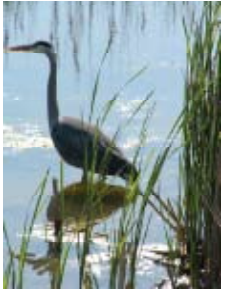


# St. Clair Region Watershed Report Card

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## What is a Watershed Report Card?

A Watershed Report Card evaluates key indicators of watershed health, using provincial standards. It uses current monitoring programs to generate grades for portions of the region.

## What do the grades mean?

The grades have been set using provincial guidelines. High scores indicate a watershed supports the full range of native fish, wildlife and birds and watercourses where people can fish, swim, boat and drink the water. Low scores reflect poor water quality from urban and rural

## Uniquely St. Clair

This region has been affected by urban, industrial and agricultural development but it supports an extraordinary number of rare plant and animal species. In the St. Clair Region over 80 endangered, threatened or special concern species are recognized under federal or provincial legislation. The largest watershed in the region is the Sydenham River. This river supports more mussel species than any other river in Canada. The Sydenham supports healthy reproducing animals such as Northern Riffleshell mussels, which are struggling in other North American watersheds. The Sydenham River has been recognized as nationally significant because it is home to 34 species of freshwater mussels.

Likewise, although the region has very little forest cover, it contains many significant tree and bird species that do

## Why do it?

It helps watershed residents and agency staff to evaluate the health of our watercourses and their individual watersheds, and identifies gaps in the monitoring programs.

land uses and loss of natural forest cover. Our grades are low compared with the province-wide standards and are similar to the neighbouring Thames River and Ausable River watersheds.

not thrive in most of Ontario. Ontario's largest known concentration of Blue Ash trees occurs in the St. Clair Region. Provincially-rare birds such as the Red-headed Woodpecker, Cerulean Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat breed in St. Clair Region woodlands. The existence of these birds enriches our quality of life, and also provides valuable natural control of insects.

The St. Clair Region hosts a mosaic of farmland and forests, urban areas, industrialization and natural areas with extraordinary biological diversity. Residents, agencies and municipalities must act to protect and improve this region of Canada which is "uniquely St. Clair".

## Action already happening - Thumbs up to:

- All those landowners who have Environmental Farm Plans
- Over seventy landowners who are using Forest Management Plans for their woodlands
- Middlesex County for developing a Comprehensive Woodlands Management Plan for all their woodlands, and establishing a Woodlands Advisory Committee to provide feedback on all matters concerning woodlands management
- Sydenham Field Naturalists for fundraising and campaigning to protect Wallaceburg Sycamore Woods, which is now in public ownership
- Chatham-Kent for continuing to separate combined sewer outfalls in Wallaceburg and Dresden
- Robert Bossu for retiring row cropland along the Sydenham River and developing the Bossu Wetlands
- City of Sarnia for naturalizing 32 hectares of agricultural land beside Perch Creek Management Area
- Dow Chemical for development of Dow Wetlands, planting 32 hectares of trees and shrubs and developing Forest Management Plans for existing woodlands
- Terra Industries for 20 hectare naturalization project adjacent to the St Clair River
- ICI Canada for creating 20 hectare wetland including buffer of trees and shrubs
- City of Sarnia for continuing to separate combined sewer outfalls
- Lambton County for naturalizing 26 hectares of land near Bowen's Creek with trees
- Chatham-Kent for setting a goal of 10% tree cover, and financing Greening Partnerships to work toward this goal
- Nine families who have donated over 250 ha of land for conservation securement, including over 120 ha of woodland

And much more...

To download the Report Card for your own watershed, check our website at [www.scrca.on.ca](http://www.scrca.on.ca)

For more information, please contact our office:

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# St. Clair Region Watershed Report Card



## What are our grades?

The St. Clair Region receives a C grade for Surface Water Quality and a D grade for Forest Conditions, using Watershed Report Card standards developed by Conservation Ontario and the Ministry of the Environment.

## Action needed!

Each of the fourteen individual report cards includes action items for individuals and municipalities. Local solutions include:

- Plant trees to increase the size of existing woodlands
- Encourage woodlot owners to prepare and to follow Woodlot Management Plans
- If you use fertilizers and pesticides use them wisely, and dispose of household hazardous waste, fertilizers and pesticides properly

- Conserve woodlands through designations in Official Plans, supporting the woodlands and tree conservation bylaws and providing incentives and education for landowners
- Encourage streamside buffers along at least one side of all watercourses, especially municipal drains
- Fix faulty septic systems and establish a septic maintenance plan
- Implement Environmental Farm Plans, particularly

- for fertilizer, pesticide and fuel storage and use; manure storage and spreading; livestock restriction from watercourses
- Encourage municipalities to manage stormwater runoff from existing urban development, and to implement stormwater planning and monitoring for new developments

