



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
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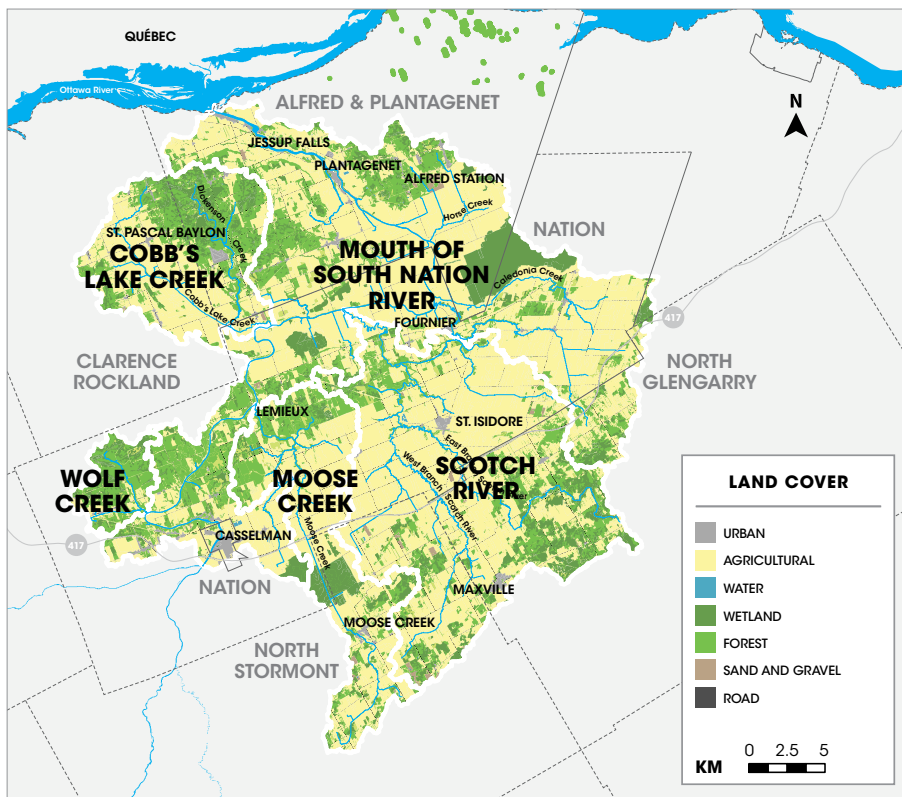
LOWER SOUTH NATION

SUBWATERSHED REPORT CARD

NOVEMBER 2018

SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION

SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION (SNC) works with partners to conserve, restore, and manage natural resources in local watersheds. Monitoring helps us better understand our watershed, focus our efforts where they are needed most, and track changes over time. The Lower South Nation Subwatershed is part of the larger South Nation Watershed and comprises parts of the City of Clarence Rockland, Township of Alfred-Plantagenet, Nation Municipality, Township of North Stormont and Township of North Glengarry. This report is a snapshot of current conditions, using key indicators such as forest, wetland, and water resources. Resource conditions will be revisited in 2022 to review changes and trends.



LOWER SOUTH NATION SUBWATERSHED


DRAINAGE AREA

990 km²

CATCHMENT AREAS

COBB'S LAKE CREEK
MOOSE CREEK
MOUTH OF SOUTH NATION RIVER
SCOTCH RIVER
WOLF CREEK

SNC MAINTAINS AND PROTECTS 4,384 KM² OF EASTERN ONTARIO



Youth Fish Camp along the South Nation River at Jessup's Falls Conservation Area

WHAT IS SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION DOING?

PROTECTING THE SNC JURISDICTION

SNC is a local organization with a mandate to conserve, restore, and manage the water, land, and natural habitats of the SNC Jurisdiction, a 4,384 km² area. SNC works closely with partner municipalities, government agencies, individual landowners, and community groups to maintain and improve the natural environment.

FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING, AND LOW WATER RESPONSE

Data, including weather information, water levels and flows, snow pack, and ice conditions, are used to help protect life and property from natural hazards such as high and low water conditions. For watershed conditions, visit www.nation.on.ca

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Land use planning input and administration of Ontario Regulation 167/06 (Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses) ensures the protection of people and their property, and that development does not negatively impact wetlands, shorelines, or waterways.

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND STEWARDSHIP

Public workshops, school programs, and local events provide environmental education opportunities. Programs exist to provide technical advice and financial assistance to landowners to implement stewardship projects that enhance and protect the jurisdiction.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND REPORTING

Data collected through a variety of monitoring activities, including surface water, groundwater, and fisheries sampling, is used to evaluate and report on existing watershed conditions, identify changes, and target stewardship activities.

FORESTRY PROGRAM

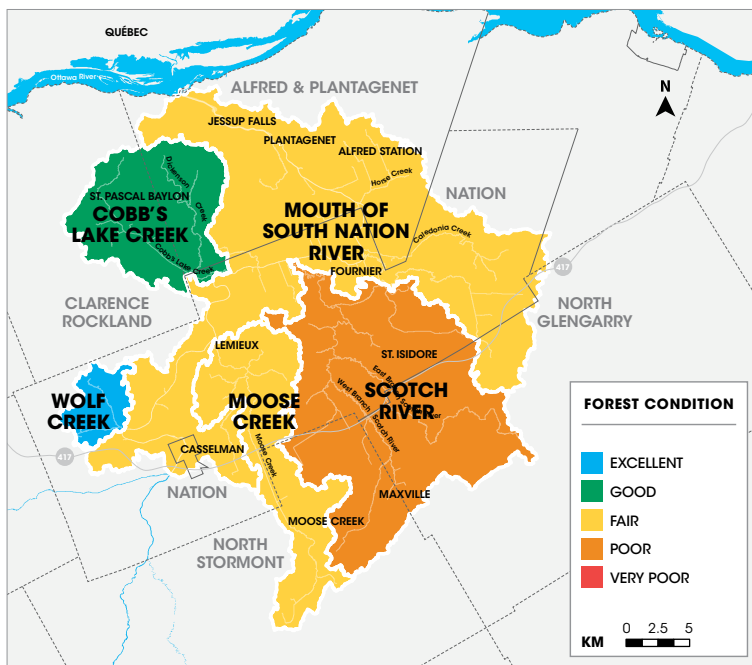
SNC has planted over 3 million trees locally to act as windbreaks, control erosion along stream banks, and reforest idle land. More than 1,000 landowners in the SNC jurisdiction have been served by our tree planting program. SNC is a partner in the management of over 20,000 acres of community forest land in Eastern Ontario. SNC encourages responsible, recreational use of our forests.



FOREST CONDITIONS

Forests are an essential part of a healthy watershed. Trees filter our air and water, prevent flooding and erosion, and provide food and habitat for wildlife. They also provide many economic, recreational, cultural, and social benefits. The quality of forest cover conditions is based on: **FOREST COVER** – the total area that is covered in trees; **FOREST INTERIOR** – the wooded area that is more than 100 metres from a forest's edge (required by many species for survival); and **FOREST RIPARIAN ZONE** – the amount of forest within 30-metres on either side of a watercourse.

Environment and Climate Change Canada recommends a minimum of 30% Forest Cover, 10% Forest Interior, and that 75% of stream length should be naturally vegetated on both sides of the stream.



LOWER SOUTH NATION SUBWATERSHED

TOTAL
FOREST COVER

28%

FOREST INTERIOR

9%

RIPARIAN COVER

22%

Forest Cover in the Lower South Nation Subwatershed is low at **28%**. Overall, total forest cover and forest interior is below recommended guidelines and needs some improvement. The riparian cover needs considerable improvement and is poor at **22%** cover. With such productive agricultural land in this area, SNC is helping landowners and municipalities increase forest cover through programs such as the Tree Planting Program, the Woodlot Advisory Service, and the Clean Water Grant Program. Nearly **120,000 TREES** have been planted in and around the Lower South Nation Watershed over the past 5 years, resulting in 154 acres being planted. Additionally, 20 woodlot owners have partnered with SNC for the Woodlot Advisory Service, while 2,000 acres have been enrolled by SNC in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program.

