

# Lakehead Region Watershed Report Card 2023



The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority has prepared this report card as a summary of the state of your forests, wetlands, and water resources.



**LAKEHEAD REGION**  
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



# WHERE ARE WE?



## What is a Watershed?

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

## Why Measure?

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

<b>Groundwater Quality</b>	<b>Surface Water Quality</b>	<b>Forest Conditions</b>	<b>Wetland Conditions</b>

## GRADING

<b>A</b> Excellent
<b>B</b> Good
<b>C</b> Fair
<b>D</b> Poor
<b>F</b> 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.



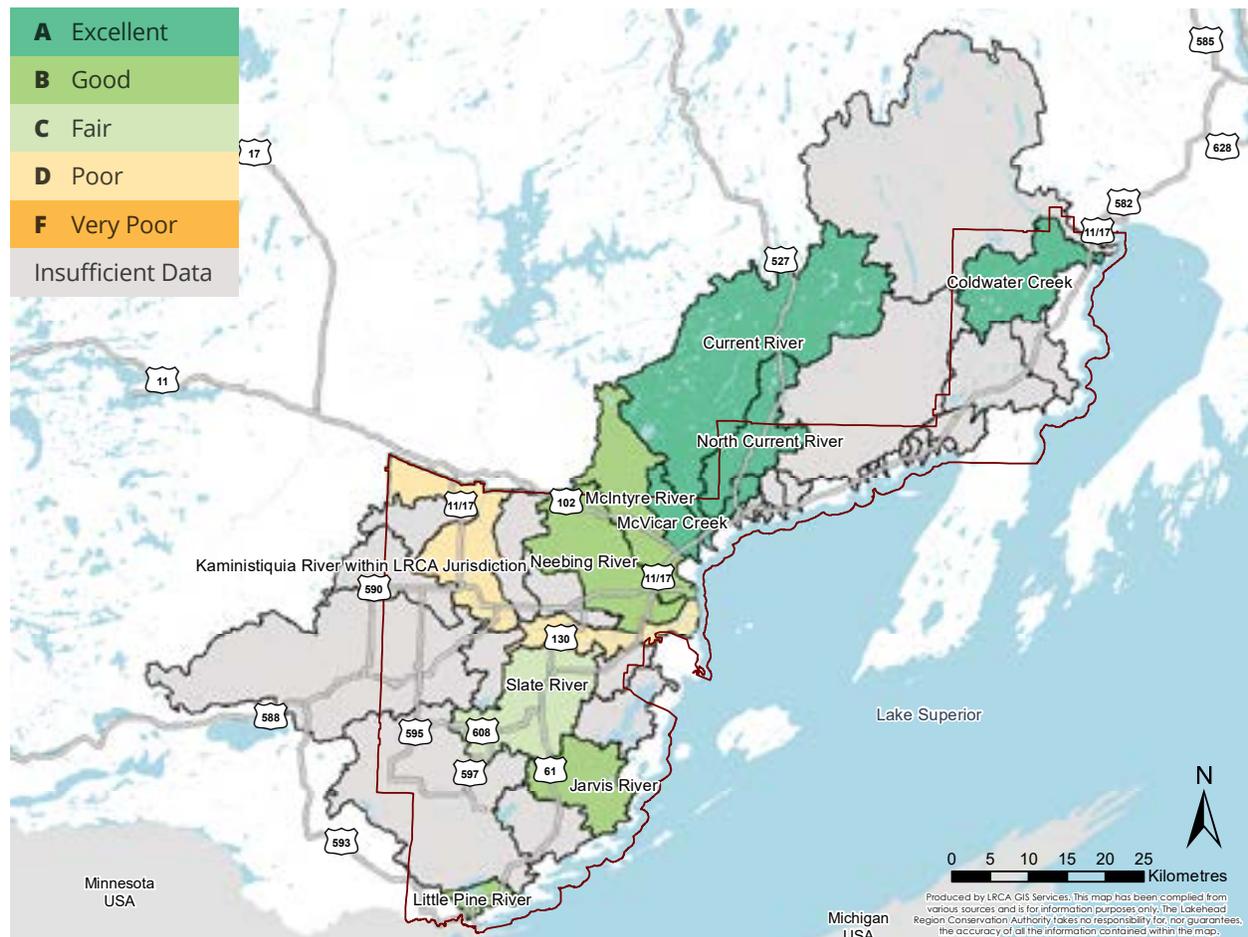
Grades for surface water quality are based on chemical (total phosphorous concentrations) and bacteriological (E. coli concentrations) indicators of water quality. The LRCA collected data from seven sample sites through the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) program.

