

MEDIA RELEASE

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Region Scores Well with 2023 Watershed Report Card

(March 22, 2023 – North Bay) A Watershed Report Card for the region’s subwatersheds, released today by the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority, tells us that the overall watershed health is good, with room for improvement in a few subwatersheds.

“NBMCA’s 2023 Watershed Report Card provides an overview of water quality, forest conditions and wetland cover. The quality of our natural environment is essential for our communities’ health and economic wellbeing. The role that NBMCA plays in monitoring and reporting on environmental factors is instrumental in keeping us informed,” said Shelley Belanger, NBMCA’s Vice-chair.

“While grades varied throughout the 20 subwatersheds located within NBMCA’s jurisdiction, overall groundwater quality, wetland cover and forest conditions scored an A (Excellent), while stream, river and lake water quality scored a B (Good),” said Chitra Gowda, NBMCA’s CAO.

The grades were calculated in each category based on guidelines produced, reviewed, and updated every five years by a committee comprised of Ontario’s conservation authorities and Conservation Ontario.

“Water quality grades for the lakes, rivers, and streams are based on their phosphorus levels (lakes, rivers, streams) and benthic macroinvertebrate data (rivers and streams only)” explains Angela Mills, Water Resources Specialist. Benthic macroinvertebrates are small, spineless creatures living in streambeds which are good indicators of aquatic health. Water quality grades are based on up to five years of data.

Forest cover grades are based on overall forest cover, interior forest (>100 m from edge) and riparian (streamside) forest cover. Wetland cover is based on the best available mapping. Forest cover and wetland conditions typically decline around urban areas because of reduced natural vegetation and increased paved surfaces.

To learn more about the ecosystem health of the North Bay-Mattawa watershed and what individuals can do to help improve grades, the report card, explanatory document, and grades at a glance are available online at www.nbmca.ca

For more information about Conservation Ontario’s watershed check-up initiative and the health of watersheds throughout the province, visit www.watershedcheckup.ca

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