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Allochthonous sources of iodine and organic carbon in an Eastern Ontario aquifer

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Abstract

Regional geochemical characterization of groundwaters in a bedrock aquifer in the Ottawa – St. Lawrence Lowlands of Eastern Ontario has identified an iodine (I) anomaly, with values regularly exceeding 150 µg/L, and a maximum observed concentration of 10 812 µg/L. The spatial distribution, enrichment mechanisms, and sources of I and organic matter were investigated using geochemical and isotopic data. High-I groundwaters (> 150 µg/L) are prevalent in Na-Cl type groundwaters at low bedrock elevations in areas overlain by thick layers of glacial sediments. I is thought to be linked to massive muds in the glacial sediments overlying the aquifer, deposited during the postglacial incursion of the Champlain Sea 10 – 12 ka BP. Principal component analysis of I and 18 other chemical parameters revealed correlations between I, salinity, and indicators of microbial oxidation of organic matter, suggesting that the intrusion of saline porewaters affected by decomposition of organic matter such as marine phytoplankton in the massive muds is the dominant process controlling I enrichment in groundwater. ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I ratios in the pre-modern waters vary between near marine values of 150 × 10⁻¹⁴ and 5 × 10⁻¹⁴, demonstrating that older, allochthonous I derived from the surrounding Paleozoic sedimentary terrain also contributed to the I pool in the Champlain Sea basin. ¹⁴C ages and δ¹³C signatures for dissolved organic carbon (DOC) in groundwater and disseminated organic carbon within the glaciomarine muds highlight an allochthonous source of terrestrial organic carbon predating the Champlain Sea incursion, likely transported in tandem with I to the Champlain Sea basin via glacial meltwaters.

Keywords: Champlain Sea, Iodine-129, Radiocarbon, Glacial meltwaters, Iodine enrichment

Introduction

Geochemical analysis of shallow groundwaters (<200 mBGS) sampled from residential and monitoring wells in the central St-Lawrence lowlands region in Eastern Ontario by the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) and South Nation Conservation Authority (SNCA) during the summers of 2012, 2013, and 2015 revealed problem areas with anomalously high concentrations of iodine (I) as iodide (I^-) up to 10 812 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (OGS, 2016). I is an essential element for synthesis of thyroid hormones in the human body and an excess or deficiency can be harmful. Chronically high I intake above the proposed upper limit of 1 000 $\mu\text{g/day}$ for adults can increase the risk of hyperthyroidism and goiter (WHO, 2007), and I-rich drinking water in China was shown to contribute to increased incidences of these health issues (Andersen et al., 2008). In China, a threshold I concentration of 150 $\mu\text{g/L}$ in groundwater is used to define areas at risk of excessive I intake (China Ministry of Health, 2003), a guideline which is regularly surpassed in the study area. Although there is currently no drinking water limit for I in Canada (Health Canada, 2017) it is estimated that 15% of the Canadian population between the ages of 3 – 79 have an excessive I intake (Stats Canada, 2013) based on optimal urine concentrations of I required for nutritional sufficiency defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007). Additionally, levels of I in milk from Ontario dairy herds exhibit greater average I concentrations of 345 $\mu\text{g/kg}$ compared to a Canadian average of 304 $\mu\text{g/kg}$ (Castro et al., 2010). In Eastern and Southern Ontario, this phenomenon is thought to be linked to consumption of high-I groundwater by dairy cows (Rogerson et al., 2016).

The phenomenon of I enrichment in groundwater affects many regions in the world including Japan (Kashiwagi et al., 2006; Togo et al., 2016), Denmark (Andersen et al., 2002; Voutchkova et al., 2014; Voutchkova et al., 2017), Canada (Fabryka-Martin et al., 1991;

Hamilton et al., 2015), and China (Zhang et al., 2010; Li et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2013; Duan et al., 2016). In these areas, decomposition of organic matter within marine sediments is typically one of the mechanisms invoked to explain I enrichment in groundwater (Kashiwagi et al., 2006; Li et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2013; Hamilton et al., 2015; Duan et al., 2016). In marine or estuarine environments, I is concentrated into phytoplankton or other plants (Moisan et al., 1994) and correlates with organic matter in marine sediments (Fuge and Johnson, 1986; Malcolm and Price, 1984). The relative I content of sedimentary reservoirs decreases from recent marine sediments (5 – 200 mg/kg) to soils (2 – 15 mg/kg), shales/carbonates (2.3 – 2.7 mg/kg), sandstones (0.8 mg/kg) and finally igneous/metamorphic rocks (0.24 – 0.30 mg/kg), based on values reported in Fuge and Johnson (1986). The St-Lawrence lowlands of Eastern Ontario and southwestern Québec are characterized by thick layers of glaciomarine muds deposited during a post-glacial marine incursion referred to as the Champlain Sea, which occurred from 12 – 10 ka BP (see Geology and Hydrogeology section). It is expected that high I groundwaters in Eastern Ontario are due to the leaching of porewater enriched in I from the decomposition of organic matter within glaciomarine muds. The prevalence of high-I groundwater in Eastern Ontario highlights the need for a better understanding of the factors controlling the spatial variability and release of I, as well as the sources of I and organic carbon in the glaciomarine muds. The objectives of this study were 1) to characterize the hydrogeochemical environments in which naturally high I groundwater ($> 150 \mu\text{g/L}$) is prevalent, 2) identify the link between I and other geochemical parameters using multivariate statistical analysis to evaluate which factors influence I concentrations and 3) apply a stable and radioisotopic dataset to trace the sources of organic carbon and I in the studied aquifer, as they are poorly understood.

Study Area

The study area is situated in the central St. Lawrence Lowlands region of Eastern Ontario at an average elevation of 70 mASL and lies 50 kilometres east of the City of Ottawa, along the southern shore of the Ottawa River (see Figure 1). With a combined population of 32 000 people in 2011 (Stats Canada, 2016), the main study area covers an area close to 1 500 km² and is comprised of two jurisdictions: The Township of Alfred-Plantagenet and the City of Clarence-Rockland. These, in turn, are within the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. Most villages within the study area are serviced by water treatment plants that pump water from the Ottawa River. Outside of the serviced areas, groundwater is the primary source of drinking water.

