

# Fact Sheet

## Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards

Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards report on the state of the environment in many of Ontario's Watersheds

Surface Water Quality \* Forest Conditions \* Groundwater Quality

Conservation Authority watershed report cards are a management and evaluation tool that allow Conservation Authorities and their partners to better target programs and measure environmental change.

The watershed report cards are a successful way to deliver a vast amount of technical information in a readily understandable and interesting way. Municipalities, agencies, and other stakeholders can use the outcomes of the report cards to assist their programs.

### Why Monitor Ontario's Watersheds?

Watershed monitoring helps us:

- to identify issues, project future conditions,
- focus natural resource management actions where they are needed most, and
- track progress over time.

Monitoring conditions helps to inform local watershed plans and programs

How do Conservation Authorities Monitor Watersheds?

Conservation Authorities collect data using a combination of their own monitoring sites and information from outside sources and partnerships.

- ✓ Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)
- ✓ Provincial Groundwater Quality Monitoring Network (PGMN)
- ✓ Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN)
- ✓ GIS Mapping Data
- ✓ Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System (SOLRIS) MNR
- ✓ Ontario Stream Assessment Protocol (OSAP)
- ✓ Ontario Base Maps
- ✓ Ontario Invasive Plant Council
- ✓ Other sources: municipalities, Environment Canada

Not all Conservation Authorities have the same financial and staff resources and as a result, there may be gaps in some data requirements which will be identified in the report cards. Conservation Authorities can continue to build on their knowledge and understanding of local water conditions and how they are changing by sustaining and expanding monitoring programs.

Ontario's natural resources provide important ecological, economic and society benefits and should be protected.

Conservation Authority watershed report cards can inform decision-making around water and related land resources in order to ensure healthy and sustainable ecological goods and services and healthy people.



Conservation Authority Programs contribute to healthy watersheds which help to protect our own health.

Each year, Conservation Authorities spend \$300 million collectively to:

- ensure safe drinking water and clean air through many programs including source protection, watershed planning, stewardship, and tree planting,
- protect important natural areas which help us to build resilience to climate change,
- prevent property damages and loss of life through flood management programs,
- engage landowners, agencies, and many other stakeholders in stewardship projects that improve water quality, ensure sustainable water resources, protect and restore important natural habitat and support a healthy agricultural industry, and
- use watershed management practices to provide tangible and measurable social, economic and environmental benefits.

How do we benefit from healthy watersheds?

Resilient ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, natural areas, and wildlife, help us to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change which already threaten water quality and quantity, create higher insurance rates from increased flooding and wind events, and threaten the respiratory health of children and others from extreme heat.

Healthy ecosystems protect our own health by providing safe water resources, clean air, cooler environment, reduced stress, and opportunities for more physical activities in parks and conservation areas.

Economically, our environment helps to produce energy, supplies water to industry and households, contributes to tourism, timber, fisheries and recreational industries, provides food, fuel, and much, much more.