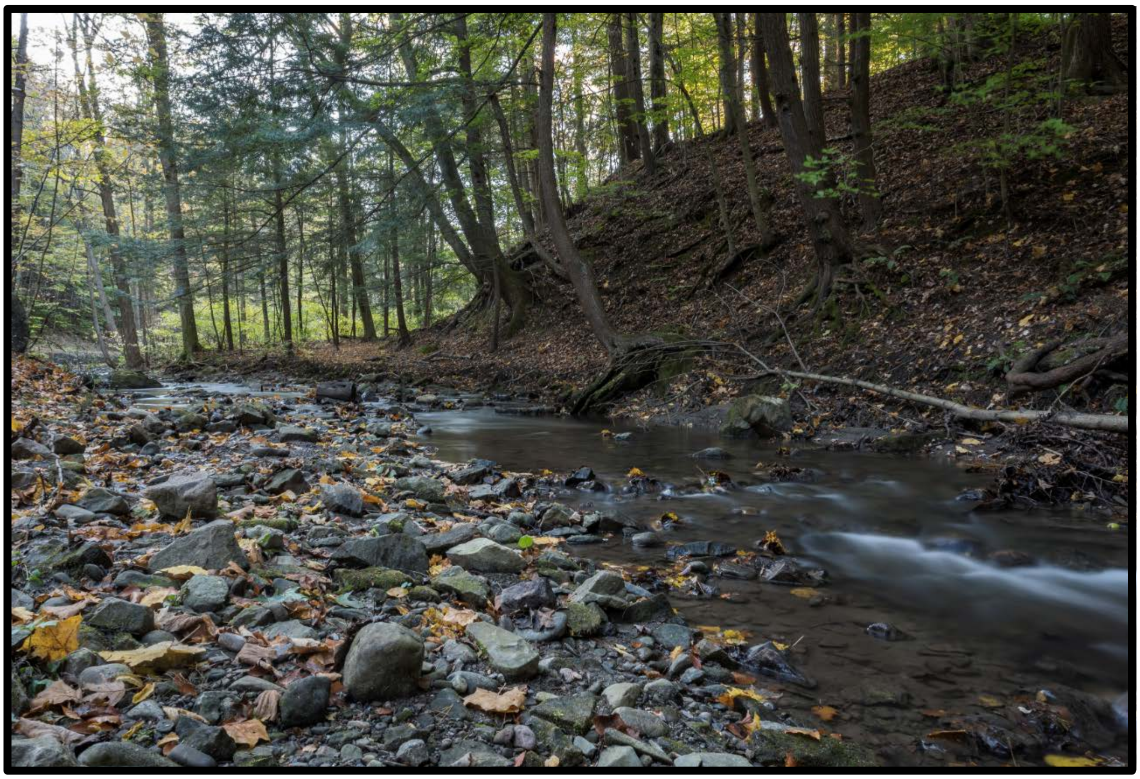
NPCA WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM: SUMMARY REPORT OF THE YEAR 2019



MAY 2020

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Table of Acronyms

AOC	Area of Concern
BC MOE	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
BioMAP	Biological Monitoring and Assessment Program
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CCME	Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
CWQG	Canadian Water Quality Guidelines
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
EMRB	Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Branch
HIA	Hamilton International Airport
HBI	Hilsenhoff Biotic Index
MECP	Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks
NPCA	Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
PGMN	Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network
PWQMN	Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network
PWQO	Provincial Water Quality Objective
ODWS	Ontario Drinking Water Standards
OPG	Ontario Power Generation
RMN	Regional Municipality of Niagara
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WQI	Water Quality Index- for CCME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Water Quality Monitoring Program was implemented in 2001 and is operated in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Regional Municipality of Niagara, Haldimand County and the City of Hamilton. Through these partnerships the NPCA collects water quality samples at 80 surface water stations and 13 groundwater stations located throughout the NPCA watershed. The NPCA utilizes both chemical and biological approaches to evaluate the surface water quality. Surface water quality samples are analysed for several indicators such as nutrients, *E. coli*, suspended solids, and metals. Surface water results are used to calculate the Canada Council of Ministries of Environment (CCME) Water Quality Index. This index is a Canada-wide standard for reporting water quality information. The NPCA also evaluates water quality in the watershed by sampling the aquatic animals at most of the NPCA surface water quality stations using the Ontario Biological Benthos Monitoring (OBBN) protocol. The density and diversity of animals living in the watercourse provides a biological snapshot of the water quality. Groundwater samples are evaluated by comparing monitoring results to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) Drinking Water Standards.

For surface water, the biological and chemical monitoring results indicate that most of Niagara's watersheds have poor water quality. Total phosphorus, *E. coli*, suspended solids, and chlorides from non-point sources (agricultural/livestock runoff, faulty septic systems) and point sources (combined sewer overflow, urban stormwater) continue to be the major causes of impairment in the NPCA watershed. Twelve Mile Creek continues to have the best water quality rating in the NPCA watershed.

For groundwater, results indicate that water quality generally meets Ontario Drinking Water Standards. Reported groundwater quality exceedances were mainly related to naturally occurring bedrock conditions; however, two groundwater monitoring stations were found to have elevated nitrate concentrations. These nitrate exceedances have been investigated thoroughly by the NPCA, Niagara Public Health and the MECP are likely attributed to surrounding agricultural land use and/or faulty septic systems.

The Water Quality Monitoring Program continues to provide valuable information about the health of the NPCA watershed. Often the way the land is managed is reflected in the health of our water resources. The fact that the water quality is generally poor in the NPCA watershed has been caused by decades of environmental degradation. However, water quality improvement programs that improve how nutrients are managed, increase riparian buffers, and improve forest cover can begin to address these impacts. It will likely take many years of implementing these programs before the water quality in the NPCA watershed improves to the point where it is able to meet federal and provincial water quality guidelines and objectives. As such, it is recommended that the NPCA continue to monitor both our surface water and groundwater to ensure that there is up-to-date current water quality information available, be able to quantify trends, and continue to identify sources of contamination within the NPCA watershed.

NPCA WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM: SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program was initiated in 2001. Before 2001, the NPCA was involved in numerous water quality related initiatives but did not have a dedicated monitoring program. The NPCA has since established an extensive network of monitoring stations located throughout the watershed with the purpose of gathering long-term water quality data for both surface water and groundwater. This network represents the largest and most comprehensive water quality monitoring program in the Niagara Peninsula. The NPCA monitoring network is operated in partnership with the MECP, Regional Municipality of Niagara (RMN), Haldimand County and City of Hamilton. The main objective of the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program is to assess water quality in local watersheds using a network of chemical and biological monitoring stations. The purpose of this Annual Report is to summarize the water quality data collected from these monitoring stations and provide recommendations for future monitoring and stewardship initiatives.

2.0 SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

2.1 CHEMICAL MONITORING

In 2019, the NPCA monitored surface water quality at 80 stations covering 52 watersheds. Grab samples are collected monthly during the ice-free season and analyzed for several parameters including nutrients, metals, bacteria, suspended solids, and general chemistry. The chemical monitoring program is mainly funded through the municipal levy, however the NPCA does receive additional support for lab analysis from the following partners: RMN, MECP, ECCC and the City of Hamilton. These are described in detailed below.

2.1.1 NIAGARA RIVER AOC TRIBUTARY MONITORING PROGRAM

The Niagara River Remedial Action Plan Stage 2 Report released in 1995 by Environment Canada and the MOE outlines 37 recommended remedial actions to restore the health of the watershed. Recommendation #29 is to develop and implement a Welland River and Niagara River tributaries monitoring program to monitor rural non-point sources of pollution and track the effectiveness of stewardship efforts (MOE and EC 1995). To fulfill this recommendation, the Niagara River Area of Concern (AOC) Tributary Monitoring Program was implemented in 2003 through a partnership between the NPCA, Environment Canada and Climate Change (ECCC) and the MECP. The objectives of the program are to establish baseline water quality conditions at selected tributaries and track changes in water quality over time. Monitoring stations for the Niagara River AOC Tributary Monitoring Program were selected as specified in the funding agreement and sampling was initiated in 2003 and concluded in 2016. Stations were selected to both overlap with historic stations and fill data gaps where required. Commencing in 2017, the NPCA began funding the lab analysis for these monitoring stations.

2.1.2 PROVINCIAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK

In 2003 a partnership was established with the MECP through the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) whereby NPCA staff collect monthly water samples at six stations located within the NPCA watershed and the MECP provides laboratory services. The PWQMN was established in 1964 to collect surface water quality information from rivers and streams at strategic locations throughout Ontario. Over time, stations have been added and discontinued in response to changing MECP and program-specific needs. The NPCA has 13 PWQMN stations which are located on the Black Creek (Fort Erie), Welland River (West Lincoln & Welland), Twenty Mile Creek (West Lincoln and Lincoln), Forty Mile Creek (Grimsby), Four Mile Creek (Niagara-on-the Lake), and Twelve Mile Creek (Pelham & St. Catharines).

2.1.3 Other Water Quality Monitoring Programs

Several watersheds are monitored through other water quality monitoring programs. In 2002 a monitoring agreement was established with the City of Hamilton whereby NPCA staff collect monthly water samples at eleven stations located within the City of Hamilton's municipal boundaries and the City of Hamilton provides laboratory services. This laboratory partnership was to be cancelled as of January 2018 by the City of Hamilton. However, after the cancellation of this program the NPCA continued to fund the lab analysis for these monitoring stations. The NPCA is also involved in monitoring at the Hamilton International Airport and the Glanbrook Landfill. For further details, please refer to section 6.0.