## What Did We Find?

- In sub-watersheds, the grades range from A to D, with mostly C grades; within the Lakehead Watershed, scoring ranged from a grade of 'A' to 'D'.
- Phosphorous and E. coli concentrations are low within the Lakehead Watershed.
- Due to a lack of available data, benthic invertebrate data was not included in the assessment.

### GRADING

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# Lakehead Region FOREST CONDITIONS

GRADE

**A**

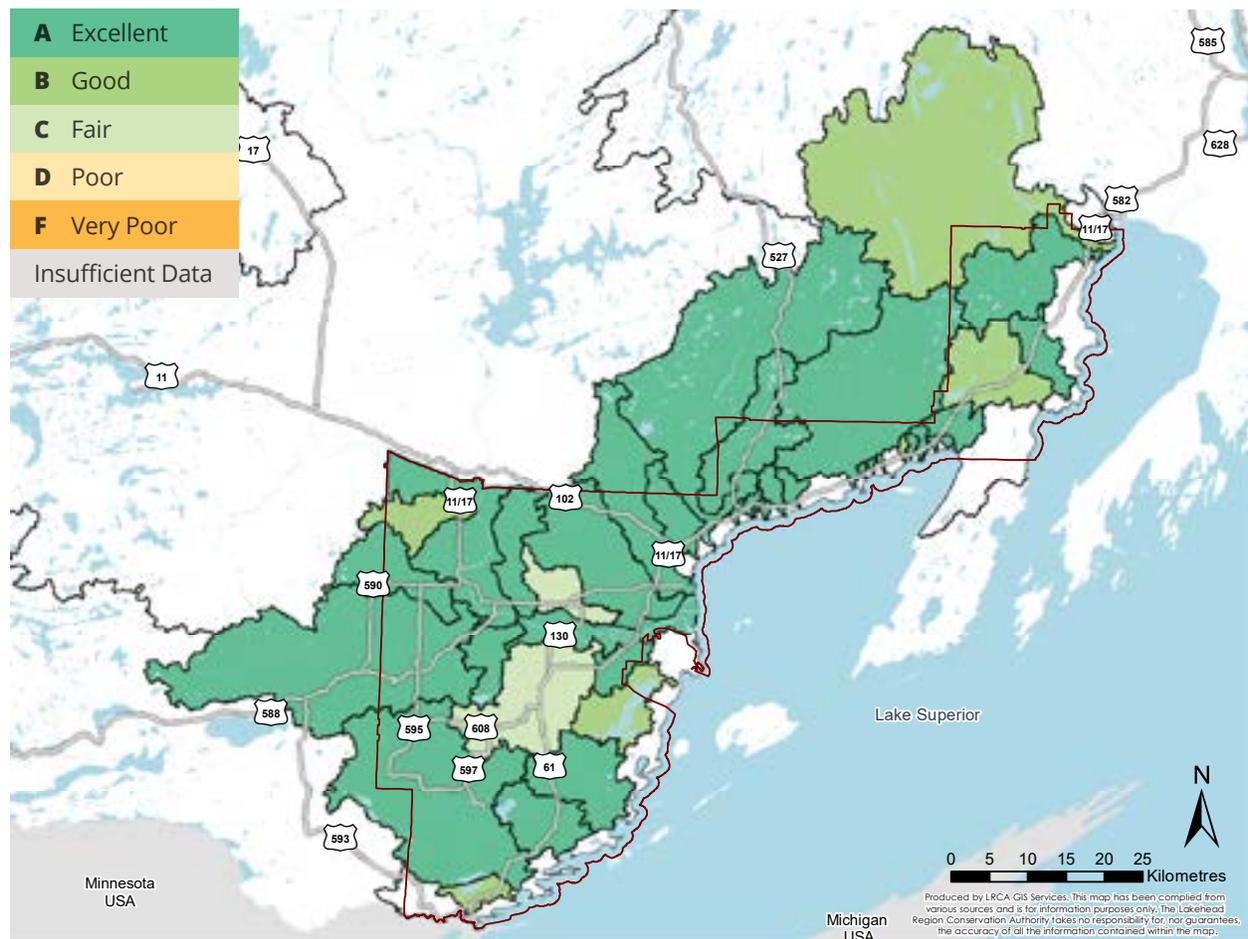
The quality of the Lakehead Watershed forest is measured by calculating the area of forest cover, forest interior, and forested riparian zones. The Forest interior is the wooded area that is more than 100 metres from a forest's edge. A forest riparian zone is the area of forest 30 metres on either side of a watercourse.

