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Natural Champions

# Media Release



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **New Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards provide a CHECK UP on the State of Ontario's Environment**

NEWMARKET (March 18, 2013) In conjunction with World Water Week, Ontario's Conservation Authorities have started to release a new series of Watershed Report Cards that provide a *CHECK UP* on the current state of many of Ontario's watersheds in terms of lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater and forest conditions.

"Conservation Authorities have been monitoring and assessing local conditions across Ontario for years and these report cards bring that information to the general public in a very user-friendly, informative way which we hope will help all of us make good decisions about how to protect important water and land resources that we rely on every day," said Dick Hibma, Chair of Conservation Ontario.

The report cards, which start rolling out March 18, 2013 online at [www.conservationontario.ca](http://www.conservationontario.ca), specifically look at how water and land resources are connected to each other and how our actions impact the health of those resources.

"Watershed reporting helps to communicate baseline information on watershed health, to identify local and regional differences, and to show us where to target our efforts for the most impact," said Mr. Hibma. Examples of activities that Conservation Authorities, landowners and their partners do to improve conditions in local watersheds include watershed planning, stewardship initiatives such as tree planting, rural water quality activities, water conservation programs, flood and erosion control, stormwater management and green infrastructure.

Ontario's water and land resources provide important ecological, economic and societal benefits and should be protected. Forests, lakes, rivers, natural spaces, wetlands, soils, plants and animals are all necessary for clean air, safe drinking water, sustainable water supplies, food, fuel, energy and most important, healthy bodies and minds.

Challenges such as urbanization and climate change significantly impact the health and resiliency of our watersheds which we need in order to adapt to changing global and local conditions. In order to plan how to protect these important resources, it's critical to monitor conditions and then analyze them in order to find out what it's telling us about changing conditions in local watersheds.

"We're very pleased to launch the first of these watershed report cards" Dick Hibma said. "More will be added as they are available."

The report cards report on three resource categories: surface water quality, forest conditions, and groundwater quality. The purpose of the report cards is to inform people living in Ontario about local conditions and to provide a management and evaluation tool for Conservation Authorities and other practitioners to measure environmental change and target programs.

The Conservation Authorities' watershed report cards are designed to be an ongoing product and will report once every five years. In between report cards, Conservation Authorities will continue to provide information and updates on local issues and conditions in many other ways.

To find your local report card, please visit [www.watershedcheckup.ca](http://www.watershedcheckup.ca).

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