EMERALD ASH BORER

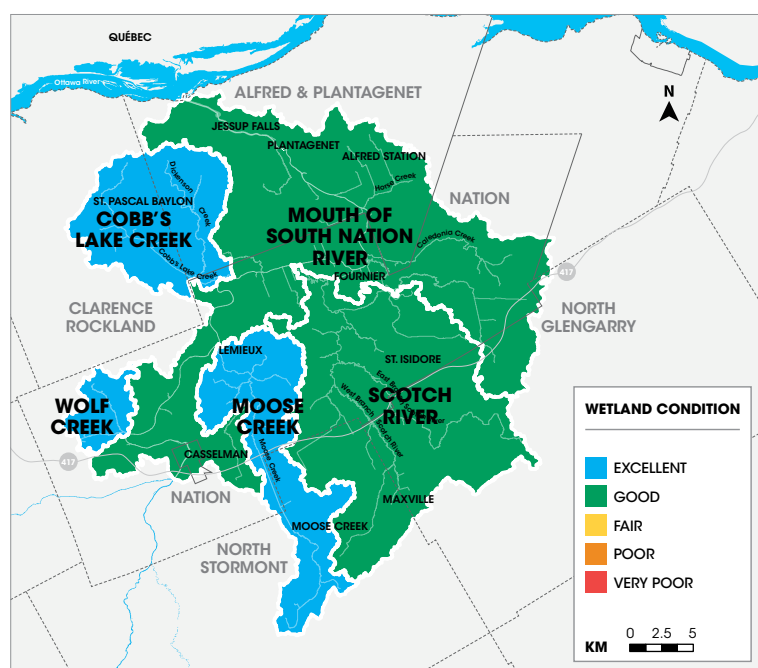
The emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive beetle, native to Asia, that has caused considerable damage to ash trees across SNC's jurisdiction. SNC is helping to manage these pests by releasing 1 mm non-stinging wasps, within controlled areas throughout the jurisdiction, that target EAB eggs and larvae. Invasive species management initiatives help SNC protect biodiversity across the watershed. Through a partnership with the City of Ottawa, SNC offers cost-share grants to help Ottawa residents replace ash trees.



WETLAND CONDITIONS

Wetlands provide natural flood control during peak flows and act as water reservoirs during dry weather. They filter pollutants before they enter streams, provide important habitat for plants and animals, and provide numerous economic, recreation, and aesthetic benefits. **WETLAND COVER** is the total area that is covered in swamp, marsh, fen, and bog habitat.

Environment and Climate Change Canada recommends 10% wetland cover.



LOWER SOUTH NATION SUBWATERSHED

TOTAL WETLAND COVER

12%

Wetland cover is excellent to good across the Lower South Nation Subwatershed at **12%** total wetland cover. Higher wetland cover is found in the headwaters of Wolf Creek, Moose Creek, and Cobb's Lake Creek. Some Provincially Significant Wetland complexes include the Alfred Bog (39.6 km²), Pendleton Swap (2.1 km²), and Wolf Creek Swamp (1.4 km²).

ALFRED BOG

The Alfred Bog is a domed peat bog in the Lower South Nation Subwatershed and is considered the largest high-quality bog in southern Ontario. Water enters the area mainly from natural precipitation, creating conditions ideal for the bog's dominant vegetation – sphagnum moss. The bog is home to many rare plant and animal species, as well as a healthy moose population.

