

Rouge River

State of the Watershed Report



Summary

CHAPTER
14

SUMMARY

14.0 SUMMARY

The *Rouge River State of the Watershed Report* represents the first major document in the development of an integrated watershed plan for the Rouge River watershed. The report characterizes the watershed systems, identifies key issues, and evaluates current conditions according to a set of watershed goals and objectives. Key findings arising from each theme area are listed at the beginning of each of the preceding chapters in this report. A concise summary of the overall findings of this characterization study is presented as Chapter 3 (Current Conditions and Issues) of the *Rouge River Watershed Plan – Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future* (TRCA, 2007). This information, together with findings from further analysis, served as the basis for the recommended management strategies that form the watershed plan.

One role of the *State of the Watershed Report* was to establish a baseline “Report Card” of watershed health, from which progress at implementing the watershed plan can be measured. A rating has been assigned for each watershed management objective, as a means of describing the extent to which current watershed conditions meet the targets defined for various indicators associated with the objective. The rating system is defined as follows:

Rank	Percent of Target Achieved
Excellent	better than 80
Good	between 70 and 79
Fair	between 60 and 69
Poor	between 50 and 59
Fail	below 50
TBD	Further study required; baseline data not available or insufficient.

A summary of the Rouge River Watershed Report Card ratings shows that current conditions are considered either “Good” or “Fair” for each of the objectives (see Table 14-1). This pattern suggests that the Rouge River Watershed, overall, may be at a critical threshold of health. Management decisions in the near future will be instrumental in ensuring continual improvement, rather than deterioration, in the ratings. The *Rouge River Watershed Plan* lays out a path toward achieving the overall goal for management of the Rouge River Watershed:

To work towards a healthy, sustainable Rouge River watershed by protecting, restoring, and enhancing its ecological and cultural integrity within the context of a regional natural heritage system.

Table 14-1: Summary of Rouge River Watershed Report Card Ratings

<i>Watershed Goals and Objectives</i>	Overall Rating
<p><i>Groundwater Quantity and Quality</i> <i>Goal:</i> Groundwater of sufficient quantity and quality to support ecological functions, aquatic habitats, native fish communities and sustainable human needs, including drinking water, agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect, restore and enhance groundwater recharge and discharge. 	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect, restore and enhance groundwater quality. 	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure sustainable rates of groundwater use. 	Good
<p><i>Surface Water Quantity</i> <i>Goal:</i> Surface waters of a quality, volume and naturally variable rate of flow to: Protect aquatic and terrestrial life and ecological functions; Protect human life and property from risks due to flooding; Contribute to the protection of Lake Ontario as a domestic drinking water source; Support sustainable agricultural, industrial, and commercial water supply needs; Support swimming, fishing and the opportunity to safely consume fish; and Contribute to the removal of Toronto from the Great Lakes list of Areas of Concern</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and restore the natural variability of annual and seasonal stream flow. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and restore natural levels of baseflow. 	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate or minimize risks to human life and property due to flooding and erosion. 	Good
<p><i>Surface Water Quality</i> <i>Goal:</i> Surface waters of a quality, volume and naturally variable rate of flow to: Protect aquatic and terrestrial life and ecological functions; Protect human life and property from risks due to flooding; Contribute to the protection of Lake Ontario as a domestic drinking water source; Support sustainable agricultural, industrial, and commercial water supply needs; Support swimming, fishing and the opportunity to safely consume fish; and Contribute to the removal of Toronto from the Great Lakes list of Areas of Concern.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet standards for body contact recreation at nearshore beaches and in the river. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and restore surface water quality with respect to other pollutants, to ensure protection of aquatic life, ecological functions and water supply needs. 	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and restore surface water quality with respect to toxic contaminants, to ensure protection of aquatic life, ecological functions, human health, and water supply need. 	Good
<p><i>Fluvial Geomorphology</i> <i>Goal:</i> Natural, stable stream channels and corridors that allow for natural stream flow</p>	

<i>Watershed Goals and Objectives</i>	Overall Rating
patterns, support diverse aquatic habitat, limit sediment loading and protect human life, property and infrastructure from risks due to erosion and slope instability.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and restore natural channel morphology and stability. 	Fair
Aquatic System	
Goal: A healthy aquatic system that supports a diversity of native habitats and communities and provides sustainable public use opportunities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, restore and enhance the health and diversity of native aquatic habitats, communities and species. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for sustainable fishing opportunities and the safe consumption of fish. 	Good
Terrestrial System	
Goal: A healthy terrestrial system that supports a diversity of native habitats and communities, a more natural watershed hydrology, cleaner air and sustainable public use opportunities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, restore and enhance natural cover to improve connectivity, biodiversity and ecological function. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, restore and enhance terrestrial natural heritage system quality and function to minimize the negative influences of surrounding land use. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase native terrestrial biodiversity. 	TBD
Air Quality	
Goal: Air of a quality that protects human health, natural ecosystems and crops, and does not exacerbate global climate change.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and restore air quality. 	Fair
Cultural Heritage	
Goal: Recognition, preservation, and celebration of cultural heritage in the Rouge River watershed to increase awareness and understanding of human relationships with the environment.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, document, protect and celebrate cultural heritage resources. 	Good
Nature-based Recreation	
Goal: Opportunities for public enjoyment that are compatible with, and raise awareness of, the watershed's natural and cultural heritage.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that recreation activities in the watershed are compatible with ecological and cultural integrity. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for a variety of appropriate public uses and experiences in representative natural and cultural landscapes. 	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a continuous trail network linking Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine, with connections to local communities, neighbouring watershed trail systems and natural and cultural heritage features. 	Fair
Land and Resource Use	
Goal: A healthy watershed with a mosaic of land and resource uses (at watershed and	

<i>Watershed Goals and Objectives</i>	Overall Rating
community scales) that are compatible with the protection and improvement of ecological health. Land and resource uses include: Rouge Park, urban and rural settlements, agriculture, golf courses, aggregate extraction, and transportation and utility corridors.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice sustainable resource use by individuals, households, businesses, institutions and governments. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve sustainability in urban form at building site, community and watershed scales. 	Fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect agricultural lands for food and crop production and as a vital component of the watershed landscape, by sustaining a viable agricultural industry. 	Fair

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

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ROUGE RIVER WATERSHED PLANNING STUDY

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Watershed Plan

Rouge River Watershed Plan – Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future. Report of the Rouge Watershed Task Force. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Final Draft 2007.

Supporting Documents

2006 New Home Builder Customer Satisfaction Study – TRCA Supplemental Study. J.D. Power and Associates. 2006.

Action Plan for Sustainable Practices – Implementation Strategies for the Residential and Business Sectors in the Greater Toronto Area. Freeman Associates. 2006.

Development of a Sustainable Community Scenario for the Rouge River Watershed. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. 2007.

Rouge River State of the Watershed Report. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. 2007.

Rouge River Watershed Based Fisheries Management Plan (in progress, 2007)

Rouge River Watershed HSP-F Update and Future Scenarios Modelling. EBNFLO Environmental in association with Aquafor Beech Ltd. 2006.

Rouge River Watershed Scenario Modelling and Analysis Report. TRCA. 2007.