In 2003 a similar monitoring arrangement was established with the RMN whereby NPCA staff collect water samples at ten stations located within the Niagara Regional Municipal boundary of the NPCA watershed and the RMN provides laboratory services.

2.2 Biological Monitoring

The NPCA also monitors surface water quality using benthic invertebrates as indicators of stream health. Water quality monitoring has historically relied heavily upon chemical testing as a means of measuring the quality of water but the advantages of biological monitoring using benthic invertebrates as indicators of water quality are well documented (Griffiths 1999, Jones *et al.* 2005). Due to their restricted mobility and habitat preferences benthic invertebrates usually remain in a localized area. As a result, they are continuously subjected to the effects of all pollutants and environmental stream conditions over time, and as such can provide a broad overview of water quality related problems. They are abundant in all types of aquatic systems and can be easily collected and identified.

The NPCA has been using benthic invertebrates as indicators of water quality since 1995 and is a leader in the field of biological monitoring in the Niagara Peninsula. Benthic invertebrate samples are collected annually during the spring and fall seasons using the Biological Monitoring and Assessment Program (BioMAP) developed by Dr. Ron Griffiths (Griffiths 1999). BioMAP water quality assessments have been completed at over 100 sites located throughout the NPCA watershed. BioMAP monitoring projects are also completed annually and biennially by the NPCA for Hamilton International Airport and the City of Hamilton Glanbrook Landfill to evaluate environmental management practices.

The NPCA is also involved in the development of the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN). The OBBN is a biomonitoring research initiative that was launched in 2002. The goal of the OBBN is to provide a standardized benthic invertebrate sampling protocol for the province of Ontario. A secondary goal of the OBBN is to provide a biological complement to the chemistry based PWQMN. The NPCA is an active participant in the development of the OBBN and is providing on-going research support in the upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed. In 2016, the NPCA transitioned its benthic invertebrate sampling protocol from the BioMAP protocol to the OBBN sampling protocol with the reporting focus on the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI).

3.0 SURFACE WATER QUALITY INDICATOR PARAMETERS

The indicator parameters described in the following sections best reflect the range of water quality issues that are likely encountered in the watershed and are most useful in assessing relative stream quality. These indicator parameters and their respective surface water quality objectives are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Summary of surface water quality indicator parameters

INDICATOR PARAMETER	OBJECTIVE	REFERENCE
Chloride	120 mg/L (Chronic)	CWQG (CCME 2011)
Nitrate	2.9 mg/L	CWQG (CCME 2003)
Total phosphorus	30 µg/L	PWQO (MOE 1994)
Suspended solids	25 mg/L	BC MOE (2001)
Copper	5 µg/L	PWQO (MOE 1994)
Lead	5 µg/L	PWQO (MOE 1994)
Zinc	20 µg/L	PWQO (MOE 1994)
Escherichia coli	100 counts/100 mL	PWQO (MOE 1994)
Benthic invertebrates	>Good	HBI (Hilsenhoff 1987)

3.1 CHLORIDE

Chloride is a naturally occurring substance found in all waters. Chloride can be toxic to aquatic organisms with acute toxic effects at high concentrations and chronic effects on growth and reproduction at lower concentrations. Chloride ions are conservative, which means that they are not degraded in the aquatic environment and tend to remain in solution. Chloride is extensively used in the form of sodium chloride and calcium chloride for salting of roadways and ice removal during the winter season. Other anthropogenic or human-derived sources of chloride include sewage, animal waste, storm and irrigation drainage, fertilizers, and industrial effluent. Due to natural variability, there is currently no guideline for chloride in surface water. The Canadian Water Quality Guidelines (CWQG) for the Protection of Aquatic Life recommend that long-term or chronic chloride concentrations should not exceed 120 mg/L in surface water (CCME 2011).

3.2 NITRATE

Nitrate is the most common form of nitrogen that occurs in surface water. In aerobic or oxygen-rich water, bacteria convert ammonium and nitrite to nitrate through a process known as nitrification. In anaerobic or oxygen-depleted water, the process is reversed through denitrification. The nitrate ion is the most stable form of nitrogen in water and does not tend to combine with other ions in solution. Nitrate can be toxic to aquatic organisms and elevated concentrations contribute to excessive plant and algae growth in surface water. Anthropogenic sources of nitrate include sewage discharges, animal waste, fertilizers and pesticides. The CWQG for the Protection of Aquatic Life recommend that nitrate-nitrogen concentrations should not exceed 2.9 mg/L in surface water (CCME 2003).

3.3 Total Phosphorus

Phosphorus is a natural element found in rocks, soils and organic material and is an essential nutrient for plant growth. Phosphorus clings tightly to soil particles and is often associated with suspended sediment. Excessive phosphorus concentrations stimulate the overgrowth and decomposition of plants and algae. The decomposition of organic matter in turn depletes dissolved oxygen concentrations and stresses aquatic organisms such as fish and benthic invertebrates. Total phosphorus is a measure of all forms of phosphorus in a water sample, and includes biologically accessible phosphates. Anthropogenic sources of phosphorus include fertilizers, pesticides, and sewage discharges. The interim Ontario Provincial Water Quality Objective (PWQO) for total phosphorus in streams and rivers is 30 µg/L (MOE 1994).

3.4 Suspended Solids

Suspended solids are a measure of undissolved solid material in surface water and usually consist of silt, clay, plankton, and fine particles of organic and inorganic matter. Sources of suspended solids include soil erosion, stormwater, wastewater, and industrial effluent. Fine particles are significant carriers of phosphorus, metals and other contaminants. Concentrations of suspended solids vary seasonally and often peak during rain events. Due to natural variability in surface water there is currently no water quality guideline for suspended solids in Ontario. High concentrations of suspended solids in surface water can negatively impact aquatic organisms. Water quality guidelines for the protection of aquatic life from the British Columbia Ministry of the Environment recommend that the maximum concentration of suspended solids in surface water should not exceed 25 mg/L (BC MOE 2001). This is a conservative guideline and will be under review for future NPCA reporting.

3.5 Copper

Copper is an essential trace element that is toxic to aquatic organisms at elevated concentrations. In surface water copper tends to bind with organic matter and accumulate in streambed sediment. Natural sources are wind-blown dust, decaying vegetation and from forest fires. Anthropogenic sources of copper include industrial wastewater, sewage discharges and pesticides. The interim PWQO for copper is 5 µg/L (MOE 1994).

3.6 Lead

Lead is a non-essential trace element that is toxic to aquatic organisms at elevated concentrations. Lead tends to bioaccumulate and can affect the central nervous system. Lead occurs naturally in the environment. However, most lead concentrations that are found in the environment are a result of human activities. Anthropogenic sources of lead include industrial wastewater, sewage discharges, municipal waste incineration, fertilizers and pesticides. The interim PWQO for lead is 5 µg/L (MOE 1994).

3.7 Zinc

Zinc is an essential trace element that is toxic to aquatic organisms at elevated concentrations. In surface water zinc tends to bind with organic matter and accumulate in streambed sediment. Zinc occurs naturally in air, water and soil. Anthropogenic sources of zinc include industrial wastewater, sewage discharges and stormwater runoff. The interim PWQO for zinc is 20 µg/L (MOE 1994).

3.8 *ESCHERICHIA COLI*

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) is a type of fecal coliform bacteria that is commonly found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and humans. *E. coli* is used as an indicator for the presence of sewage or animal waste in surface water, and the possible presence of pathogens (Tchobanoglous & Schroeder 1987). The PWQO for *E. coli* is 100 counts per 100 mL (MOE 1994).

3.9 BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS: BENTHIC INVERTEBRATES

Benthic invertebrates are the larger organisms inhabiting the substrate of watercourses for at least part of their life cycle. As a rule, benthic invertebrates include those species whose body width exceeds 500 microns. Examples of benthic invertebrate species that are commonly found in the NPCA watershed include clams, snails, leeches, worms, and the larval stages of dragonflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, mayflies, and beetles.

The NPCA collects benthic samples during the spring and fall seasons each year at approximately 30 monitoring sites. Once collected, counted and preserved, the benthic invertebrates are identified to family level and various statistics were calculated. For this 2019 Report the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI) was calculated for each sample site. The HBI estimates the overall tolerance of the community in a sampled area, weighted by the relative abundance of each family taxonomic group. Organisms are assigned a tolerance values based on those provided Hilsenhoff (1987). Water quality is classified as gradient from *excellent* to *very poor* in to recognize the occurrence of organisms whose environmental requirements and tolerances match those which would be expected at the site without the input of environmental stresses to those with the organisms found are less sensitive. Therefore, more tolerant to environmental stresses than organisms which would have historically occurred. The benthic population at an impaired site would typically be dominated by these more tolerant species, and as a result biodiversity at the site would be quite low.

Threshold values to classify the water quality of watercourses based on Hilsenhoff Family Biotic Index (1987)	
Family Biotic Index	Water Quality Rating
0.00-3.75	Excellent
3.76-4.25	Very Good
4.26-5.00	Good
5.01-5.75	Fair
5.76-6.50	Fairly Poor
6.51-7.25	Poor
7.26-10.00	Very Poor

4.0 SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING RESULTS

The Water Quality Index (WQI) was used to summarize the indicator parameter data collected from NPCA surface water quality monitoring stations between 2015 and 2019. This is a significant departure from previous water quality reports where the entire dataset (2002 to present) was used to generate the CCME WQI. Although this approach reduces the overall sample size of some water quality monitoring stations it allows for the partitioning of the water quality dataset to determine if CCME WQI ratings are changing over time. This approach is consistent with Conservation Ontario's recommendation for comparing water quality data in watershed reporting (Conservation Ontario 2011). Using the five-year blocks of data minimizes seasonal variation and provides sufficient data for reliable statistics in surface water analysis.