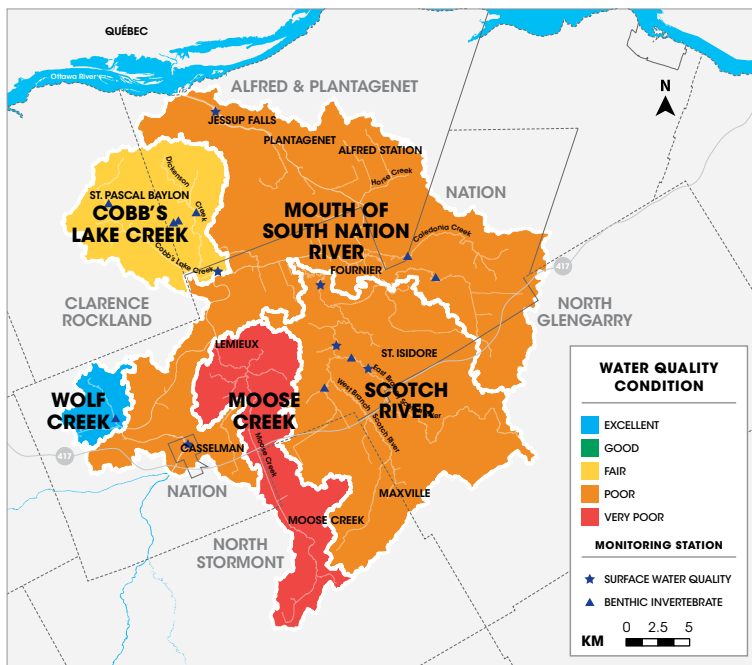


SURFACE WATER QUALITY

Healthy river systems provide invaluable services and benefits that sustain life and fuel human economies. Surface water quality is essential to healthy rivers. Two indicators that help determine water quality are:

- **TOTAL PHOSPHORUS** is naturally occurring in rivers, but can be elevated due to detergents, fertilizers, and sewage. Too much can result in algae blooms, affecting oxygen levels, and the fish and biota that live there.
- **BENTHIC MACROINVERTEBRATES** are small creatures that live in the river including: insects, mollusks, and worms. They are very sensitive to pollution and are excellent indicators for water quality and stream health.

Overall, water quality in the Lower South Nation Subwatershed is poor. Phosphorus levels routinely exceed the Provincial Water Quality Objective (0.03 mg/L), while benthic invertebrate communities range from good condition to poor condition depending on location. Sites in good stream health have good forest cover, especially along the banks of the rivers. Sites requiring improvement have low forest cover and are prone to erosion. Programs administered by SNC offer grants to landowners to help improve the condition of rivers. These programs have received national and international recognition as effective tools to improve water quality.



Good surface water quality is essential to healthy rivers.

GROUNDWATER CONDITIONS

Groundwater, an important and vital natural resource found in aquifers below the Earth's surface, supplies more than 95% of the rural population SNC's jurisdiction with water. Approximately 42% of the population within SNC's jurisdiction rely on groundwater for drinking water supplies, with 12% coming from municipal wells, and 30% from private wells.



NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES

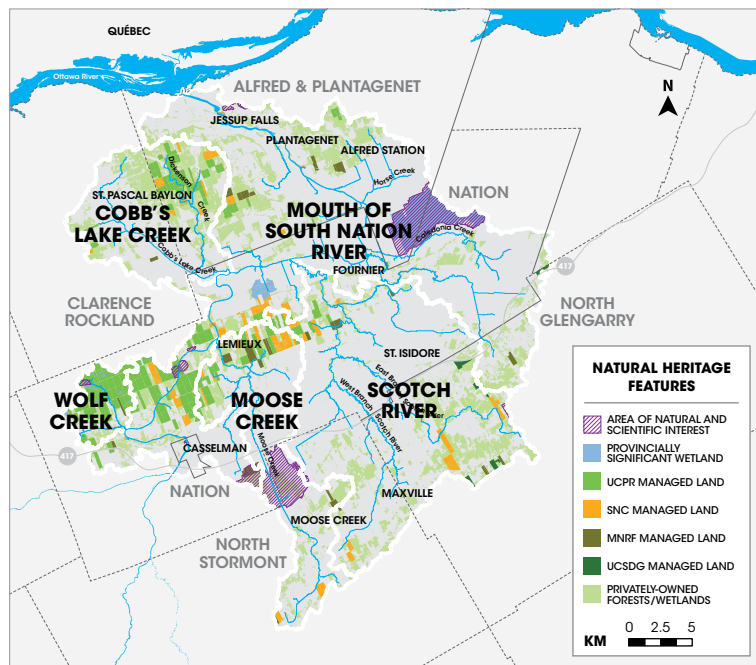
The Lower South Nation Subwatershed has many natural spaces that support a rich diversity of plants and animals, wetlands, forests, streams, significant geological formations, and important corridors for wildlife. The following map displays forests and wetlands that are protected as conservation lands. Most forests and wetlands in the watershed are privately owned and managed and provide important linkages to other natural heritage features on the landscape.