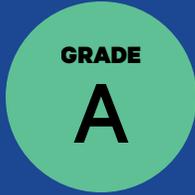
## What Did We Find?

- The Lakehead Watershed forest is in excellent condition, scoring an average grade of 'A'.
- The Lakehead Watershed is comprised of approximately 80% forest cover.
- The Lakehead Watershed's forest interior is approximately 56%.
- The Lakehead Watershed riparian zone is 58% forested.

### GRADING

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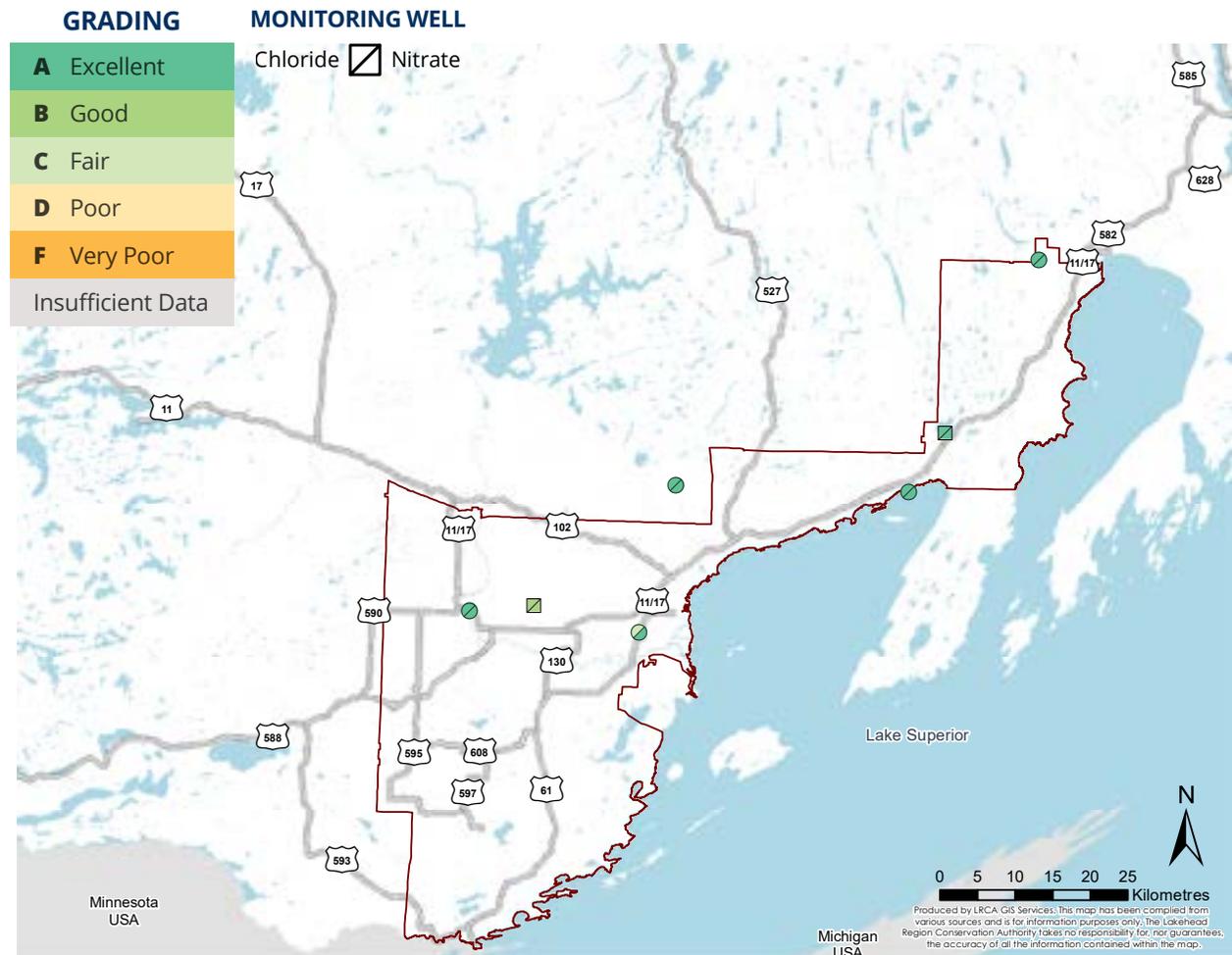