The WQI was developed by a sub-committee established under the Canadian Council for Ministers of the Environment (CCME) Water Quality Guidelines Task Group to provide a convenient means of summarizing complex water quality information and communicating it to the public (CCME 2001). The WQI incorporates the number of parameters where water quality objectives have been exceeded, the frequency of exceedances within each parameter, and the amplitude of each exceedance. The index produces a number between 0 and 100 which represents the worst and best water quality, respectively. These numbers are divided into five descriptive categories that range from *poor* to *excellent* (**Table 2**). The CCME WQI has been used extensively by other agencies, including conservation authorities and provincial ministries, as a means of reporting water quality data.

Table 2: CCME Water Quality Index categories (CCME 2001)

CATEGORY	WATER QUALITY INDEX	DESCRIPTION
Excellent	95-100	Water quality is protected with a virtual absence of threat or impairment; conditions very close to natural or pristine levels.
Good	80-94	Water quality is protected with only a minor degree of threat or impairment; conditions rarely depart from natural or desirable levels.
Fair	65-79	Water quality is usually protected but occasionally threatened or impaired; conditions sometimes depart from natural or desirable levels.
Marginal	45-64	Water quality is frequently threatened or impaired; conditions often depart from natural or desirable levels.
Poor	0-44	Water quality is almost always threatened or impaired; conditions usually depart from natural or desirable levels.

The calculation of the WQI is dependent on the water quality parameters and objectives selected for analysis. The indicator parameters and objectives summarized in **Table 1** were used to determine the WQI for NPCA monitoring stations. Benthic invertebrate data is not included in the WQI and is presented separately. It is important to note that the water quality information presented in this report is limited by the size of the dataset which represents 1 to 5 years of data, depending on the station. The reliability of the WQI rating improves over time (> 3 years) as more data is collected and a wider range of water quality conditions are captured in the dataset.

4.1 TREND ANALYSIS

The NPCA operates with its partners the most extensive surface water quality monitoring network in the NPCA watershed. The dataset that has been collected through this network has reached a sufficient size so that trend analysis can be conducted on some NPCA water quality monitoring stations. Trend analyses are very useful for determining if water quality parameter concentrations are increasing, decreasing or remaining unchanged over time. If the concentration of a water quality parameter is found to be increasing or remaining in an impaired status then appropriate corrective action can be taken. Trend analysis is also useful for evaluating the performance of stewardship or remediation efforts.

The data on many water quality parameters for the NPCA are not normally distributed and it is not appropriate to use parametric statistical methods to test for trends. Non-parametric statistical methods can deal effectively with non-normally distributed data and are flexible enough to account for seasonal variability. The Seasonal Mann-Kendall Test is often used to determine trends in water quality data (Helsel and Hirsch 1992). The Seasonal Mann-Kendall Test modified from the Mann-Kendall Test (Helsel and Hirsch 1992), compares relative ranks of data values from the same season. This means the water quality parameter concentrations of May would be compared with concentrations of May in other years. Similarly, June concentrations would be compared with June concentrations and so forth. The null hypothesis (H_0) is that the concentration of a water quality parameter is independent of time or, in other words, the datasets show no distinct trend. The alternative hypothesis (H_A) means that a significant increasing or decreasing trend is found over time. The Seasonal Mann-Kendall uses alpha (α) to quantify the probability that a trend exists. For this report, the alpha level for statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. This alpha level is commonly used in statistical methods to test for statistical significance. It should be noted that a value of $\alpha = 0.05$ means there is a 5 percent possibility of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis that no trend exists. Probability values of less than 0.05 mean there was statistically significant trend (increasing or decreasing). Trend analysis using the Seasonal Mann-Kendall Test was conducted on chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solids concentrations at all stations with 5 or more years of data using software provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (Helsel *et al.*, 2005). Trend analysis for copper, lead, nitrate and zinc parameters could only be conducted on a small number of stations because many concentrations found were below the laboratory detections limits. These were reported as “non-detect” or a “less than” the laboratory detection limit. Trend analysis with many non-detections or less than values was not favourable for analysis and therefore was excluded from most stations.

4.2 Welland River Watershed

The Welland River is the largest watershed in the NPCA jurisdiction with a total drainage area of 1,023 km^2. The watershed covers eleven local municipalities, originating in the Town of Ancaster and spanning the center of the Niagara Peninsula to its physical outlet in the City of Niagara Falls at the Niagara River (**Figure 1**). Over 70% of the watershed is classified as rural. The Welland River is part of the Niagara River Area of Concern (AOC) and is targeted for restoration through the Remedial Action Plan. As shown in **Appendix A**, 29 of the 80 surface water quality monitoring stations are in the Welland River watershed, and 13 of these 29 stations are located on the main Welland River channel.

4.2.1 Welland River: Water Quality Index

The calculated WQI for the Welland River ranges from *poor* to *excellent*. Based on the 2015-2019 data collected, seven of thirteen Welland River stations have *poor* water quality, five stations were rated as *marginal*, one station was rated as fair and one was rated as *excellent* (WR012). WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A**. Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 2019 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Welland River are summarized in **Table 3**:

Figure 1: Map of the subwatersheds monitored for water quality within the Welland River watershed

Table 3: Summary of NPCA water quality data for the Welland River (2015-2019)

Station	WQI Rating ↔ Stable ↓ Declining ↑ Improving	Hilsenhoff Family Biotic Index Rating	Factors Affecting Water Quality (%)= Percentage of samples exceeding guidelines This is only reported when >50% of samples exceed guideline	Trend Green- Decreasing Black- Stable Red- Increasing
WR00A Welland River	Marginal ↔	Poor	• Exceedances of copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (95%), and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• *Decreasing* total phosphorus concentrations • Stable chloride, and total suspended solid concentrations
WR000 Welland River	Fair ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances of *E. coli* (57%) total phosphorus (81%), and total suspended solids. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Groundwater discharge provides intermittent baseflow at this but the watercourse will dry up in the summer when groundwater levels drop	• Decreasing chloride and total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Stable *E. coli* concentrations
WR001 Welland River	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances of chloride, copper, *E. coli* (51%), nitrate, total phosphorus (63%), total suspended solids and zinc (50%) • Potential stressors include: agricultural, airport and roadway run-off	• Decreasing zinc concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
WR002 Welland River	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances of chloride (100%), copper, *E. coli*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus, total suspended solids and zinc (93%) • Potential stressors include: agricultural, airport and roadway run-off	• Decreasing *E. coli* concentrations • Stable chloride, total phosphorus, total suspended solid and zinc concentrations
WR020	Marginal	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in chloride (59%), copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (100%), and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include agricultural and roadway run-off	• Insufficient Data
WR003 Welland River	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances of chloride (62%), copper, *E. coli*, nitrate total phosphorus (93%), total suspended solids (55%) and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations • Stable *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
WR004 Welland River	Marginal ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances of chloride, copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (95%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Lake Niapenco is improving the water quality the Welland River at this site	• Decreasing *E.coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Stable chloride concentrations
WR005 Welland River	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances of chloride, copper, *E. coli* (64%), nitrate, total phosphorus (98%), suspended solids (70%) and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Decreasing chloride concentrations • Stable total phosphorus and suspended solid concentrations

			• Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Increasing *E. coli* concentrations.
WR006 Welland River	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances of chloride, copper, *E. coli,* lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
WR007 Welland River	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances of copper, *E. coli,* lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%) total suspended solids (64%) and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural, roadway run-off • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months • Site is invaded by non-native Zebra Mussels	• Stable chloride and total phosphorus concentrations • Increasing *E.coli* and total suspended solid concentrations
WR009B Welland River	Poor ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances of copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (93%), total suspended solid and zinc • Potential stressors include: Sewage treatment plant effluent and agricultural and urban run-off • Site strongly influenced by Niagara River backwater which has the potential to improve water quality	• Decreasing chloride concentrations • Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
WR010 Welland River	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances of copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (78%), and total suspended solids. • Potential stressors include: Sewage treatment plant effluent and agricultural and urban run-off • Site strongly influenced by Niagara River backwater which has the potential to improve water quality	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total phosphorus concentrations
WR011 Welland River	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances of chloride, *E. coli,* total phosphorus (72%) and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: Sewage treatment plant effluent and agricultural and urban run-off • Site strongly influenced by Niagara River backwater which has the potential to improve water quality	• Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
WR012 Welland River	Excellent	Insufficient Data	• No water quality exceedances observed • Site influenced by re-direction of the Niagara River for Ontario Power Generation hydroelectricity	• Insufficient Data

4.2.2 Welland River: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

Hilsenhoff Biotic Index results indicate that water quality at most stations in the Welland River ranged from *Very Poor* to Poor (**Table 3**). Two sites managed to obtain a *Fairly Poor* rating (WR000 and WR005). Results from Hilsenhoff Biotic Index assessments completed between 2015 and 2019 are illustrated in **Appendix J**.

Benthic invertebrates at stations WR001 and WR002 are negatively impacted by discharges from Hamilton International Airport (HIA). The NPCA has completed annual BioMAP assessments for Hamilton International Airport since 1998 (NPCA 2019). Recent NPCA reports (2019) recommend that HIA review its stormwater and de-icing management practices to improve water quality in the upper Welland River. Low BHI scores observed in the Welland River mainly are due to sediment loading, lack of in-stream habitat, and nutrient enrichment. A biological assessment was not completed for WR009B, WR010, WR011 and WR012 due to high water depth and channel morphology. These stations are located at the siphon where the Welland River flows beneath the Welland Canal and would require boat access for sample collection.