Geology and Hydrogeology

The geology of the study area (Figure 1c) consists of Precambrian basement of the Canadian Shield overlain by Paleozoic sedimentary rocks including sandstones (Covey Hill, Nepean, March, and Rockcliffe formations) as well as interbedded shales (Billings, Carlsbad and Queenston formations) and carbonates (Oxford, Gull River, Bobcaygeon, Verulam, and Lindsay formations), as per Armstrong and Dodge (2007). The most recent Quaternary glaciation (Wisconsinian) resulted in the deposition of tills, subglacial outwash deposits (primarily sands), and glaciomarine sediments, comprised of glaciomarine muds and nearshore sands, atop the bedrock units. In the study area, sandy silt tills from the erosion of carbonates are the most prevalent, due to the abundance of localized carbonaceous sedimentary rocks. The retreat of the Laurentide ice sheet from the region at approximately 12 ka BP uncovered an isostatically depressed landmass which resulted in a marine incursion from the Gulf of St-Lawrence, forming the Champlain Sea, which was present for approximately 2 000 years (Barnett, 1992). The depositional sequence of Champlain Sea muds in the study area was described by Gadd (1986),

who reported three mud units (from oldest to youngest): basal rhythmites, massive muds, and red-and-grey stratified mud. The entire sequence of mud and overlying nearshore sands (“glaciomarine sediments”) was interpreted to be produced by deltaic offlap during regression of the Champlain Sea. Massive muds are the most abundant and widespread deposits and have an average thickness of approximately 10 meters with a maximum observed thickness of 90 meters in the studied area (Charron, 1975). Locally, the highest observed porewater salinities are observed in the massive muds and are thought to reflect the salinity of the Champlain Sea (Torrance, 1988). The glaciomarine muds overlie till and subglacial outwash sands in most areas, with the exception of topographic high areas, where till or exposed bedrock is found at the surface. The muds reach their maximum thicknesses in topographically low areas and typically exhibit an organic carbon content ranging from 0.4-1 wt.% (Donovan and Lajoie, 1979). Deposits containing significant proportions of organic matter that predate the till are also present in the central St. Lawrence Lowlands, although there is no evidence from local well logs of the presence of these deposits in the studied area. These deposits are referred to as the St. Pierre sediment, deposited during the Les Becquets interstadial period that occurred from the late Sangamonian to Early Wisconsinian, between 60 – 75 ka BP (Ochietti, 1989). Peat and organic-rich sand from this unit in a quarry ~50 km east of the studied area at Pointe-Fortune, Québec, were found by radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating to be older than 42 ka BP (Veillette and Nixon, 1984).

The principal hydrostratigraphic unit of the St-Lawrence lowlands is described as an interface aquifer (Cloutier et al., 2006; Montcoudiol et al., 2015), comprised of a layer of till, subglacial outwash sands and highly fractured bedrock separating the overlying muds from the moderately fractured Paleozoic bedrock underneath. Meteoric water recharges the system in topographically high areas where there is little to no mud cover and flows preferentially in the

upper bedrock beneath the mud via the interface flow system to topographically low areas. Depressions in the bedrock surface throughout the study area represent the final feature of the flow system. These depressions contain remnant Champlain Sea waters which are confined by a thick layer of overlying mud, and underneath by low-permeability bedrock. The system can be divided into three components: an unconfined recharge area, a semi-confined transition area, and a confined lowland area, as shown by the conceptual model in Figure 2. Charron (1975) noted that groundwater flow is controlled by bedrock topography in the study area due to the fact that the permeable interface zone is located at the contact between bedrock and surficial sediment deposits. Groundwater residence times in the confined lowland areas typically exceed 5 ka (Montcoudiol et al., 2015).

Although flow regimes in the study area are predominantly horizontal as they travel through the continuous layer that constitutes the interface aquifer, solute diffusion from the low-permeability muds is non-negligible and can have profound impacts on water geochemistry, as demonstrated by Cloutier et al. (2006). Additionally, in a hydrogeological study of the St-Lawrence River Valley, Chapuis and Saucier (2013) concluded that the Champlain Sea muds are underdrained by groundwater (“leaky”) aquifers, which collect small amounts of vertically seeping porewaters.

Methods and Theory

Previously visited sites from sampling campaigns ($n = 139$) conducted during the summers of 2012 (Freckelton and Hamilton, 2012), 2013 (Morton et al., 2013), and 2015 (Diorio et al., 2015) as part of the Ontario Ambient Groundwater Geochemistry Program (OAGGP) were screened based on their respective I content and revisited in the summer of 2016.

151 Additionally, new sites were visited in areas with historically high-I groundwaters. In total, 61
152 sites were visited during the summer of 2016, 169 sites were sampled in the study area from
153 2012 – 2016 and iodide concentrations varied from 2 – 10 812 $\mu\text{g/L}$, with an average of 646
154 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (OGS, 2016). 47% ($n = 79$) of the sites visited exhibited I concentrations exceeding 150
155 $\mu\text{g/L}$. The purpose of returning to sampling sites was threefold: to homogenize available
156 hydrogeochemical datasets, collect samples from sites representing the full range of I
157 concentrations in the study area, and to collect samples to be analyzed for ^{129}I and $^{14}\text{C}/\delta^{13}\text{C}$ of
158 dissolved inorganic/organic carbon (DIC/DOC), which had not been done in previous sampling
159 iterations. Additionally, two glaciomarine mud samples were collected at an approximate depth
160 of six mBGS for ^{14}C and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ analysis of disseminated organic matter during the 2016
161 campaign. Groundwater and mud sample locations are shown in Figure 1.

162 *Sampling*

163 The pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, oxidation-reduction potential, H_2S
164 and alkalinity of water samples were measured in the field. Wells were purged until the
165 stabilization of field parameters, typically when temperature variations were within a range of
166 $\pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$, at which point samples were collected in high-density polyethylene (HDPE) bottles and
167 stored at 4°C until analysis of major, minor, and trace constituents for a total of 65 parameters, in
168 addition to DIC, DOC, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{DIC/DOC}}$, ^{129}I , and enriched tritium (^3H). Samples to be analyzed for
169 major, minor, and trace constituents as well as DIC and DOC were filtered using a $0.45\ \mu\text{m}$
170 polyvinylidene fluoride filter. At sites where there was significant exsolution of gas in the form
171 of free bubbles during pumping ($n = 19$) gas samples to be analyzed for ^{14}C of methane (CH_4)
172 and $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{CH}_4}$ were collected in using the inverted bottle method, and groundwater samples to be
173 analyzed for $^{14}\text{C}_{\text{DIC/DOC}}$ were filtered using a $0.45\ \mu\text{m}$ polyethersulfone filter. Gas and water

samples for ^{14}C analysis were collected in borosilicate bottles with a plastic cap and butyl septum to minimize atmospheric exchange. Data collected for CH_4 are not relevant to the scope of this study and are thus not presented in the text. More information regarding sampling methodology and site selection can be found in Lemieux et al. (2016).

