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PRESS RELEASE

Time for a Check-up!

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The Watershed Report Cards are here! Staff from Saugeen Conservation has been working hard, compiling years of data and research into ‘report cards’ that actually grade our local environment on four major categories; *forests, wetlands and water quality (both surface and groundwater)*.

Saugeen has one of the largest watershed jurisdictions of all 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario. To make this process more manageable, the jurisdiction was divided into 10 subwatersheds, consisting of: *the Upper Saugeen River, the Lower Saugeen River, the South Saugeen, the Beatty, the Rocky, the North Saugeen, the Teeswater, the Penetangore, the Pine River as well as the Lake Fringe Rivers* (those smaller river systems /watersheds along the Lake Huron shoreline between Kincardine and Port Elgin).

Saugeen Conservation is not the only Conservation Authority to be releasing their official ‘Report Cards’. Conservation Ontario (the umbrella organization or all 36 Conservation Authorities across Ontario), has coordinated efforts across the province to ensure that all Watershed Report Cards will be released for World Water Week or Canada Water Week.



“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 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 summarize data over a five year period”, said Martha Nicol, Water Quality Specialist with Saugeen Conservation, “in this case, from 2007 – 2011”, she continued. “Although it is now 2013, it takes time to compile and interpret all the data that we collected over those five

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years in the field. Not only do the report cards provide landowners with a snapshot of environmental health in their own watersheds, it also compares the data with the last set of Report Cards (2002 – 2006). As a Conservation Authority we take that information very seriously. We have to ask ourselves, are things getting better, staying the same or getting worse? If it's the latter, then why, and what is causing conditions to change; what can we do to make things better?" she reported.

The 2007 – 2011 Watershed Report Cards (as well as the previous ones), for all 10 subwatersheds can be downloaded from both Saugeen Conservation's website www.svca.on.ca or Conservation Ontario's website at www.conservationontario.ca

"It's our role to keep watershed residents aware of the 'state of the local environment' said Nicol. "While these report cards are now complete and available for viewing, I can tell you that information and data for the next set of report cards is already being compiled", she commented. "As always, there is the hope that we are getting better at looking after the environment in which we live, work and play."

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