



“This cross-Canada overview is a crucial step towards effective stewardship of Canada’s freshwater health.”

—Elizabeth Hendriks, WWF VP, Freshwater Program

May 2011

WWF launches consultations to develop best practices for watershed health reporting

September 2012

We develop and test a methodology for assessing watershed health

September 2013

With our methodology finalized, we start assessing Canadian watersheds

October 2014

With the help of experts, we begin developing a methodology for assessing threats to watershed health

July 2015

The online tool is launched, presenting our assessment of half of Canada’s watersheds

2017

We complete our assessment of the health of Canada’s watersheds and the threats they face

TAKING THE PULSE OF CANADA'S RIVERS

WWF has created a comprehensive online tool that reveals the health of and threats to our most valuable resource: freshwater.

In July 2015, WWF launched watershedreports.wwf.ca: an interactive online tool that presents the results of the coast-to-coast freshwater assessments we've been conducting since 2013.

"Canadians have an important responsibility to steward our nation's freshwater resources," says Elizabeth Hendriks, vice-president of our freshwater program. Through these watershed reports, we're aiming to inspire all Canadians to take action and give them the information they need to be effective.

Over the past 18 months, we have assessed half of Canada's watersheds, gathering monitoring data from a host of sources and analyzing it using a methodology we developed in collaboration with leading scientific experts.

After crunching all the numbers, we assigned ratings for four key health

indicators: water flow, water quality, bugs (benthic invertebrates), and fish. We also assessed seven major threats to watershed health: pollution, climate change, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, overuse of water, alteration of water flows, and invasive species.

Nationwide, only two watersheds were healthy enough to earn a score of "good," while pollution, climate change, and habitat fragmentation posed significant threats from coast to coast.

Knowledge is power. Click on the website's map to discover how healthy your local watershed is.

Funding local action—with help from Loblaw

WWF's Loblaw Water Fund launched in 2014 to help non-profit groups conserve freshwater habitat, protect species, and collect important data.

Our first round of funding for 10 projects resulted in 75 hectares of freshwater habitat restored, more than 7,200 native trees and plants planted, and more than 1,500 volunteers involved across nine provinces and territories.

Over the past year, we funded 14 further projects, from Alberta's Battle River to the wetlands on B.C.'s Salt Spring Island to the Northwest Territories' Mackenzie Basin.



Blanding's turtle

Protecting freshwater habitat helps thousands of different species, including Blanding's turtles. These long-living reptiles with a distinctive yellow chin and throat spend most of their time in lakes, streams, marshes, and swamps. Their numbers are dangerously low, as a result of threats like habitat loss and road mortalities. Canada's Species at Risk Act currently lists Blanding's turtles as "threatened" in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence region and "endangered" in Nova Scotia.

BLANDING'S TURTLE, ONTARIO, CANADA © NICOLE RICHARDS / WWF-CANADA

RELEASING SPINY SOFTSHELL TURTLES © WWF-CANADA / JARMIILA BECKA LEE