Analytical Methods

Major, minor and trace cation and anion concentrations, including Ca, Mg, Na, K, Fe, Al, Mn, Cl, Br, and SO_4 were measured at Geoscience Laboratories (GeoLabs) in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. Cations were analyzed by both inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) using a Perkin Elmer Elan 9000 ICP-MS and inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES) using a Teledyne Leeman Laboratories Prodigy ICP AES Radial View instrument. Anions were analyzed by Ion Chromatography (IC), using a dual-pump system ion chromatograph, Dionex model ICS-3000. Overall method precision was determined with field and laboratory duplicate pairs using the method of Thompson and Howarth (1978).

$\text{NO}_2 + \text{NO}_3$ and NH_3/NH_4 were analyzed by SGS analytical laboratories in Lakefield, Ontario, Canada within seven days of collection. Nitrate (NO_3^-) and nitrite (NO_2^-) were analyzed using a Dionex Ion Chromatograph and reported as ppm N. Ammonia (NH_3) and Ammonium (NH_4^+) were analyzed using a Skalar Segmented Flow Autoanalyzer.

Within the range of pH and oxidative-reductive conditions found at the Earth's surface or within its oceans, I is present in three oxidation states: -1 (iodide, I^-), +5 (iodate, IO_3^-), and 0 (gaseous iodine, I_2). The Eh-pH diagram for I speciation is presented in Figure 3 (also known as a Pourbaix diagram), along with Eh-pH values for collected groundwater samples in the study area. The conditions indicated in the diagram suggest that all I in the present groundwater system would be present as iodide (I^-). I concentrations as I^- were measured within five days of sample

collection using a Thermo Scientific™ Orion™ 9453BN Iodide Electrode connected and operated through an Orion™ Star A324 portable meter. The meter was calibrated to 10 ppb I⁻, 1000 ppb I⁻ and 10 000 ppb I⁻. Prior to measurement, the water filling the neck of each 60 mL bottle was discarded, and 1 mL of ionic strength adjuster and a micro-magnetic stir bar were added. The meter was inserted into the sample bottle, placed over a magnetic stirring plate and a measurement was recorded after the meter automatically indicated the probe had stabilized.

C isotopes of dissolved species in water and disseminated organic matter within collected mud samples ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) were analyzed at the G.G. Hatch Stable Isotope laboratory at the University of Ottawa. Groundwater samples were first run on an OI Analytical analyzer for total inorganic carbon and total organic carbon (TIC-TOC) (Aurora Model 1030) with a model 1088 autosampler to determine concentrations for organic/inorganic carbon (in ppm C). The TIC-TOC analyzer was interfaced to a Finnigan MAT Delta plus XP IRMS for analysis by continuous flow. Analytical precision is $\pm 2\%$ for quantitative analysis, and $\pm 0.2\text{‰}$ for $\delta^{13}\text{C}$. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values are reported relative to the Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite (VPDB) standard.

For analysis of the collected glaciomarine muds, the samples were flash combusted at 1800°C in an Elementar VarioEL Cube Elemental Analyser, and generated gases (CO_2 , N_2 , SO_2 , H_2O) were subsequently quantitatively measured with a thermal conductivity detector (TCD) with a precision of $\pm 0.1\%$. The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ isotopic composition of released CO_2 was measured using a DeltaPlus Advantage isotope ratio mass spectrometer, which was coupled to the EA with a ConFlo III interface. Precision of the isotopic analyses was $\pm 0.2\text{‰}$.

Dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC), dissolved organic carbon (DOC), and disseminated organic carbon in the muds were prepared for ^{14}C analysis at the Andre E. Lalonde AMS Laboratories at the University of Ottawa using techniques outlined in Crann et al. (2017). Results

are reported in percent modern carbon (pMC) relative to the Ox-II modern carbon standard (NIST SRM 4990C) and are normalized to a $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value of -25‰ (relative to VPDB). ^{14}C ages are calculated as $-8033\ln(\text{pMC})$ and reported in ^{14}C years BP (BP = AD 1950).

A carrier-addition method described by Herod (2015) was used to extract I during a series of redox transformations for ^{129}I analysis at the Andre E. Lalonde AMS laboratory using an HVE 3MV Tandetron. Measurements were normalized with respect to the ISO-6II reference material for which $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I} = (5.72 \pm 0.08) \times 10^{-12}$, by calibration with the NIST 3230 I and II standard reference material. Results are reported as $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio $\times 10^{-14}$. Standard deviations for $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios of individual analyses varied between ± 0.1 to 2.6.

Enriched ^3H analysis was performed at the University of Waterloo Environmental Isotope Laboratory. ^3H values were measured by electrolytic enrichment ($\geq 15\text{x}$) with liquid scintillation counting (LSC). Samples with a specific conductivity exceeding $5000 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ were subjected to azeotropic distillation. Results are reported in tritium units (TU), where $1 \text{ TU} = 1 \text{ T per } 10^{18}\text{H}$, with a detection limit of 0.8 TU and a precision of $\pm 0.5 \text{ TU}$.

Data Availability

The full hydrogeochemical dataset containing major, minor, and trace ion concentrations and station data for all field seasons (2012, 2013, 2015, 2016) is publicly available for download using the OGSEarth application from the Ontario Geological Survey website (<https://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/en/mines-and-minerals/applications/ogsearth>), as part of the Ontario Ambient Groundwater Geochemistry Program (OAGGP). Isotopic data (^{129}I , ^3H , and $^{14}\text{C}/\delta^{13}\text{C}$ of DIC and DOC) is presented in the text.

241 *Principal Component Analysis and Data Preparation*

242 Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has previously been used to understand the
243 correlation between chemical variables and I and to infer the geochemical processes responsible
244 for its spatial variation in groundwater in Denmark (Voutchkova et al., 2014) and China (Zhang
245 et al., 2013; Duan et al., 2016), and was applied to the current dataset using version 3.3.1 of the
246 programming language R (R, 2016). The procedure used to prepare the dataset for analysis
247 resembles that of Cloutier et al. (2008) and Montcoudiol et al. (2015). Parameters were excluded
248 based on recommendations from Güler et al. (2002). For example, chemical parameters that were
249 additive, redundant, measured in the field, exhibited little regional variation, and that had many
250 (over 15% of samples) values below the detection limit or no result available were excluded.
251 Samples exhibiting a charge balance error $> \pm 10\%$ were excluded from analysis. From the
252 current dataset, 19 chemical parameters were retained for analysis: B, Ba, Br, Ca, Cl, DOC, F, Fe
253 HCO_3 , I, K, Li, Mg, Mn, Na, NH_4 , Si, SO_4 and Sr. In total, the results from 146 of the 169
254 collected samples were retained for PCA. Eight samples were rejected upon the basis of charge
255 balance error, eleven for multiple missing values or values below detection limit, and four were
256 rejected because they exhibited evidence of water treatment and thus did not represent raw
257 groundwater. In instances where the value of a retained chemical parameter for a given sample
258 was below the detection limit, this value was replaced with 55% the detection limit (Sanford et
259 al., 1993). All variables were log-transformed, apart from HCO_3 , which exhibited normal
260 distribution (skewness < 1). The variables were standardized, resulting in a new set of values (Z_i)
261 with a mean of 0, measured in units of standard deviation. Six principal components were
262 retained based on the Kaiser criterion (Eigenvalue > 1), and a Varimax normalized rotation was
263 applied to maximize perceived variance between the retained components.