4.2.3 WELLAND RIVER: KEYS FINDINGS

- Based on the 2015-2019 data, elevated concentrations of total phosphorus are a widespread cause of water quality impairment in the Welland River. Greater than 95% of samples collected in the main Welland River exceeded the PWQO with some concentrations greater than 20 times the PWQO. High phosphorus in the Welland River has stimulated the overgrowth of algae and duckweed throughout the watershed. When these plants transpire, and decompose they deplete dissolved oxygen in the water and this in turn stresses aquatic organisms such as fish and benthic invertebrates. Manure from livestock operations, sewage discharges, soil erosion, fertilizers, and pesticides are sources of total phosphorus in the Welland River.
- Generally, the overall water quality of the Welland River downstream of the City of Welland is less stressed than the water upstream of the City of Welland. This is caused by the redirection of the Niagara River water down the Welland River in Chippawa for Ontario Power Generation (OPG). This results in a dilution effect that reduces the concentrations of water quality parameters. This effect is observed all the way to the east side of the City of Welland. However, upstream of the City of Welland, the river flow pattern caused by OPG operations and canal siphons are likely restricting the natural flushing of sediment, nutrients and other contaminates from the central Welland River watershed and exacerbating water quality conditions in this watershed.
- The Hamilton International Airport (HIA) water quality stations WR001 and WR002 continue to have water quality designated as *poor* due to elevated concentrations of chloride and zinc. Chloride concentrations are stable at WR001 but increasing at WR002 despite the recent removal of the road salt storage pad. Zinc concentrations found at these stations consistently exceed the PWQO and are the highest observed in the NPCA water quality network. The current information that the HIA has suggests that zinc is coming off the brake system of the airplanes. It should be noted that zinc concentrations have been decreasing at both stations. The NPCA also has not observed any propylene glycol discharge in WR001 or WR002 this year. In 2011, the HIA expanded its facilities and upgraded its water quality safeguards to WR001 and WR002. Continued monitoring by the NPCA will track water quality changes at these tributaries. The NPCA does not monitor the water quality of the Hamilton Airport tributary identified as the potential source of Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) that has been found in turtle/fish tissue sampled at Binbrook Conservation Area. PFOS is a man-made compound belonging to a large family of compounds known as perfluorinated chemicals. These compounds do not readily breakdown and have the potential to bioaccumulate in animal tissue. The PFOS investigation is currently being led by the MECP and Hamilton Public Health, and new fish consumption guidelines were implemented for the 2018 Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish. The NPCA has been notifying Binbrook Conservation Area park users about the new fish consumption guidelines and information regarding PFOS has been posted on the NPCA website. The NPCA water quality department has added PFOS sampling in 2014 as part of special project monitoring program at Binbrook Reservoir. The NPCA still undertakes this monitoring.

4.3 Welland River Tributaries

Fourteen tributaries of the Welland River are monitored through the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program. These tributaries include: Buckhorn Creek, Elsie Creek, Mill Creek, Oswego Creek, Beaver Creek, Big Forks Creek, Coyle Creek, Drapers Creek, Feeder Canal, Grassy Brook, Tee Creek, Thompson Creek, Power Canal and Lyons Creek (**Figure 1**). Tributaries were selected based on drainage area, landuse, restoration projects, and watershed plans.

4.3.1 Welland River Tributaries: Water Quality Index

Based on the results of the WQI thirteen of sixteen Welland River tributary stations have water quality that is rated as *poor* (**Table 4**). Tee Creek (TE001), Lyons Creek (LY003), and the Power Canal (PR001) were found to have water quality rated as *marginal*. WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A.** Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 2019 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Welland River are summarized in **Table 4**:

Table 4: Summary of NPCA water quality data for Welland River tributaries (2015-2019)

Station Watershed	WQI Rating ↔ **Stable** ↓ **Declining** ↑ **Improving**	Hilsenhoff Family Biotic Index Rating	Factors Affecting Water Quality (%)= Percentage of samples exceeding guidelines This is only reported when >50% of samples exceed guideline	Trend Green- Decreasing Black- No Trend Red- Increasing
BF001 Big Forks Creek	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (63%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zincs. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Significant algae and overabundance of duckweed observed during summer months • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing total phosphorus concentrations
BU001 Buckhorn Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (70%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (98%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
BV001 Beaver Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Significant algae observed during summer months • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

CO001 Coyle Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, lead, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Site invaded by non-native Zebra Mussels	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations
DR001 Drapers Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (85%), total phosphorus (95%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: urban run-off • Algae observed during summer months	• Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
EL001 Elsie Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae observed during summer months • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
GR001 Grassy Brook	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae observed during summer months • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TE001 Tee Creek	Marginal ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Nutrient enrichment from upstream agricultural areas • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
LY003 Lyons Creek	Poor ↓	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Site strongly influenced by Niagara River backwater which has the potential to improve water quality	• Decreasing chloride concentrations • Stable E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

MI001 Mill Creek	Poor ↓	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae and overabundance of duckweed observed during summer months	• Decreasing total phosphorus concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total suspended solid concentrations
OS001 Oswego Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli* (60%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids (83%) and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae and overabundance of duckweed observed during summer months	• Stable chloride concentrations • Increasing E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solids
OS002 Oswego Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (65%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae and overabundance of duckweed observed during summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TC001 Thompson Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (72%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
PR001 Power Canal	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in *E. coli* (62%), total phosphorus, total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: urban run-off and Niagara Falls waste water treatment plant • Water source at this site is Niagara River water which potentially improves water quality	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
MR001 Mill Race Creek	Poor ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli* (70%), total phosphorus (100%) and total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Insufficient Data
FC001 Feeder Canal	Poor ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, lead, total phosphorus (84%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Insufficient Data

4.3.2 Welland River Tributaries: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

HBI results indicate that water quality is ranged from *very poor* to *fairly poor* at all Welland River tributary stations currently monitored (**Table 4**). Results from biological assessments completed between 2015 and 2019 are illustrated in **Appendix J**. Generally, the HBI results match with water chemistry ratings. Sediment loading, lack of in-stream habitat, and nutrient enrichment are the primary causes of impairment at all stations. Buckhorn Creek BioMAP assessments are completed biennially by the NPCA for the City of Hamilton as part of the Glanbrook Landfill monitoring plan. Biological assessments completed between 1998 and 2018 indicate that water quality is impaired; however, there is no additional impairment resulting from the landfill (NPCA, 2018).

4.3.3 Welland River Tributaries: Key Findings

- Based on the 2015-2019 data, elevated concentrations of total phosphorus are a widespread cause of water quality impairment in the Welland River tributaries. Approximately 95% of samples collected from the Welland River tributaries exceeded the PWQO with some concentrations greater than 30 times the PWQO. Concentrations of total phosphorus are very high in Beaver Creek, Big Forks Creek, Oswego Creek and Tee Creek. These subwatersheds have been prioritized for Best Management Practice works to reduce phosphorus loads. Sources of phosphorus include manure from livestock operations, sewage discharges, soil erosion, fertilizers, and pesticides.
- *E. coli* concentrations frequently exceed the provincial objective in Buckhorn Creek, Big Forks Creek, Beaver Creek, Coyle Creek, Drapers Creek, Elsie Creek, Mill Creek, and Oswego Creek.
- Decreasing total phosphorus concentrations in Mill Creek are now being observed with the NPCA's long-term data. Mill Creek watersheds have been targeted by the NPCA's stewardship program over the last twenty years to reduced non-point pollution such as nutrients and sediment. These data provide some evidence that this program is reducing nutrient runoff.

NPCA staff using a water quality sensor to measure dissolved oxygen.

4.4 TWENTY MILE CREEK WATERSHED

The Twenty Mile Creek watershed is the second largest watershed in the NPCA jurisdiction with a total drainage area of 302 km^2. Nine of 80 NPCA surface water quality monitoring stations are located within the Twenty Mile Creek watershed. There are six stations on the main channel. There are also monitoring stations for each of the subwatersheds which include Spring Creek, North Creek and Gavora Ditch (**Figure 4**).

