moraine.