264 *Theory: ^{129}I*

265 There are two isotopes of I in the natural environment: stable ^{127}I and ^{129}I , the only long-
266 lived radioactive isotope, which has a decay half-life of 15.7 Ma. ^{129}I is produced through three
267 different pathways: cosmic spallation of Xe atoms in the upper atmosphere (“cosmogenic”),
268 from the spontaneous fission of ^{238}U in the subsurface (“geogenic”), from fallout during past
269 atmospheric testing of nuclear bombs and through releases from nuclear fuel reprocessing
270 (“anthropogenic”). The long half-life, in conjunction with its long residence time in the marine
271 environment (40 000 years), would suggest that the pre-anthropogenic $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio would have
272 been fairly constant, and has been estimated to be between $30 - 300 \times 10^{-14}$ based on fissiogenic
273 and atmospheric inputs (Fabryka-Martin et al., 1985), and $\sim 150 \times 10^{-14}$ based on measurements
274 of recent marine sediments with no anthropogenic contamination (Fehn, 2000). Given the long
275 half-life of ^{129}I (15.7 Ma) and the timing of the postglacial marine incursion (12 ka BP), it is
276 expected that I derived from seawater during the Champlain Sea incursion would exhibit a
277 $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio close to 150×10^{-14} .

278 In geological formations exceeding 100 Mya in age, the quantity of ^{129}I typically remains
279 constant because the production rate from ^{238}U fission in the host rock is equal to the decay rate,
280 which is referred to as secular equilibrium. Fabryka-Martin et al. (1985) calculated the estimated
281 secular equilibrium $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios for I in groundwater derived from different bedrock types,
282 which depend largely on the ^{129}I production rate (a function of the fractional ^{238}U concentration
283 in the rock) and the leaching efficiency of produced ^{129}I from the host formation. Estimated
284 groundwater $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ values for samples derived from geological units relevant to the studied
285 area vary from approximately 3×10^{-14} for limestones, 13×10^{-14} for clay shales, 63×10^{-14} for
286 black shales, 320×10^{-14} for sandstones and 470×10^{-14} for crystalline granite. $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios for

modern surface and recharge waters in North America are much higher, estimated to be on the order of 10^{-8} (Rao and Fehn, 1999; Rädlinger and Heumann, 2000) due to significant ^{129}I releases associated with nuclear activities.

Results

Spatial distribution of I

Univariate analysis was conducted on the retained 146 samples after data preparation to examine the spatial distribution of I in the studied area. All wells selected as a part of this study exploit groundwater from the interface flowpath of the aquifer defined in Figure 2. Due to the control bedrock topography exhibits on the groundwater flow in the study area (Charron, 1975), bedrock elevation can be used as a proxy for distance from the recharge area (i.e. as bedrock elevation decreases, distance from the recharge area increases) as it travels along the interface flowpath. I concentrations in groundwater tend to increase as bedrock elevation decreases (Figure 4), implying that the highest I concentrations would be observed in depressions in the bedrock surface. Also shown in Figure 4 is the positive relationship between I concentrations and overburden (unconsolidated glacial sediment) thickness, which represents the combined thickness of the tills, subaqueous outwash deposits, glaciomarine muds, and nearshore sands. Where information on the representative geological unit sampled was available, this was compared to I concentrations (Figure 5). These units include carbonates ($n = 99$), shale ($n = 13$), glacial sediments ($n = 23$), and sandstone ($n = 9$). The highest median concentrations are observed in samples derived from shale units ($1\,327\ \mu\text{g/L}$) or glacial sediments ($450\ \mu\text{g/L}$), whereas lower median concentrations are observed in samples derived from carbonate ($129\ \mu\text{g/L}$) or sandstone ($27\ \mu\text{g/L}$) units. I concentrations in samples taken from sandstone units appear to be significantly lower than from other units. High interquartile ranges are observable for samples from the carbonate, shale, and glacial sediment units.

Principal component analysis

The 19 chemical parameters for $n = 146$ sites retained for PCA (B, Ba, Br, Ca, Cl, DOC, F, Fe, HCO_3 , I, K, Li, Mg, Mn, Na, NH_4 , Si, SO_4 and Sr) exhibited six factors accounting for 89% (41%, 16%, 10%, 8%, 7%, and 6% respectively) of the perceived variance in the dataset. The results from PCA are presented in table 1, and the position of the loadings for each parameter relative to principal components 1 and 2 are presented in Figure 6. Factor loadings $> \pm 0.7$ were considered significant for the purposes of this analysis.

The first component is characterized by positive factor loadings for Na, K, HCO_3 , Cl, NH_4 , Br, I, DOC, and B. The second component exhibits positive factor loadings for Ca and Mg, in addition to a negative loading for F. Interpretations of the geochemical processes responsible for significant factor loadings will be presented in the discussion. Each of remaining four components do not exhibit significant loadings for I, explain less than 10% of variance within the dataset and are more likely related to local effects than the first two components – thus, these components were regarded as unimportant and not considered during the interpretation of PCA. Component 3 exhibits a positive loading for Fe and Mn and most likely represents the reductive dissolution of metal oxides, component 4 exhibits a positive loading for SO_4 , component 5 exhibits a positive loading for Si, and component 6 a positive loading for Li.

^{129}I

Samples collected in 2016 analyzed for ^{129}I ($n = 55$) were separated into two groups based on ^3H content, to qualitatively establish the presence of anthropogenic ^{129}I (Figure 7). As per Clark and Fritz (1997), groundwaters lacking detectable proportions of ^3H (< 0.8 T.U.) represent waters recharged prior to 1952, also referred to as “pre-modern” groundwaters. Conversely, samples containing detectable proportions of ^3H (> 0.8 T.U.) represent either

recharge water dating after 1952 (“modern” groundwater) or a mix between pre-modern and modern groundwaters and would be affected by modern inputs of ^{129}I . Based on the classification from ^3H data, 21 samples analyzed for ^{129}I represent modern groundwater, whereas 34 represent pre-modern groundwaters. The data presented in Figure 7 demonstrate a decrease of the $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio as I concentrations in a sample increase. Typically, modern waters exhibited $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios exceeding the pre-anthropogenic ratio of 150×10^{-14} , which can be attributed to the contribution of anthropogenic ^{129}I . The $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio for pre-modern groundwaters ranges from 5.7 to 460.7×10^{-14} , with an average of 62.4×10^{-14} . As I concentrations increase, the $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio decreases, and appears to remain constant around 20×10^{-14} after I concentrations surpass $500 \mu\text{g/L}$. These trends represent a more important influence of geologic sources of I as concentrations increase.

