# WHAT ARE THE WATERSHED'S KEY ISSUES?

## Stormwater Runoff

- Excessive stormwater runoff is a major challenge in the Don River watershed due to intense urbanization and limited stormwater management controls.
- The high water flows associated with stormwater results in streambank erosion and increased flooding during storm events.
- Stormwater is also associated with poor water quality in the Don River as stormwater carries sediments and contaminants such as chloride directly into the river system.

## Invasive Species

- Several invasive plants such as dog-strangling vine, phragmites, and emerald ash borer are already in the watershed and continue to spread.
- Round Goby, an invasive fish, is currently found near the mouth of the Don River.

# HOW CAN WE ENHANCE THE WATERSHED?

## What can you do?

- **Plant** native trees, shrubs, and flowers on your property.
- **Reduce** or eliminate the use of deicing salt, pesticides, and fertilizers which can contaminate water.
- **Volunteer** for community tree plantings, litter pick-ups, or other stewardship events: **trca.ca/get-involved**
- **Read** the Discover the Don blog: **discoverthedon.ca**
- **Participate** in Paddle the Don.

**PADDLE THE DON**
Held annually, *Paddle the Don* provides an opportunity to celebrate the Don River by paddling from Ernest Thompson Seton Park to the mouth near Corktown Common. Funds raised help TRCA conserve the natural system in the Toronto Region and provide opportunities to educate and engage the public on the importance of protecting the Don River.

## What local actions have been taken?

**Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project**
The Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project was undertaken to protect human life and infrastructure from flooding by permanently removing approximately 210 hectares of land from the regulatory floodplain through the creation of a flood protection landform now known as Corktown Common.

**trca.ca/don** @DiscovertheDon PaddleTheDon

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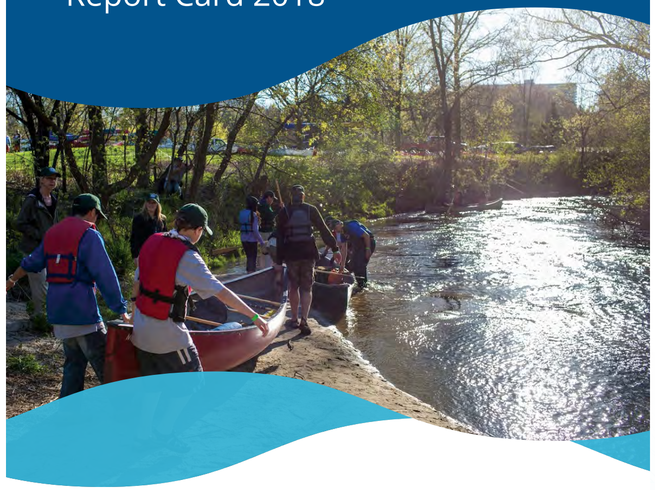
To learn about The Living City Foundation: **thelivingcity.org**

This Watershed Report Card is available online at reportcard.trca.ca

# Don River
# WATERSHED
## Report Card 2018



Watershed Checkup

Toronto and Region Conservation has prepared this report card as a summary of the state of our forest and water resources.

# WHERE ARE WE?


## What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land, drained by a creek or stream into a river, which drains into a body of water such as a lake. Everything in a watershed is connected. Our actions upstream affect conditions downstream.

**GRADING**

| | |
|---|---|
| **A** | Excellent |
| **B** | Good |
| **C** | Fair |
| **D** | Poor |
| **F** | Very Poor |
| | Insufficient Data |

## What is a watershed report card?

Ontario's Conservation Authorities report on watershed conditions every five years. The watershed report cards use Conservation Ontario guidelines and standards developed by Conservation Authorities and their partners.

## Why measure?

Measuring helps us better understand our watershed. We can target our work where it is needed and track progress. We measured:

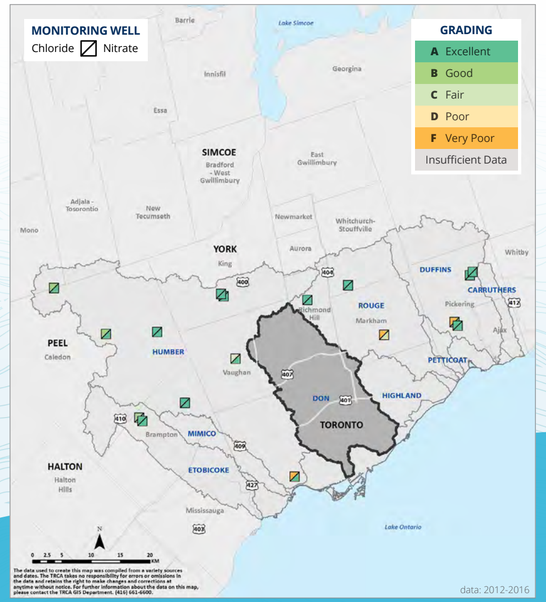
- Groundwater Quality
- Surface Water Quality
- Forest Conditions
- Land Cover

# GROUNDWATER QUALITY

*Fertilizers (nitrogen) and road salt (chloride) are common sources of contamination in groundwater. Concentrations of nitrate and chloride were measured at 17 monitoring wells across the TRCA jurisdiction. Grades were calculated for each well but not for each watershed. Learn more about groundwater at* ***trca.ca/source-water-protection***

## What did we find?

- Generally, concentrations of nitrate were better than the drinking water guidelines in most wells ('A' grade) across the jurisdiction.
- About 60% of the monitoring wells in the TRCA jurisdiction received an 'A' grade for chloride. The 'F' grades were located in urban areas close to major roads.