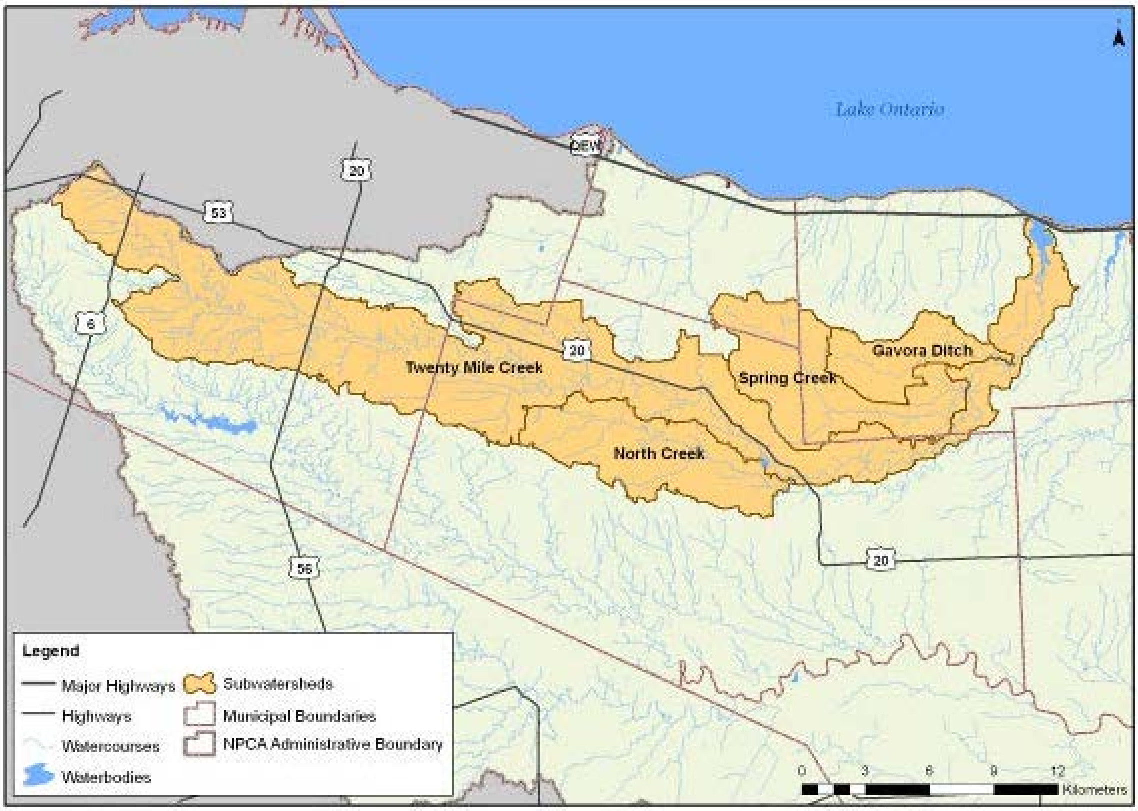

Figure 4: Map of the subwatersheds monitored for water quality within the Twenty Mile Creek watershed

4.4.1 TWENTY MILE CREEK WATERSHED: WATER QUALITY INDEX

Based on the results of the WQI six of nine Twenty Mile Creek watershed stations have water quality that is rated as *poor*. Three stations (GV001,TN002 & SP001) were rated has marginal. WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A**. Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 2019 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Twenty Mile Creek are summarized in **Table 5**:

Table 5: Summary of NPCA water quality data for the Twenty Mile Creek watershed (2015-2019)

STATION WATERSHED	WQI RATING ↔ Stable ↓ Declining ↑ Improving	HILSENHOFF FAMILY BIOTIC INDEX RATING	FACTORS AFFECTING WATER QUALITY (%) = PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING GUIDELINES THIS IS ONLY REPORTED WHEN >50% OF SAMPLES EXCEED GUIDELINE	TREND GREEN- DECREASING BLACK- NO TREND RED- INCREASING
TN001 Twenty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (51%), copper, *E. coli* (74%), lead, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and urban run-off • Site invaded by the non-native Chinese Mystery Snails • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TN002 Twenty Mile Creek	Marginal ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (52%), lead, total phosphorus (93%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and urban run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TN003 Twenty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (56%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and urban run-off • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TN003A Twenty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli* (60%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and urban run-off • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TN004 Twenty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (67%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids (59%) and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TN006 Twenty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli* (50%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

NC001 North Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (65%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and suspended solid concentrations
SP001 Spring Creek	Marginal ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli* (79%),lead, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months • Excessive algae observed during the summer months	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations
GV001 Gavora Ditch	Marginal ↑	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in *E. coli* (69%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months • Algae observed during summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

4.4.2 Twenty Mile Creek Watershed: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

HBI results indicate that water quality is ranged from *poor* to *fairly poor* at most Twenty Mile Creek monitoring stations (**Table 5**). Results from biological assessments completed between 2015 and 2019 are illustrated in **Appendix J.** Reduced baseflow, high sediment loading due to erosion, lack of in-stream habitat, and nutrient enrichment are primary causes of impairment at these stations.

4.4.3 Twenty Mile Creek Watershed: Key Findings

- Based on the 2015-2019 data, elevated concentrations of total phosphorus are a widespread cause of water quality impairment in the Twenty Mile watershed. Approximately 95% of samples collected from the Twenty Mile watershed exceeded the PWQO with some concentrations greater than 30 times the PWQO.
- *E. coli* and total suspended solid concentrations frequently exceed the provincial objective in Twenty Mile Creek watershed. Efforts through BMPs works should continue to be implemented to reduce the sources of *E. coli* in this watershed.

NPCA staff using a water quality sensor to measure stream temperature.

4.5 LAKE ONTARIO TRIBUTARIES

Eighteen tributaries discharging into Lake Ontario are monitored through the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program. These tributaries include: Forty Mile Creek, Thirty Mile Creek, Eighteen Mile Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek, Fifteen Mile Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, Francis Creek, Richardson Creek, Walker's Creek, Eight Mile Creek, Six Mile Creek, Four Mile Creek, Two Mile Creek, One Mile Creek, Purdhommes Drain, Welland Canal, Shriners Creek and Beaver Dam Creek (**Figure 6**). Twenty Mile Creek is also a tributary of Lake Ontario but is presented separately due to the relatively large size of the watershed.

4.5.1 LAKE ONTARIO TRIBUTARIES: WATER QUALITY INDEX

Based on the results of the WQI, sixteen of twenty-seven Lake Ontario tributary stations have water quality that is rated as *poor*. Nine stations were rated as *marginal*, and two stations were rated as *fair*. WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A**. Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 2019 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Lake Ontario tributaries are summarized in **Table 6**.

Tributary outlet to Lake Erie

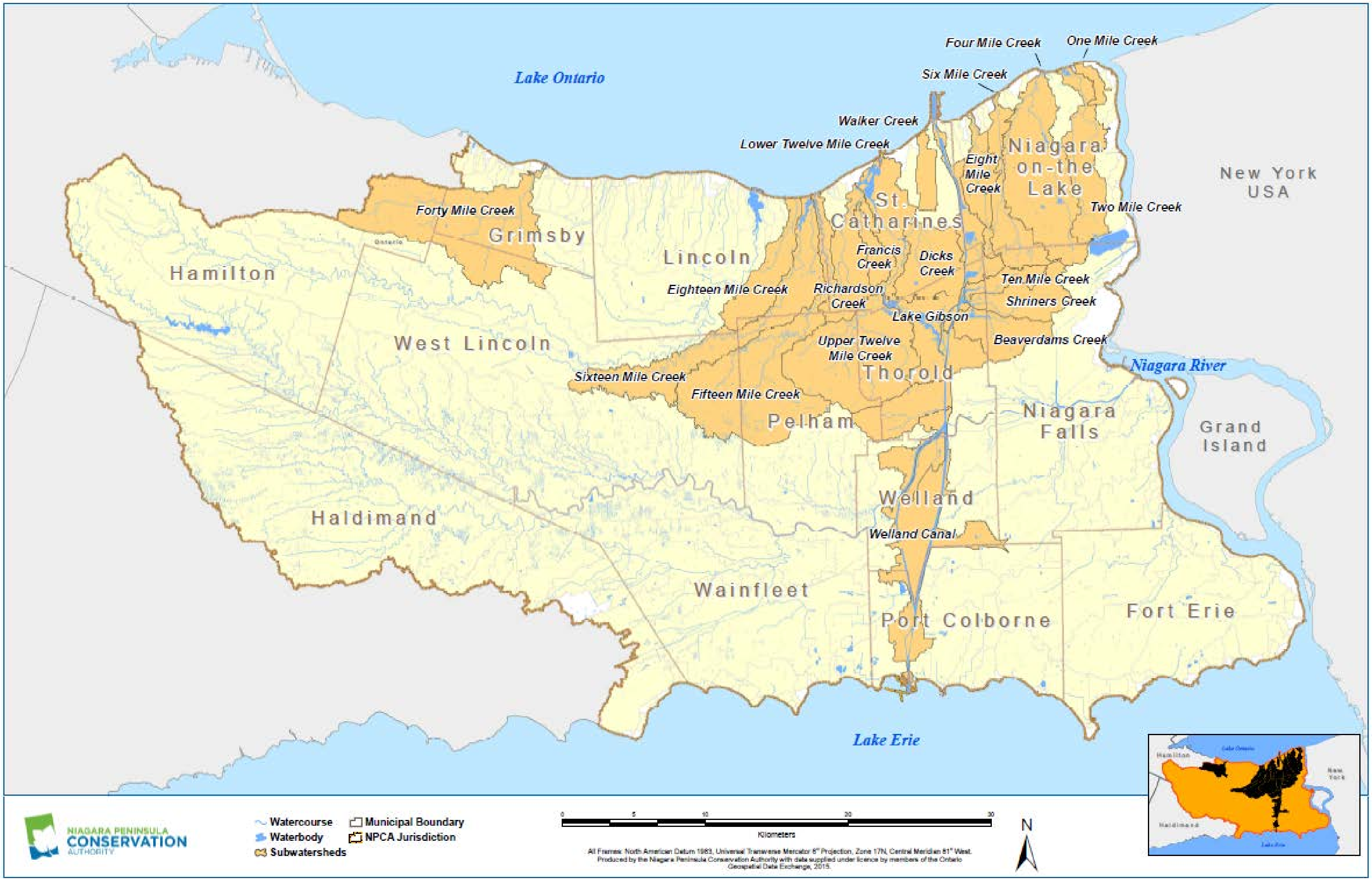

Figure 6: Map of the subwatersheds draining to Lake Ontario that are monitored for water quality

Table 6: Summary of NPCA water quality data for Lake Ontario tributaries (2015-2019)