DIC and DOC pools

The DIC pool in groundwater represents the sum of CO_2 , HCO_3^- , and CO_3^{2-} species, the proportions of which vary based on pH. Given the range of pH values observed for collected samples (Figure 3), the DIC pool is expected to be predominantly comprised of the HCO_3^- species. Potential sources for DIC in the groundwater aquifer include: (1) dissolved CO_2 soil gases from recharge waters, (2) CO_2 derived from the decomposition of dissolved or sedimentary organic carbon sources within overburden materials, (3) CO_2 derived from decomposition of dissolved or sedimentary organic matter within the Ordovician bedrock, and (4) HCO_3^- derived from dissolution of carbonate bedrock. The relationship between ^{14}C ages for DIC and DOC with Cl and their respective $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures is presented in Figure 8. Uncorrected ^{14}C ages for DIC were between 7.1 – 16.1 ka BP, with an average of 12.9 ka BP. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ DIC values range from -23.3 to -5.1‰, and do not exhibit a significant relationship with uncorrected ^{14}C ages for DIC. A

lack of correlation also exists between uncorrected DOC ages with their respective $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures. Uncorrected ^{14}C ages for DIC are youngest in low-salinity groundwaters, and stabilize at an age of approximately 15 ka BP at Cl concentrations exceeding 1000 mg/L. The same trend is observable for uncorrected DOC ages, although the “stable” age for samples with Cl concentrations > 1000 mg/L is approximately 16 ka BP. The similarity of the trends for the DIC and DOC pools suggest a relationship between the two.

Potential sources for DOC in the aquifer include: (1) soil organic carbon sources from recharge waters, (2) Organic matter generated during the Champlain Sea incursion, (3) Organic matter from the St. Pierre sediment, and (4) Organic matter from Ordovician bedrock. The first two components would present detectable proportions of radiocarbon, whereas the last two would not. ^{14}C ages for DOC from the current dataset vary from 4.4 – 19.3 ka BP, with an average of 13.5 ka BP. The average age corresponds to a time when the study area was still ice-covered, indicating a source of organic carbon which predates the Champlain Sea incursion. ^{14}C ages data for the disseminated organic matter within the glaciomarine mud presented in table 2 also suggests the presence of older organic carbon sources, as these ages range from 17.1 – 23.6 ka BP.

The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signature for disseminated organic carbon within the mud varies between -27.5 to -26.3‰, and averages -26.7‰. Additionally, the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures ($n = 56$, see electronic dataset) for DOC in groundwater vary from -29.72 to -25.86‰, with an average value of -26.8‰.

Discussion

Spatial distribution of I

The observed relationships for I with decreasing bedrock elevation and increasing overburden (glacial sediment) thickness are indicative of the enrichment of I in groundwater as it travels from recharge areas to depressions in the bedrock surface along the interface flowpath. A similar trend for groundwater salinization was observed by Montcoudiol et al. (2015) and Cloutier et al. (2006) for similar aquifers. They demonstrated that groundwater geochemical facies progressed from Ca-HCO₃ to Na-HCO₃ and finally Na-Cl with increasing distance from recharge areas. The main groundwater processes driving the transition from Ca-HCO₃ to Na-HCO₃ are ion exchange with the glaciomarine muds and carbonate dissolution as the solubility of carbonate increases due to Na⁺ replacement by Ca²⁺ and Mg²⁺ in the mud matrix. The evolution of Na-HCO₃ to Na-Cl groundwater groups is mainly attributed to mixing with fossil Champlain Sea water (Cloutier et al., 2006). Box plots in Figure 9 show the dominant ion composition for groundwater samples relative to their I content and demonstrate that I enrichment is concurrent with system evolution and groundwater salinization, with values below 150 µg/L for Ca-HCO₃ waters (n = 18), intermediate concentrations in Na-HCO₃ (n = 78) waters, and extreme concentrations over 1000 µg/L in Na-Cl (n = 46) waters. Samples in the Ca-SO₄/Cl portion of the Piper plot (n = 4) are characterized by their proximity to major roads, high Cl/Br ratios and detectable proportions of ³H (> 0.8 T.U.), indicating that they likely represent modern groundwaters affected by road salt contamination.

Box-and-whisker plots for I concentrations relative to the geological setting of well screens indicate that higher concentrations are observed for groundwater sampled from shale and limestone units, whereas lower concentrations are observed for groundwater derived from

sandstone units. High I has been correlated to bedrock lithology in groundwaters sampled from shale (Lu et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2015) and limestone units (Fuge, 2005; Voutchkova et al., 2014), and attributed to the presence of marine organic matter in these rocks. However, evidence has also been presented in this paper suggesting that I is enriched with increasing distance from recharge areas. The spatial distribution of groundwater samples from sandstone units are predominantly found in the northern portion of the study area where bedrock elevations are higher and groundwater recharge is occurring, contrary to samples from limestone and shale units, which typically coincide with lower bedrock elevations where groundwater is of the Na-HCO₃ or Na-Cl geochemical facies, implying that I concentrations in groundwater may depend more on the spatial distribution of bedrock units rather than their lithology. High I concentrations for samples derived from glacial sediments also supports this interpretation, which agrees with results from Cloutier et al. (2006) for a similar interface aquifer in Québec, where they demonstrated that bedrock lithology does not control major ion chemistry, and instead attributed geochemical variations to hydrogeological conditions associated with surface sediments (unconfined, semi-confined, and confined aquifer conditions).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Results from PCA indicate a significant relationship between I and major components of salinity (B, Br, Cl, and Na) as well as DOC, HCO₃, K, and NH₄ for the first component. Microbial decomposition of organic matter in the glaciomarine muds would release dissolved CO₂, causing a corresponding rise in HCO₃ concentrations. This is also reflected by the positive loading for DOC. The positive loading for K can also be explained due to the decomposition of organic matter, as suggested by average K concentrations for samples with > 1000 mg/L Cl⁻, exceeding what would be expected with normal Cl/K ratios for seawater. The glaciomarine muds