data: 2012-2016

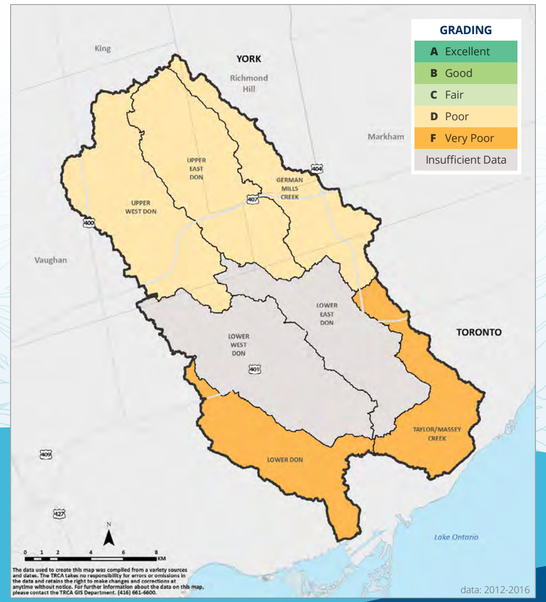
*Monitoring wells are part of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN). No wells were located within Don River watershed.*

# SURFACE WATER QUALITY

*Concentrations of phosphorus and Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria were measured at 5 stations in the Don River watershed. Benthic invertebrates (small aquatic animals living in the sediment) were identified at 23 stations. The type and proportion of these animals are indicators of water quality conditions. These indicators were combined to provide a grade for the watershed.*

## What did we find?

- The Don River watershed received an overall 'D' grade for surface water quality which improved slightly from the 'F' grade in 2013.
- Chloride concentrations are not part of the grade but chloride is an issue for the watershed. Almost 100% of the samples were above the recommended water quality guideline of 120 mg/L. The chloride found in streams is typically from road salt and elevated chloride concentrations can harm aquatic life.




data: 2012-2016

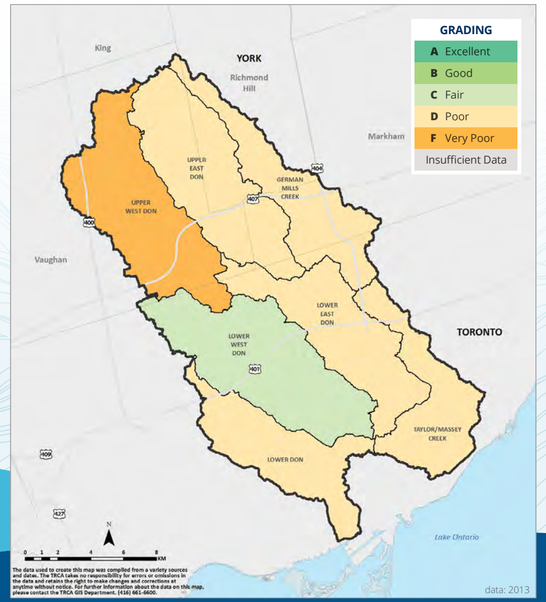
*Data are based on surface water quality monitoring stations that are part of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) and/or TRCA's Regional Watershed Monitoring Program (RWMP).*

# FOREST CONDITIONS

*Forests help to clean our air and water, provide habitat and shade, improve water infiltration, and help to reduce both erosion and flooding. The percentages of forest cover, forest interior, and streamside cover were measured with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and combined to provide a grade for the watershed.*

## What did we find?

- The Don River watershed received a 'D' grade for forest conditions which is the same as the previous report card in 2013.
- There was about 9% forest cover, <1% interior forest cover, and 47% streamside cover. There was almost a 4% increase in streamside cover since the last report card in 2013, which is a sign of improvement.




data: 2013

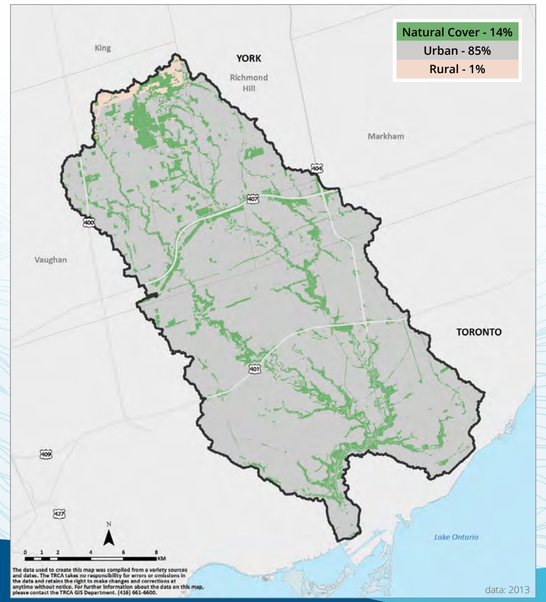
*Forest condition targets were set by Conservation Ontario. TRCA has a unique set of targets for natural cover which consists of areas of natural vegetation such as forest, wetland, and meadow. TRCA specific targets are not included in this report card.*

# LAND COVER

*How we use land affects the natural environment and our health. Forests and wetlands have been removed over time because agricultural and urban land uses have expanded. As our region continues to grow, we need to consider how to increase the amount of natural cover and greenspace available so that people can enjoy the many health benefits of nearby nature.*

## What did we find?

- The Don River watershed is almost completely urban (85%).
- Less than 50% of the population in the watershed is within 300 m of natural cover greater than 1 ha in size.
- Natural cover is unevenly distributed across the Toronto region. More natural cover would mean additional opportunities to support wildlife populations and habitat, and equal access to nature for residents.




data: 2013

*Natural cover consists of vegetation such as forest, wetland, and meadow. Distance to natural cover and size values are based on indicators recommended in scientific literature (e.g. Van den Bosch et al., 2015).*