STATION WATERSHED	WQI RATING ↔ Stable ↓ Declining ↑ Improving	HILSENHOFF FAMILY BIOTIC INDEX RATING	FACTORS AFFECTING WATER QUALITY (%)= PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING GUIDELINES THIS IS ONLY REPORTED WHEN >50% OF SAMPLES EXCEED GUIDELINE	TREND GREEN- DECREASING BLACK- NO TREND RED- INCREASING
FM001 Forty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (81%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (91%), total suspended solids and zinc (54%) • Potential stressors include: road salt storage compound, quarry dewatering, urban and agricultural run-off.	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
ET001 Eighteen Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper (63%), *E. coli* (63%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: greenhouse waste water, rural and agricultural run-off. • Very frequent copper exceedances warrant further investigation	• Decreasing chloride concentrations. • Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
FF001 Fifteen Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli* (60%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Excessive algae observed during summer months • Potential stressors include: rural and agricultural run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total phosphorus concentrations.
SX001 Sixteen Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (68%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total phosphorus concentrations
EI001 Eight Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (62%), nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), and total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Stable *E. coli*, and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride and total phosphorus concentrations
FA001 Francis Creek	Marginal ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (100%), copper, *E. coli (81%)*, nitrate, and total phosphorus (86%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	Insufficient Data
RC001 Richardson Creek	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (50%), copper (61%), *E. coli (67%)*, nitrate (100%), and total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	Insufficient Data
SI001 Six Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (55%), copper, *E. coli (81%)*, total phosphorus (77%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and roadway run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and

				total suspended solid concentrations
FU004 Four Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (55%), nitrate, total phosphorus (98%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations
TM001 Two Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (92%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), and total suspended solids • Excessive *E. coli* concentrations warrant further investigations • Potential stressors include: rural and urban run-off	• Decreasing chloride concentrations • Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
OM001 One Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (81%), nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: urban run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing total phosphorus concentrations
TW001 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↑	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli (38%)*, lead, total phosphorus (69%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: rural and urban run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Decreasing total suspended solid concentrations. • Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
TW002 Twelve Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fair	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli*, lead, total phosphorus, total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Decreasing *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solids • Stable chloride concentrations
TW003 Twelve Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (74%), lead, total phosphorus (90%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: decommissioned landfill and rural run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations

TW004 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↔	Fair	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli (52%)*, nitrate (97%), total phosphorus, total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: golf course and rural run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Decreasing total phosphorus concentrations • Stable *E. coli*, and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride and nitrate concentrations
TW005 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (67%), total phosphorus (68%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: rural and urban run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Decreasing total phosphorus and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable *E. coli* concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
TW006 Twelve Mile Creek	Fair ↔	Fair	• Exceedances in *E. coli* (54%), total phosphorus (56%) and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: rural run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Decreasing chloride concentrations • Stable *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
TW007 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↔	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (65%*)*, nitrate, total phosphorus (70%), and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Groundwater discharges sustains continuous baseflow at this site.	• Insufficient Data
TW008 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↑	Fairly Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (84%), copper, *E. coli* (50%*)*, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months	• Decreasing E. coli and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride and total phosphorus concentrations
TW009 Twelve Mile Creek	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli,* nitrate, total phosphorus, total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: urban run-off and industrial waste water • Water source at this site is predominately from the Welland Canal water which potentially improves water quality	• Insufficient Data
TH001 Thirty Mile Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (51%), copper, *E. coli* (67%*)*, lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

WC001 Walkers Creek	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (77%), copper, *E. coli* (92%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (90%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: urban run-off	• Stable chloride, E. coli, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
SH002 Shriners Creek	Poor ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (647%), copper, *E. coli* (54%), total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: urban run-off • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride and *E. coli* concentrations • Increasing total phosphorus concentrations
BE004 Beaver Dam Creek	Fair ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in *E. coli*, total phosphorus (77%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: industrial and urban run-off • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Decreasing *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations • Stable total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
WE001 Welland Canal	Marginal ↓	Insufficient Data	• Exceedance in chloride, *E coli* and total phosphorus, totals suspended solids and zinc. • Water source at this site is predominately from the Lake Erie	• Insufficient Data
PD001 Prudhommes Drain	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (64%), copper, *E. coli* (88%), lead, nitrate, total phosphorus (96%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: urban run-off • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Insufficient Data
BT001 Bartlett Creek	Marginal	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli* (88%), total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: highway and agricultural run-off	• Insufficient Data

4.5.2 Lake Ontario Tributaries: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

HBI results indicate that water quality is ranged from *fair* to *very poor* at Lake Ontario tributary stations (**Table 6**). Results from biological assessments completed between 2015 and 2019 are illustrated in **Appendix J**. Sediment loading, nutrient enrichment, and the lack of in-stream habitat are the primary causes of impairment at these stations. Upper Twelve Mile Creek stations TW002, TW004, and TW006 located on the Effingham tributary are rated as *fair*. The Effingham tributary of upper Twelve Mile Creek is the only watercourse in the NPCA watershed that consistently achieves this rating. These sites can support several sensitive taxa such as mayflies and stoneflies due to cooler water temperatures, excellent riparian buffer and in-stream habitat, and suitable water quality.

4.5.3 Lake Ontario Tributaries: Key Findings

- The Upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed represents some of the best water quality in the Niagara Peninsula. This portion of Twelve Mile Creek supports brook trout and a rich macroinvertebrate community that is unique in Niagara. The main stresses to the aquatic community include exceedances of total phosphorus and *E. coli*. Nitrate contamination has been identified as a stressor at TW004 and its source is likely a golf course. Efforts to minimize these stressors through BMP initiatives will allow this watershed to remain in its current state.
- Based on the 2015-2019 data, all the Lake Ontario tributaries have total phosphorus exceedances. The most impacted of these tributaries include Fifteen Mile Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek and Eighteen Mile Creek which had median concentrations nearly 10 times the PWQO. The upper portions of these watersheds need to be prioritized for BMPs to reduce phosphorus loads. Total phosphorus concentrations were found to be lower in the NOTL watersheds.
- The Lake Ontario tributary WQIs were stable when compared to previous assessments. There was an increase in WQI ratings (*poor* to *marginal*) for Twelve Mile Creek at two sites (TW001 and TW008) due to reduced exceedances in metal parameters. The WQI rating decreased from *fair* to *marginal* at the Welland Canal site (WE001) due to continued exceedances in total suspended solids and zinc concentrations detected during wet-weather events.
- Two Mile Creek (TM001) has the highest concentrations of *E. coli* in the NPCA watershed and continues to suggest that there may be sewage entering the Two Mile Creek. The NPCA sampled the stormwater outfalls of Two Mile Creek Conservation Area and found two sources of the bacteria and are currently working with the Town of NOTL and MECP to solve this issue. Elevated *E.coli* concentrations for Walkers Creek (St. Catharines) and Purdhommes Drain (Lincoln) were also observed and additional follow up will be initiated with the municipalities.
- Copper and zinc concentrations in Eighteen Mile Creek consistently exceed PWQOs. Within the NPCA water quality monitoring network regular metal exceedances are uncommon but based on the landuse in this watershed there may be pesticides entering the watercourse. The MECP has been alerted to these exceedances and will be investigating further.
- Richardson Creek consistently exceeds CCME for nitrate and has a significant nitrate impairment. Possible sources may include upstream agricultural sources and greenhouse operations.

A mayfly (Heptageniidae) collected from 12 Mile Creek

4.6 Niagara River Tributaries

Five tributaries discharging to the Niagara River are monitored through the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program. These tributaries include: Bayer Creek, Black Creek, Beaver Creek, Frenchman's Creek, and Usshers Creek (**Figure 8**).

4.6.1 Niagara River Tributaries: Water Quality Index

Based on the results of the WQI, Usshers Creek station (US001) was rated as *poor* water quality. Bayer Creek (BA001), Beaver Creek (BR001), Black Creek (BL003) and Frenchman Creek station (FR003) stations were all rated as *marginal*. WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A**. Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 20198 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Niagara River Tributaries are summarized in **Table 7:**

Figure 8: Map of the subwatersheds monitored for water quality in the Niagara River watershed outside of the Welland River

Table 7: Summary of NPCA water quality data for Niagara River tributaries (2015-2019)

STATION WATERSHED	WQI RATING ↔ Stable ↓ Declining ↑ Improving	HILSENHOFF FAMILY BIOTIC INDEX RATING	FACTORS AFFECTING WATER QUALITY (%)= PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING GUIDELINES THIS IS ONLY REPORTED WHEN >50% OF SAMPLES EXCEED GUIDELINE	TREND GREEN- DECREASING BLACK- STABLE RED- INCREASING
BA001 Bayer Creek	Marginal ↑	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (59%), total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and concentrations
BL003 Black Creek	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Stable chloride, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing *E.coli* and total suspended solid concentrations
BR001 Beaver Creek	Marginal ↔	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli, t*otal phosphorus (100%) and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
FR003 Frenchman Creek	Marginal ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli* (68%), total phosphorus (86%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Algae observed during summer months	• Decreasing chloride and total phosphorus concentrations • Stable *E. coli* and total suspended solid concentrations
US001 Usshers Creek	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (50%),total phosphorus (100%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Prone to zero baseflow conditions in the summer months • Algae and duckweed observed during summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations

4.6.2 Niagara River Tributaries: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

HBI results indicate that water quality is *impaired* at all Niagara River tributary stations (**Table 7**). Results from biological assessments completed between 2015 and 2019 are illustrated in **Appendix J**. Sediment loading, reduced baseflow, lack of in-stream habitat, and nutrient enrichment are primary causes of impairment at these stations. BioMAP samples have not been collected from station BL003 due to high water depth, channel morphology, and access restrictions.