425 have also been found by others to have high contents of exchangeable K (Laventure and
426 Warkentin, 1965). Decomposition in an anaerobic environment would also result in the
427 conversion of organic nitrogen to NH_4 , and the conversion of organo-iodine to inorganic I,
428 causing the enrichment of these elements in solution. Thus, factor loadings for component 1 are
429 suggestive of saline porewaters within the glaciomarine muds enriched in I through the
430 decomposition of marine organic matter. The high salinity of porewaters within the massive
431 muds (Torrance, 1988), coupled with observations of hydrotroilite and evidence of bioturbation
432 that are indicative bacterial reduction in the same massive muds (Cummings et al., 2011)
433 suggests that I-rich saline porewater originates predominantly from the massive mud unit.
434 Although the second component of the PCA does not exhibit significant loading for I, it explains
435 an important proportion of the perceived variance (16%) within the dataset. Significant positive
436 loadings for parameters relating to water hardness (Ca and Mg) and a negative loading for F
437 were observed. These results are similar to findings from Cloutier et al. (2008) and Morton
438 (2015) from geochemical characterizations of groundwater samples in similar aquifers, which
439 were attributed to the decreased solubility of fluorite (CaF_2) due to increased proportions of
440 dissolved Ca and Mg attributed to carbonate dissolution.

441 *Significance for I and organic carbon sources in sediment loading of glacial meltwater*

442 If the I in the glaciomarine muds were entirely derived from the marine basin, observed
443 values for $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios would have reflected the pre-anthropogenic marine sediment ratio of
444 150×10^{-14} . However, the average observed ratio for pre-modern high-I groundwaters was much
445 lower, at 20×10^{-14} . The depleted isotopic signature observed for ^{129}I would most likely be due to
446 the introduction of allochthonous sources of ^{129}I -depleted geogenic I during the Champlain Sea
447 incursion via glacial meltwater. Cloutier et al. (2006) demonstrated that glacial meltwater was a

significant component of the Champlain Sea. Analyses of modern-day glacial meltwaters demonstrate that they can furnish the marine environment with important limiting micronutrients such as Fe, DOC, NO₃, PO₄, and SiO₂, which would fertilize primary productivity (Hawkings et al., 2015; Bhatia et al., 2013; Slemmons and Saros, 2012; Hodson et al., 2004). The authors are not aware of any research conducted on I loading in glacial meltwaters.

PO₄ can serve as an analogue to interpret I export in glacial meltwater. Hodson et al. (2004) remarked that PO₄ concentrations in glacial meltwater closely reflected the concentrations of underlying sedimentary units. Similarly, in an analysis of the sources of ¹²⁷I and ¹²⁹I in coastal watersheds of North America and Europe, Moran et al. (2002) demonstrated that rivers surrounded by marine shale or carbonate sedimentary terrain show higher relative I concentrations when compared to rivers surround by igneous or metamorphic bedrock. For rivers unaffected by anthropogenic point sources of ¹²⁹I, they observed a depletion in the ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I ratio as I concentrations increased, which they attributed to the input of I derived from surrounding bedrock or soils. This is in line with conclusions from Cohen (1985) postulating that I in fresh surface waters is mainly derived from the weathering of sedimentary rocks. The stable ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I ratio of approximately 20×10^{-14} observed for higher proportions of I exceeding 500 µg/L suggests a significant proportion of I derived from carbonate and/or shale units. I is released into solution both in its dissolved form as organic matter oxidation occurs, or as particulate organic matter during physical weathering of the rock. Conversely, the ¹²⁹I/¹²⁷I values exceeding the pre-anthropogenic ratio of 150×10^{-14} in pre-modern groundwaters can be attributed to the presence of I derived from the weathering of sandstone or crystalline bedrock units.

As deglaciation proceeds, rock flour, typically of the clay and silt size fraction, is evacuated from the subglacial environment by increasing meltwater flows. In the context of the

Champlain Sea, this rock flour would originate predominantly from weathering of local carbonate and shale bedrock units underlying the ice sheet. This would represent a significant input of particulate matter and limiting micronutrients into the Champlain Sea, resulting in an increase in primary production and subsequent I uptake as phytoplankton biomass increases. The ^{129}I and ^{127}I pools would reflect the mixing of allochthonous geogenic I sources exhibiting low $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratios derived from surrounding sedimentary units with autochthonous sources having a pre-anthropogenic ratio of approximately 150×10^{-14} . Estimating mixing proportions from each source in this instance is difficult, due to the lack of data regarding glacial meltwater fluxes and their relative I concentrations in the Pleistocene.

Stable isotopic and ^{14}C evidence for the introduction of allochthonous sources of organic carbon through glacial meltwater was also presented for the organic carbon pools within the aquifer. The average uncorrected ^{14}C ages for both DOC (13.5 ka BP) and disseminated organic carbon (21.1 ka BP) correspond to a time when the study area was glaciated, and the large range of observed ^{14}C ages suggest mixing between sources with varying ages. Additionally, these ages exceed ones found for local freshwater shells in Bourget, Ontario (10.2 ± 0.1 ka BP; Gadd, 1980) and a marine algal bed in Ottawa (10.8 ± 0.2 ka BP; Mott, 1968).

While C:N atomic ratios below 10 for disseminated organic carbon within the glaciomarine muds suggest that the primary source of organic matter is marine phytoplankton (Meyers, 1994), the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures for this organic matter and DOC in groundwater are lower than what would be expected if organic carbon were derived solely from marine or estuarine phytoplankton, and overlap with the range for C_3 vegetation. This would suggest that mixing is occurring with an older C_3 vegetation source, which would most likely be introduced into the marine basin through glacial meltwater following abrasion of Paleozoic bedrock or proximal

interstadial deposits (e.g. St. Pierre sediment), both of which would present negligible ^{14}C signatures. It is also interesting to note that the ^{14}C ages for disseminated organic matter observed here are similar to results from Silliman et al. (1996) for a sediment core in Lake Ontario, who also reported significantly older ^{14}C ages for disseminated organic matter relative to ostracod shells, which they attributed to allochthonous sources of older detrital terrestrial carbon in the disseminated organic pool introduced through streams and rivers.

Potential inorganic C sources within the aquifer were characterized using isotopic analyses of radiocarbon and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$. When considering the mixing dynamics of DIC, soil gas (or CO_2 generated from organic matter decomposition) is assumed to have a $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signature of -25‰ with a radiocarbon content corresponding to the age of the organic matter, while carbonate is assumed to have a $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signature of 0‰, with a negligible radiocarbon content (Pearson and Hanshaw, 1970). Groundwaters in closed systems where the two sources of DIC are at equilibrium commonly present $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values around -12‰ for DIC.