LOWER SOUTH NATION SUBWATERSHED NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES	% OF SUBWATERSHED
SNC Land	2.0%
Crown Land	2.0%
Prescott Russell Land	5.4%
Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry Land	0.2%
Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest	3.6%
Provincially Significant Wetlands	2.0%
Privately-Owned Forests and Wetlands	20.0%

*There is some overlap between categories



PUBLIC FOREST/WETLAND
 PRIVATELY-OWNED FORESTS/WETLANDS



SNC can help people manage, enhance, and protect natural heritage features located on their properties through the Woodlot Advisory Service, Tree Planting Program, and Clean Water Program, among others.

LOWER SOUTH NATION FISH

The Ontario Stream Assessment Protocol was followed at all monitoring stations in 2017 to monitor fish species and habitat. A species of interest that is only found in the Lower South Nation River is the Freshwater drum. Their name derives from the sound male Freshwater drums make during the breeding season to attract females. Sonic muscles vibrate against their swim bladder to produce a grunting sound. Anglers know that Freshwater drum are powerful fish on rod and reel, but they are not highly prized as a table fish. They should, however, be prized as predators of the invasive Zebra mussel.



**Alfred Bog – A Provincially Significant Wetland
in the Lower South Nation Subwatershed**

TOGETHER WE CAN IMPROVE THE LOWER SOUTH NATION SUBWATERSHED

BE A WATERSHED STEWARD!

By working together, we can make a difference. Improving the health of the Lower South Nation Subwatershed requires us to make choices that balance environmental concerns with everyday life. Here are some examples of stewardship activities that we can help you undertake to enhance your property and protect human and environmental health.

CLEAN WATER GRANTS

There is funding available to landowners in the SNC jurisdiction for cost-share projects that help improve water quality including: stream bank erosion control, decommissioning abandoned wells, education initiatives, among many others. Ask for more information on the Clean Water Program and Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program.

STREAM WATCH

The Stream Watch program uses a macro stream assessment protocol and local volunteers for surveying streams. Volunteers are guided by an experienced coordinator to help collect field data in shallow streams. Volunteers participate in activities such as fish sampling, aquatic invertebrate sampling, stream clean-ups, and habitat rehabilitation projects.

PROVIDING NATURAL SPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET OUTDOORS

SNC wants you to get outdoors and enjoy natural spaces. SNC has over 12,000 acres of public natural space that includes 14 day-use parks and trails, 9 river access points, 5 canoe/kayak routes along the South Nation River, and 3 Geo-Passports – self-guided geocaching adventures. SNC looks to acquire environmentally significant properties, protecting important natural resources for future generations.

WOODLOT ADVISORY SERVICE

Would you like to save up to 75% on your property taxes, while maximizing the potential of your woodlot? SNC's Woodlot Advisory Service promotes efficient and sustainable management of forests and establishes additional forest cover across the jurisdiction. A Woodlot Advisory Service technician will assist you in becoming aware of the value of your forest and the benefits it can provide.

TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

Everyone can benefit from planting suitable trees on their property. SNC partners with Trees Ontario to offer seedlings, site preparation/tending, and planting for a subsidized fee to landowners within the jurisdiction. There may be additional subsidies available if you are a City of Ottawa resident through the Green Acres Program or the Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program.

**This subwatershed report was prepared following the
2012 Conservation Authority Watershed Report Card Guidelines.**

