

# Watershed Report Card

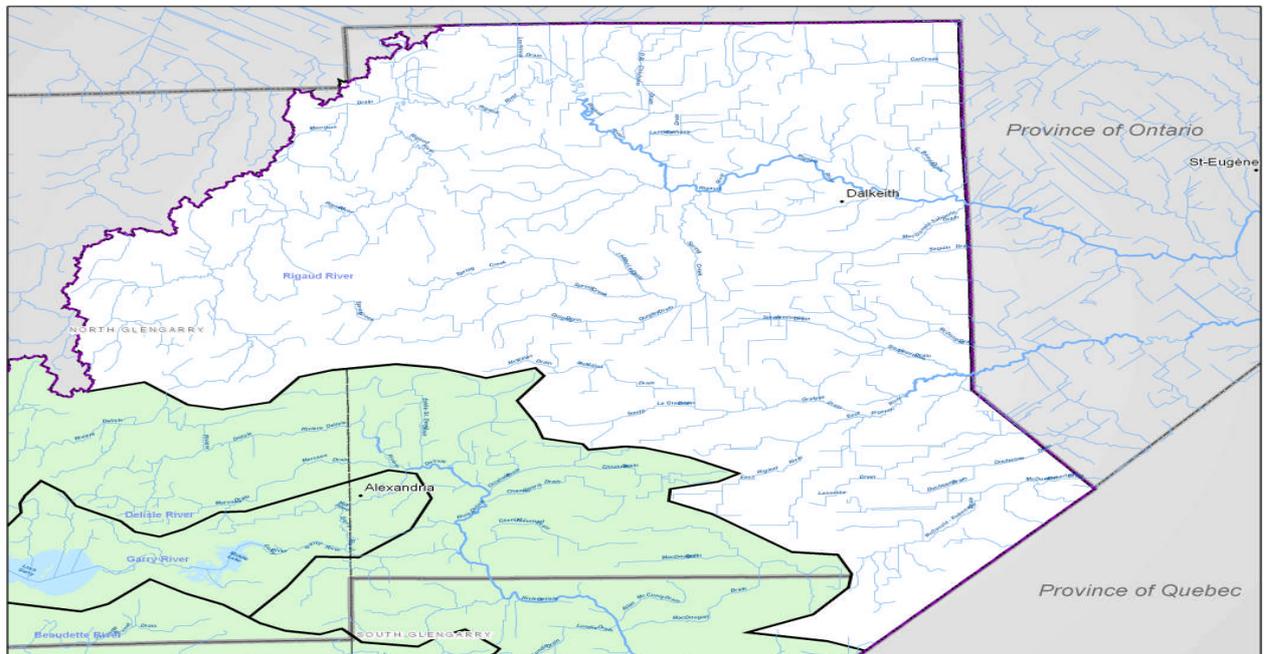
## Rigaud River

### Grades:

- C+** Forest Conditions
- D** Wetland Conditions
- D** Surface Water Quality



This Watershed Report Card outlines the environmental information for the Rigaud River watershed as of 2006. The information provides a description of forest, wetland and water parameters and ideas for local action to assist agency staff, municipalities and interested parties working for the protection of local forest, wetland and water resources.



**Municipalities:** Municipality of North Glengarry

**Watercourses:** Rigaud River, Spring Creek, Cat Creek



# Forest Conditions

Grade **C+**

Overall, forest conditions in the Rigaud River watershed rank an C+ grade. The amount of forest cover (27%) is considered high enough to sustain native plants and animals. There is little forest interior (2.5%) present meaning the existing woodlots are not large and wide enough to support sensitive species that need to live in large protective forests.

The Remedial Action Plan delisting criteria is 5% forest interior habitat in the Area of Concern tributary watershed. Forest interior habitat consists of forest cover in which the forest extends 200 metres from forest edge and has a minimum core area size of 40 hectares.

Indicators	Rigaud River Results		Raisin Region Watershed Average		Indicator Description
<b>Forest Cover</b>	27%	C	36%	B	Forest cover is the percentage of the watershed that is forested. It is believed there should be at least 25-30% natural cover to sustain native plants and animals.
<b>Forest Interior</b>	2%	D	4%	D	Forest interior refers to the protected area inside a woodlot that some species require to survive. The outer 200 metre perimeter is 'edge' habitat and prone to stresses from predators, alien species and the elements.

## Local Actions Needed for Improvement:

- Protection of all woodlands and Locally Significant Wetlands at the municipal planning level is a very important and effective method of preserving local forest cover.
- Forest interior can be increased by "bulking up" woodlots to make them larger and rounder by planting native trees and shrubs around existing woodlots or allowing the edges to naturalize on their own (eg. Retire land near woodlot edges).
- Connections can be made between woodlots and other habitat types by planting hedgerows or windbreaks along fields, waterways and roads.
- To improve the health of individual woodlots, owners should prepare and follow Woodlot Management Plans.





# Wetland Conditions

## Grade **D**

Overall, wetland conditions in the Rigaud River watershed rank an D grade. There is 1 264 ha of wetland cover, which represents 4.1% of the sub-watershed area. The wetland cover for the Rigaud River sub-watershed falls short of the the Remedial Action Plan delisting criteria, that highlights that sub-watersheds should contain 7-10 % wetland cover.

Wetlands are an important source of habitat for fish and wildlife species. Wetlands serve as flood control areas by holding water and reducing flow. Wetlands act as holding areas for the local water table and play a very important role in water quality improvement.