The average uncorrected ^{14}C ages for DIC (12.9 ka BP) roughly correspond to the Champlain Sea incursion. However, the study area was ice-covered until approximately 12 ka BP before glacial retreat (Parent and Ochietti, 1988), which would imply that ages exceeding 12 ka BP represent samples where older carbon sources have been added to the DIC pool. As observed in Figure 10, depleted $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures of DIC (< -12‰) as HCO_3^- concentrations increase suggests that the DIC pool is predominantly influenced by decomposition of organics (most likely in the massive muds) rather than carbonate dissolution. Additionally, the proximity of the uncorrected DIC radiocarbon ages to the timing of the Champlain Sea incursion indicate that DIC derived from the decomposition of contemporaneous autochthonous marine organic matter is the primary carbon source in the DIC pool.

Following the retreat of the Champlain Sea ~10 ka BP (Parent and Ochietti, 1988) was a period of high flow for the Ottawa River as it re-established its main channel, lasting from 10 - 4.7 ka BP (Fulton, 1987). Evidence for these high flows is present in the study area in the form of anastomosed river channels incised in the glaciomarine sediments (Russell et al., 2011). During this period of high flow, infiltration of freshwater into the interface aquifer and mixing with remnant Champlain Sea water would have occurred. No samples analyzed for radiocarbon contained any detectable ^3H (< 0.8 T.U.), which would preclude sources of modern freshwater carbon. Thus, the infiltration of freshwater from the paleo Ottawa River could potentially explain the prevalence of uncorrected radiocarbon ages < 10 ka BP in both the DIC and DOC at low proportions of Cl, as the infiltrating freshwater would contain younger (but still sub-modern) sources of organic and inorganic carbon.

Conclusions

The spatial patterns, enrichment mechanisms, and sources of I and organic matter in Eastern Ontario groundwater were characterized using a regional geochemical dataset that included ^{129}I and ^{14}C radiogenic tracers. Concentrations of I exceeding $150\text{ }\mu\text{g/L}$ were prevalent in Na-Cl geochemical facies, and most often observed in depressions in the bedrock surface overlain by thick layers of glacial sediments. Although the influence of bedrock lithology on I concentrations cannot be ignored, it is likely not a dominant factor. Geochemical and multivariate statistical analysis confirm the hypothesis that high I in groundwaters is due to the intrusion of saline porewaters from the massive muds enriched in I through microbial oxidation of organic matter, particularly marine algae, which was shown to be the primary source of organic matter in the mud matrix. Groundwater residence times estimated by ^{14}C analysis demonstrate that saline groundwater within the study area represents remnant lenses of

Champlain Sea water. ^{129}I analysis of I in groundwaters suggests mixing between autochthonous marine and allochthonous geogenic I sources in the Champlain Sea basin, derived from the weathering of surrounding Paleozoic sedimentary rocks, and transported into the Champlain Sea with glacial meltwaters. Glacial meltwaters would also introduce older, allochthonous sources of organic carbon derived from the mechanical erosion of Paleozoic bedrock and local interstadial organic units, as evidenced by ^{14}C ages for DOC in groundwaters and disseminated organic carbon within the mud. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values indicate that the allochthonous organic matter in mud is likely C_3 vegetation. Future work should aim to better characterize drainage patterns and pre-Champlain Sea organic carbon pools in the Eastern Ontario region in an effort to constrain the source of allochthonous organic matter in the Champlain Sea basin. In the context of public health issues, this study represents a significant first step in the delineation of areas where high I concentrations in groundwater may pose a significant health risk for consumers. This would be applicable not only to the studied area, but also to geologically similar aquifers in Eastern Canada affected by the Champlain Sea incursion.

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Tables

Table 1. PCA Eigenvalues, explained variance percentages, and Varimax-normalized factor loadings. Significant factor loadings ($> \pm 0.7$) are shown with bold text.

Parameter	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Component 6
Ca	-0.17	0.81	0.33	0.36	0.11	0.09
Mg	0.50	0.72	0.31	0.20	0.11	0.01
Na	0.92	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.15	0.17
K	0.87	0.25	0.25	-0.12	0.05	0.07
HCO ₃	0.89	0.01	-0.01	-0.10	0.15	-0.10
SO ₄	-0.51	0.09	0.00	0.80	0.05	-0.04
NH ₄	0.83	-0.11	0.26	-0.25	0.09	0.11
F	0.02	-0.92	-0.12	0.08	0.03	-0.07
Iodide	0.94	0.03	0.09	-0.09	-0.01	0.12
DOC	0.70	-0.37	-0.03	-0.14	0.13	-0.43
B	0.84	-0.39	0.00	-0.09	-0.01	0.25
Sr	0.30	0.46	0.25	0.62	0.21	0.21
Si	-0.16	0.02	0.08	0.13	0.93	-0.03
Ba	0.53	0.40	0.02	-0.41	0.51	0.05
Cl	0.82	0.35	0.03	0.10	-0.21	0.17
Br	0.89	0.19	0.05	0.02	-0.17	0.24
Li	0.43	0.12	0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.84
Fe	0.30	0.13	0.86	0.05	0.17	-0.08
Mn	-0.07	0.38	0.84	0.05	-0.08	0.14
Explained variance	7.87	3.09	1.89	1.53	1.37	1.2
Explained variance (%)	41	16	10	8	7	6
Cumulative % of variance	41	58	68	76	83	89

Table 2. Dataset for disseminated organic matter within glaciomarine muds. GC represents samples collected from Green's Creek, whereas EME/EMW represents samples collected in Embrun. pMC = % modern carbon

Sample ID	Radiocarbon laboratory no.	C:N atomic ratio	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ‰ VPDB	pMC %	^{14}C age ^{14}C ka BP	Error \pm years
GC-2	UOC-5233	8.8	-26.3	5.31	23.6	209
GC-3	UOC-5234	8.1	-26.5	5.76	22.9	136
GC-4	UOC-5235	8.9	-26.4	6.66	21.7	151
EME	UOC-5237	9.4	-27.5	11.94	17.1	76
EMW	UOC-5236	9.2	-27.2	7.83	20.5	115

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Location of groundwater samples and I concentrations relative to (a) bedrock topography, (b) surficial geology, and (c) bedrock lithology. Star represents Green's Creek site where mud samples were collected, whereas X represents Embrun sample site. Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) co-ordinates provided using North American Datum 1983 (NAD83) in Zone 18N. *Map data acquired from OGS MRD 219 (Armstrong & Dodge, 2007), 207 (Gao et al., 2006) & 128 (OGS, 2010).*

Figure 2. Conceptual model of the flow regime in the studied regional aquifer. *Modified from Cloutier et al. (2010).*

Figure 3. Pourbaix diagram with Eh-pH values for collected groundwater samples.

Figure 4. I concentrations relative to bedrock elevation and overburden thickness.

Figure 5. Box-and-whisker plots of I relative to geological setting of well screen.