Naturally occurring elements (chlorides, nitrates, and nitrites) can be found in groundwater; however, concentrations can be increased due to human activity. The LRCA collects data from seven wells through the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) program.

## What Did We Find?

- Lakehead Watershed groundwater quality is excellent; tested wells averaged 'A' in all parameters.
- Nitrate + Nitrite concentrations in all monitoring wells was low, with an average grade of 'A'.
- Concentrations of Chloride in all but two monitoring wells scored a grade of 'A'.
- Generally, nitrate, nitrite, and chloride concentrations are low at all wells.





# Lakehead Region WETLAND COVER

GRADE

**B**

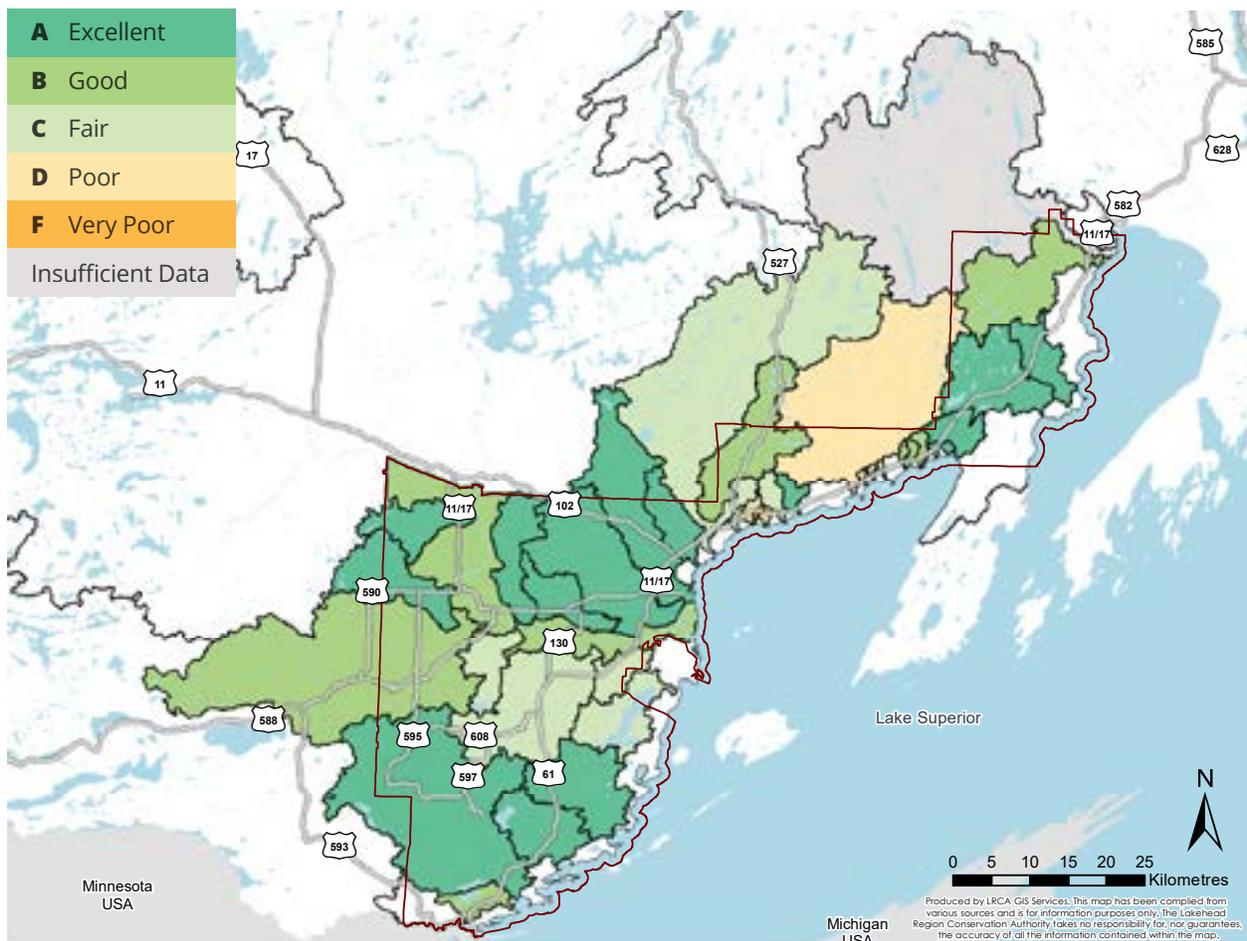
Wetland cover is measured by calculating the total area of wetland within each sub-watershed.