4.6.3 Niagara River Tributaries: Key Findings

- Generally, the water quality in these smaller Niagara River tributaries is better than the rest of the NPCA watershed. The degree of landuse impacts from urban and rural pressures are significantly less in these watersheds.
- Based on the 2015-2019 data, all the Niagara River tributaries had total phosphorus exceedances. The most impacted of these tributaries include Usshers Creek, Black Creek and Bayer Creek which had median concentrations 6 times the PWQO. Total phosphorus concentrations were found to be much lower in Frenchman Creek with median concentrations only 2 times the PWQO. Nonetheless these watersheds would benefit by Best Management Practice works to reduce phosphorus loads.

4.7 Lake Erie Tributaries

Eight tributaries discharging to Lake Erie are monitored through the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program. These tributaries include: Beaver Dam Creek, Casey Drain, Eagle Marsh Drain, Krafts Drain, Low Banks Drain, Point Abino Drain, Six Mile Creek, and Wignell Drain (**Figure 10**). In addition, the Welland Canal monitoring point in Port Colborne is also included with the Lake Erie tributaries. Water at this site enters the Welland Canal and outlets in Lake Ontario.

4.7.1 Lake Erie Tributaries: Water Quality Index

Based on the results of the WQI four of nine Lake Erie tributary stations are rated as having *poor* water quality three stations are rated as *marginal*, one station (PA001) rated as fair and one station rated as *good* (**Table 8**). WQI results are illustrated in **Appendix A**. Mapping showing the spatial distribution of the eight WQI parameters from 2015 to 2019 are found in **Appendix B** to **Appendix I**. Highlights of the water quality monitoring in the Lake Erie Tributaries are summarized in **Table 8:**

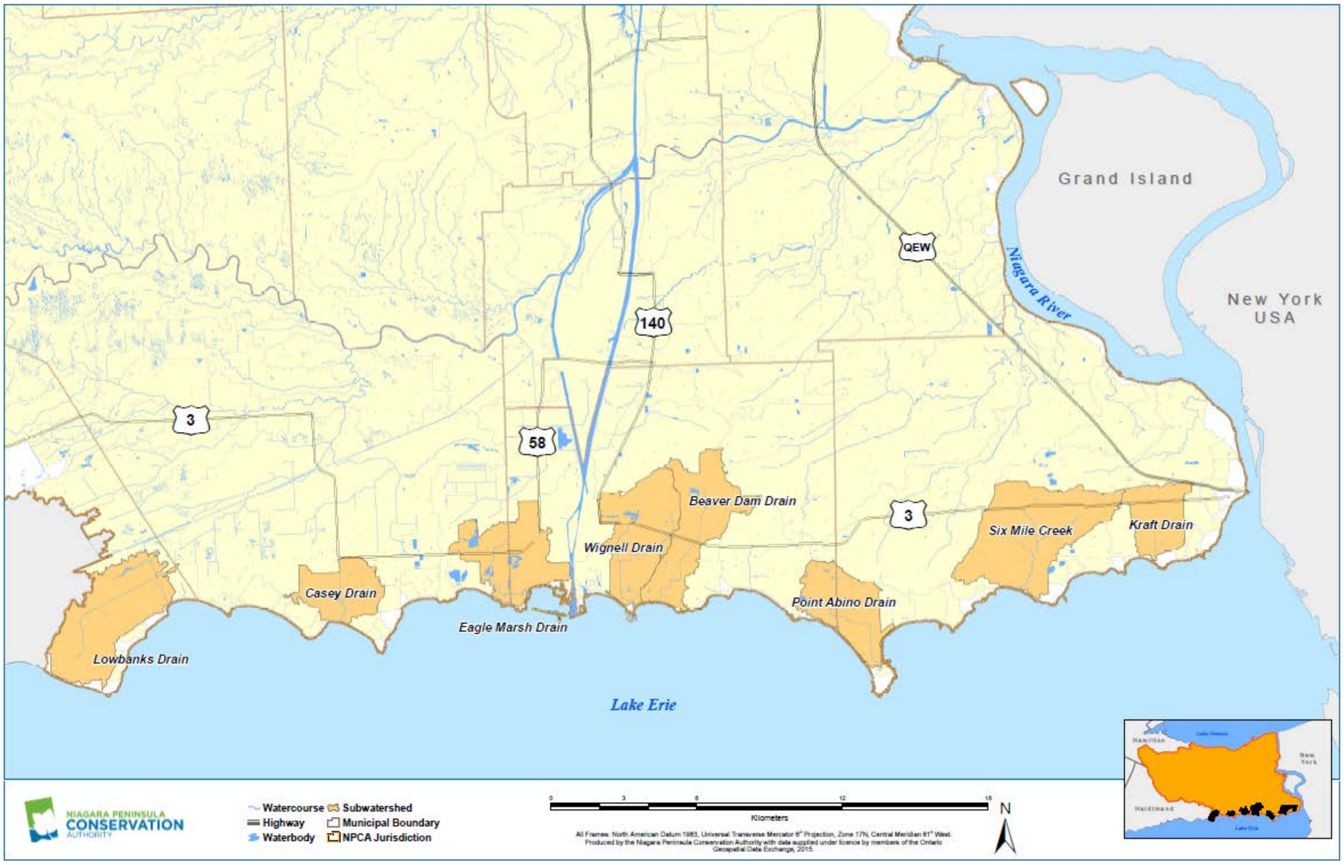

Figure 10: Map of the subwatersheds monitored for water quality along the north shore of Lake Erie

Table 8: Summary of NPCA water quality data for Lake Erie tributaries (2015-2019).

STATION WATERSHED	WQI RATING ↔ Stable ↓ Declining ↑ Improving	HILSENHOFF FAMILY BIOTIC INDEX RATING	FACTORS AFFECTING WATER QUALITY (%)= PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING GUIDELINES THIS IS ONLY REPORTED WHEN >50% OF SAMPLES EXCEED GUIDELINE	TREND GREEN- DECREASING BLACK- NO TREND RED- INCREASING
BD001 Beaver Dam Drain	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper (51%), *E. coli* (59%), nickel, nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: historic industrial pollution, agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride, *E. coli*, and total phosphorus concentrations
CD001 Casey Drain	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli* (59%), nitrate, total phosphorus (97%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing chloride and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations
EM001 Eagle Marsh Drain	Marginal ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride (59%), *E. coli* (65%), total phosphorus (82%), total suspended solids and zinc. • Potential stressors include: quarry dewatering, agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing chloride and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable *E. coli*, and total phosphorus concentrations
KD001 Krafts Drain	Poor ↔	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, *E. coli* (76%), nitrate, total phosphorus (89%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: rural and urban run-off • Algae observed during summer months	• Decreasing total suspended solids concentrations • Stable chloride and *E. coli*, concentrations • Increasing total phosphorus concentrations
LB001 Low Banks Drain	Marginal ↔	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli*, nitrate, total phosphorus (95%), total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Severe algae growth observed during summer months	• Stable chloride, *E. coli*, total phosphorus and total suspended solid concentrations
PA001 Point Abino Drain	Fair	Poor	• Exceedances in copper, *E. coli*, and total phosphorus (74%).	• Decreasing E.coli and total suspended solids concentrations

	⟷		• Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off • Site is influenced by backflow from Lake Erie which is likely improving water quality	• Stable total suspended solid concentrations • Increasing chloride concentrations
SM001 Six Mile Creek	Marginal ⟷	Insufficient Data	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, total phosphorus (100%), and total suspended solids • Potential stressors include: agricultural and rural run-off	• Decreasing chloride and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable *E. coli* and total phosphorus concentrations
WD001 Wignell Drain	Poor ⟷	Very Poor	• Exceedances in chloride, copper, *E. coli*, nickel, nitrate, total phosphorus (100%), and total suspended solids and zinc • Potential stressors include: quarry dewatering historic industrial pollution, agricultural and rural run-off • Algae observed during summer months	• Decreasing chloride and total suspended solids concentrations • Stable *E. coli* concentrations • Increasing total phosphorus concentrations
WE000 Welland Canal	Good ⟷	Insufficient Data	• Exceedance total phosphorus • Water source at this site is predominately from the Lake Erie	Insufficient Data

4.7.2 Lake Erie Tributaries: Hilsenhoff Biotic Index Results

HBI results indicate that water quality is *impaired* at most Lake Erie tributary stations (**Table 8**). Results from biological assessments for these stations are illustrated in **Appendix J**. Sediment loading, reduced baseflow, lack of in-stream habitat, and nutrient enrichment are primary causes of impairment at these stations. BioMAP samples have not been collected from SM001 due to high water depth, channel morphology, and access restrictions.

4.7.3 Lake Erie Tributaries Key Findings

- Based on the 2015-2019 data, all the Lake Erie tributaries have total phosphorus exceedances. The most impacted of these tributaries include Beaver Dams Drain, Casey Drain and Wignell Drain which had median concentrations 7 times the Provincial Water Quality Objective. In addition, the total phosphorus concentrations in Wignell Drain have been significantly increasing since 2007. These watersheds need to be prioritized for Best Management Practice (BMPs) works to reduce phosphorus loads.
- Total suspended solid concentrations have been found to be significantly decreasing in the Lake Erie tributaries since 2007. These decreases have been observed in Casey Drain (CD001), Eagle Marsh Drain (EM001), Six Mile Creek (SM001), and Wignell Drain (WD001). The decreasing trend observed in these watersheds could be the result of several factors which include improved farming

practices such as no-till minimize soil erosion, improved construction site sediment controls (silt fences/sedimentation basin), water retention ponds and drier watershed conditions.