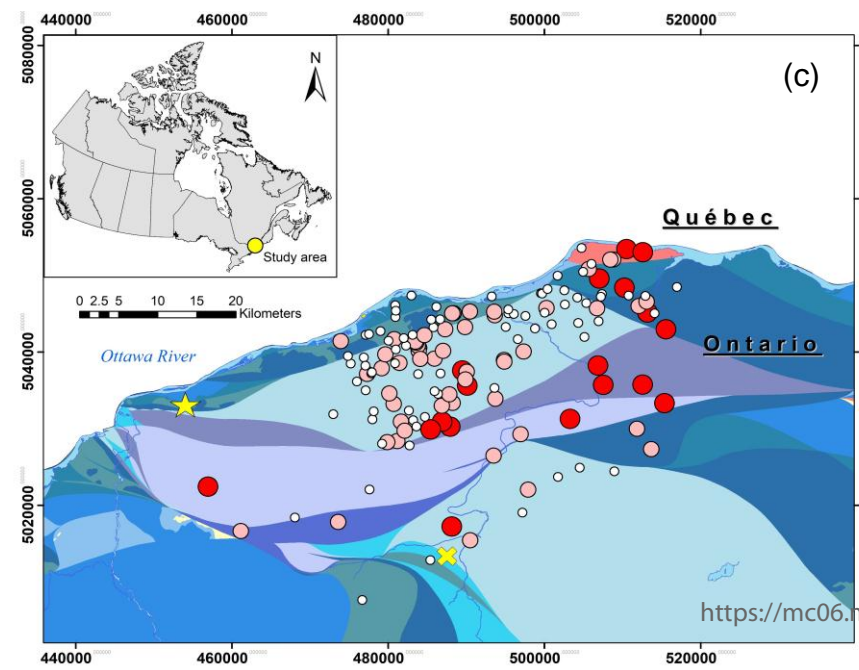
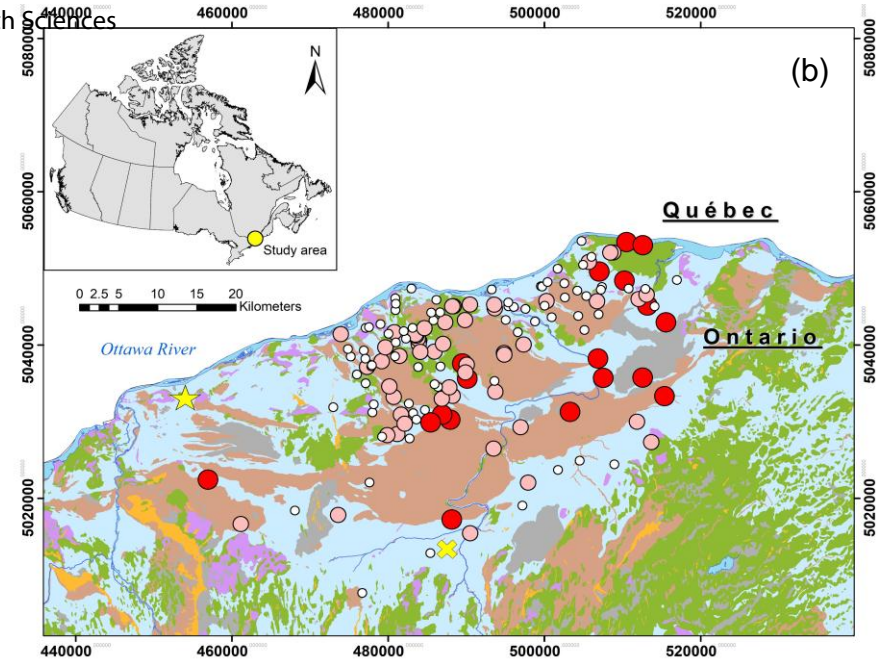
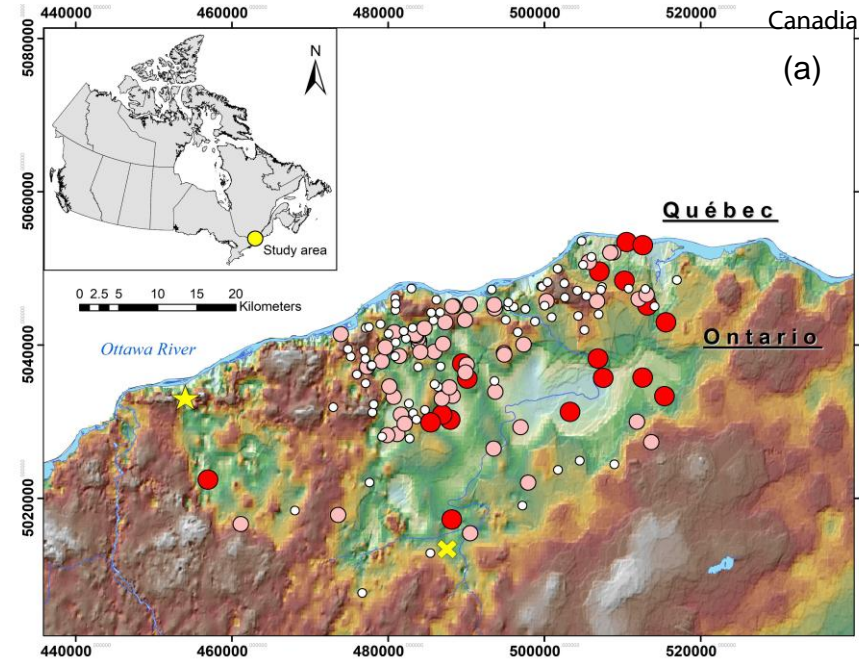
Figure 6. Plot of loadings for the first two components of the Varimax normalized rotation.

Figure 7. $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ ratio vs. I concentrations. Pre-anthropogenic $^{129}\text{I}/^{127}\text{I}$ seawater ratio of 150×10^{-14} indicated by the dashed line. Effect of influences from anthropogenic or geological sources of I indicated by arrows. Open circles represent modern groundwaters, whereas closed circles represent post-modern groundwaters.

Figure 8. Uncorrected ^{14}C ages of DIC and DOC plotted against Cl content and their respective $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ signatures. Closed circles represent DIC samples, whereas open circles represent DOC samples.

Figure 9. (a) Piper plot representing that major ion chemistry of groundwater samples. Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent the Ca-HCO_3 , Na-HCO_3 , Na-Cl , and $\text{Ca-SO}_4/\text{Cl}$ groundwater geochemical facies, respectively. (b) Box-and-whisker plots of I concentration relative to geochemical facies of groundwater samples.

Figure 10. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ DIC vs HCO_3 concentrations.



Legend