Indicators	Rigaud River Results		Raisin Region Watershed Average		Indicator Description
<b>Wetland Cover</b>	4%	D	8%	C	<b>Wetland cover is the percentage of the watershed that is wetland (swamp and/or marsh). It is believed there should be at least 10% natural wetland cover to sustain biodiversity and wetland functioning.</b>

### Local Actions Needed for Improvement:

- Protection of all Provincially and Locally Significant Wetlands at the municipal planning level is a very important and effective method of preserving wetland cover.
- Wetland biodiversity can be increased by planting native trees and shrubs around existing wetlands or allowing the edges to naturalize on their own (eg. Retire land near wetland edges). This will provide essential habitat for many wetland species.
- Connections can be made between wetlands and other habitat types, such as forests, by planting hedgerows or windbreaks along fields, waterways and roads to support the movement of native species.
- To improve the health of individual wetlands (swamp), owners should prepare and follow Woodlot Management Plans and fence out any livestock.
- To create or improve the size of individual wetlands, owners should contact the Conservation Authority for assistance in designing a wetland project.





# Surface Water Quality

## Grade **D**

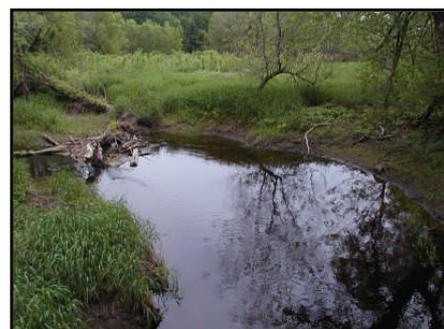
The Rigaud River sub-watershed ranks a D with respect to overall water-quality based on benthic and phosphorus. The Rigaud River sub-watershed needs more information on bacteria in order to grade it properly.

A Hilsenhoff Index score of higher than 5.00 indicates that organic pollution is likely and water quality deteriorates.

Indicators	Rigaud River Results		Raisin Region Watershed Average		Provincial Guideline	Indicator Description
<b>Benthic Score (H.I)</b>	6.01	F	6.30	F	5.00	Benthic organisms are the aquatic invertebrates that live in stream sediments and are a good indicator of water quality and stream health. The Hilsenhoff Index assigns a weighting for each taxon of invertebrate based on its tolerance of organic pollution. The sum of the weighted scores gives an indication of the degree of organic pollution in the stream.
<b>Phosphorus (mg/L)</b>	0.062	C	0.173	F	0.03	Phosphorus is found in such products as soaps, detergents, fertilizers and pesticides and contributes to excess algae and low oxygen in streams and lakes.
<b>Bacteria (per 100 ml)</b>	NA	NA	180	F	100	E. Coli bacteria are found in human and animal waste and their presence in water indicates fecal contamination. E. Coli bacteria are a strong indicator for the potential to have other disease-causing organisms in the water

### Local Actions Needed for Improvement:

- Plant buffers (grassed or treed) along creeks, rivers and open drains to filter runoff and provide shade.
- Implement protection of identified groundwater infiltration zones and conduct groundwater research and monitoring.
- Target soil erosion measures to areas of high erodibility.
- Encourage landowners to repair or replace faulty septic systems.
- Encourage agricultural Best Management Practices in the areas of manure storage and spreading, soil conservation practices, fertilizer and pesticide application, milkhouse washwater disposal and cattle access restriction.
- Promote the completion of Environmental Farm Plans and Nutrient Management Plans
- Protection of Provincially and locally significant wetlands in Official Plan





# Rigaud River

## Features

<b>Area</b>	The total area of Rigaud River sub-watershed 30 888 ha (18.3% of Raisin Region Watershed).
<b>Land Use</b>	The major land use in the Rigaud is agriculture.
<b>Soil Type</b>	Soil type is mostly clays and loams with poor drainage (some pockets of loam with good drainage are scattered throughout) and muck with very poor drainage.
<b>Stream Flow</b>	The Rigaud River is a 5th order stream system with 88.9 % of its stream length classified as first to third order (headwater) streams. Overall stream length of the Rigaud is 423 km (< 20m width), 7 km or 1.7 % flow through public lands while 416 km or 98.3 % flow through private lands.
<b>Fishery Resources</b>	Warm water forage and sport-fish community of 27 species, none of which are species of concern.
<b>Woodlot Size</b>	Rigaud River sub-watershed has 549 stands with an average size of 15.2 ha. The largest stand is 962.8 ha.
<b>Riparian Forest</b>	Rigaud River has 423 km of stream flowing through both public and private lands. On public lands, 5 of the 7 km (71.4 %) have vegetative riparian cover. On private lands, 63 of the 416 km (15.1 %) of stream have vegetative riparian cover.
<b>Rare Species</b>	Unknown
<b>Significant Natural Sites</b>	<p>Provincially Significant Wetlands –Black Lake Swamp, Mud Lake Swamp, Rigaud River Wetland</p> <p>Locally Significant Wetlands - Fassifern Swamp, Hwy 417 Swamp, Laggan Swamp, McMillon Dr. Swamp, Spring Creek Swamp</p> <p>Significant Natural Areas - None</p> <p>Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest – Rigaud River Headwaters Forest, Kirkhill Forest</p>



May, 2007

### Raisin Region Conservation Authority

P.O Box 429, 18045 County Rd 2

Cornwall, Ontario K6H 5T2

Phone: (613) 938-3611 Fax: (613) 938-3221

[Info@rrca.on.ca](mailto:Info@rrca.on.ca)

Web Site: [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