## What Did We Find?

- Wetlands assessed within each sub-watershed are in overall good condition and scored an average grade of 'B' based on the available datasets and maps.
- Environment Canada suggests that 10% wetland cover is important for a healthy watershed. The wetlands in the Lakehead Watershed comprise approximately 11% of the total sub-watershed area.
- Approximately 62% of the Lakehead Watershed received a grade of "B" or higher.

### GRADING

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# MANAGING OUR WATERSHED



The 2022 Watershed Report Card (WRC) provides an average grade for groundwater quality, forested areas, wetland coverage, and surface water quality for the Lakehead Watershed. The grade scores were derived from data sets collected through the LRCA watershed assessment projects, and program partnerships with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks. The sub-watersheds that were assessed for the WRC include:

- McVicar Creek
- McIntyre River
- Current River
- Neebing River
- Kaministiquia River
- Slate River
- Jarvis River
- Little Pine River

## **LRCA Five-Year Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027**

The LRCA's Strategic Plan provides a trail map to build and enhance all facets of our organization with a continued focus on four priorities:

- Conserve and Sustain
- Protect and Support
- Connect and Explore
- Govern and Enhance

# HOW CAN WE ENHANCE THE WATERSHED?



## What Can You Do?

- Plant native trees and shrubs.
- Inspect and pump out your septic system every three to five years.
- Reduce the amount of household chemicals you use and store them as directed.
- Minimize salt use by trying eco-friendly de-icing alternatives.
- Pick up after your pets; dog feces can contaminate waterways.

## What Are We Doing?

- Work closely with government partners, landowners and community groups.
- The LRCA's Superior Stewards Shoreline Naturalization program focuses on the revegetation of shoreline and streambank buffers.
- The LRCA has facilitated the planting of 21,427 trees over the last 5 years.

## What Can Agencies Do?

- Adopt and support green infrastructure.
- Support local environmental programs.
- Develop environmental policies and continually evaluate their effectiveness.
- Utilize grants and funding programs to support local environmental initiatives and partnerships.
- Protect significant wetlands or natural heritage features on owned properties.



**LAKEHEAD REGION**  
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

*Do you have questions not answered by this summary document?  
Visit [www.lakeheadca.com](http://www.lakeheadca.com) for the full report or contact us for more  
information:*

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*The Watershed Report Card is available online and in other formats upon request.*