- Nickel is not included in the WQI calculation; however, nickel concentrations were found to frequently exceed the PWQO at Beaver Dam Creek station BD001 and Wignell Drain station WD001. These nickel exceedances are likely from previous industrial landuse.

5.0 GROUNDWATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

5.1 PROVINCIAL GROUNDWATER MONITORING NETWORK

The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) is a partnership between the MECP and the Conservation Authorities of Ontario. The PGMN is a province-wide groundwater monitoring initiative designed to collect long-term baseline data on groundwater quantity and quality in special areas of interest. There are currently 470 ambient groundwater monitoring wells in the program. Groundwater is monitored through a network of 15 monitoring wells located throughout the NPCA watershed in locally significant hydrogeological areas. Monitoring wells are instrumented with datalogging equipment which record hourly groundwater levels at all stations. Groundwater quality samples are collected twice yearly from 13 of the 15 wells during the spring and fall, and analyzed for nutrients, metals, bacteria, and general chemistry. The two other wells W356-2 and W356-3 were not sampled because the NPCA was unable to obtain permission from the well owner. Refer to **Figure 11** for NPCA groundwater monitoring locations.

Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Well W0000361-3 in Pelham

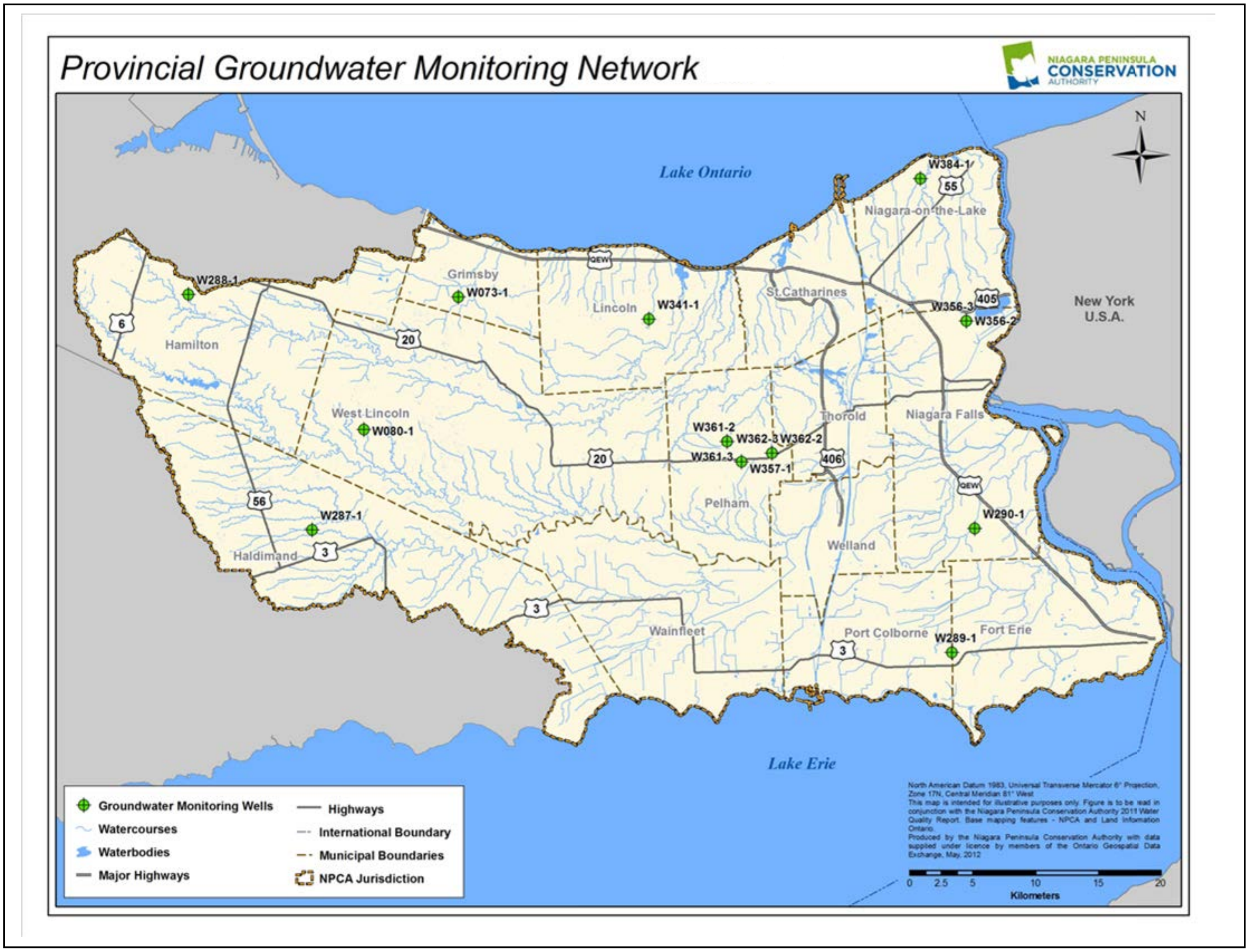

Figure 11: Location of PGMN monitoring wells in the NPCA watershed

5.1.1 Groundwater Levels

The NPCA has been monitoring water levels at all PGMN wells since 2003. Groundwater levels at this well are typically at their highest during the late-winter and spring but drop during the dry summer months are lowest in the fall. There is also yearly variation in water levels at PGMN wells which is dependent on precipitation. In dry years (such as 2016) water levels can drop substantially from seasonally high water levels; and conversely the water level drops in wet years (2009) are not substantial. PGMN monitoring wells each have water levels that are seasonally and yearly variable due to several factors (formation that well is placed into, soils, precipitation, etc.). The results of this monitoring are found in **Appendix K.**

The data from the PGMN will is also being used to help in the understanding of the impact of both local dry weather events and broader provincial scale drought events and therefore can assist in climate change adaptation planning.

5.1.2 Groundwater Chemistry

The first round of groundwater quality samples was collected by the NPCA and MOE between 2002 and 2005 and analyzed by the MOE laboratory for a wide range of parameters including metals, nutrients, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pesticides and general chemistry. Results from the first round of sampling generally indicate that water quality is good relative to natural bedrock conditions. VOCs and pesticides were not detected in any first round samples.

Routine groundwater quality sampling was initiated in 2006, and samples are collected by the NPCA during the spring and fall seasons of most field seaons. Groundwater quality samples are analyzed for bacteria, nutrients, metals, and general chemistry. Exceedances of the Ontario Drinking Water Standards (MOE 2003) are flagged by the MECP and are reported to the NPCA, Region of Niagara Public Health Department and local municipalities. Wells with reported exceedances are subsequently re-sampled by the MECP to confirm the initial exceedance. Based on the type and source of the exceedance these agencies formulate an action plan to protect human health. Confirmed exceedances of the ODWS (MOE 2003) at NPCA PGMN wells sampled between 2015 and 2019 are summarized in **Table 9**.

Table 9: NPCA PGMN stations with Health-Related Exceedances of the ODWS (2015-2019). Blue text exceedances are caused by natural groundwater conditions and red text exceedances are caused by human influences

Well ID Location	Well Type	Formation	Year				
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
W073-1 Grimsby	Bedrock	Guelph-Lockport	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium
W080-1 West Lincoln	Bedrock	Guelph-Lockport	Sodium Fluoride	Sodium Fluoride	Sodium Fluoride	Sodium Fluoride	Sodium Fluoride
W287-1 Haldimand County	Bedrock	Salina	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium
W288-1 Hamilton	Bedrock	Guelph-Lockport	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W289-1 Port Colborne	Bedrock	Onondaga	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W290-1 Niagara Falls	Bedrock	Salina	Sodium Boron	Sodium Boron	Sodium Boron	Sodium Boron	Sodium Boron
W341-1 Lincoln	Bedrock	Clinton	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium
W356-2 Niagara Falls	Overburden	St.David's Buried Gorge	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W356-3 Niagara Falls	Overburden	St.David's Buried Gorge	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W357-1 Pelham	Overburden	Fonthill Kame	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W361-2 Pelham	Overburden	Fonthill Kame	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate
W361-3 Pelham	Overburden	Fonthill Kame	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium
W362-2 Pelham	Overburden	Fonthill Kame	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium	Sodium
W362-3 Pelham	Overburden	Fonthill Kame	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance	No Exceedance
W384-1 NOTL	Overburden	Iroquois Sandplain	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate	Nitrate

5.1.3 PGMN KEY FINDINGS

- The elevated concentrations of boron, and fluoride observed in monitoring wells W080-1, W290-1, and W341-1 have been attributed to natural groundwater conditions by the MECP Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Branch (EMRB) staff. These elements occur naturally in the groundwater and the MECP reports these exceedances are likely due to the dissolution of minerals from the bedrock formations. No anthropogenic activities or potential sites were identified. This appears to be an aquifer wide issue that will likely be present when this water is extracted for use. Water treatment is recommended when using these sources for drinking.

- Elevated sodium concentrations have been observed in W073-1, W080-1, W287-1, W290-1, W341-1, W361-3, and W362-2. MECP EMRB staff has attributed these exceedances to natural groundwater conditions and impacts from road salt. As per the MECP exceedances protocol the Niagara Medical Officer of Health was notified when the sodium concentration exceeded 20 mg/L for each PGMN well, so that this information could be communicated to local physicians for their use with patients on sodium restricted diets.

- Elevated nitrate concentrations observed at monitoring wells W384-1 and W361-2 are likely attributed to agricultural landuse and/or faulty septic systems. Nitrate concentrations at W384-1 have remained unchanged since 2003, but nitrate concentrations have been significantly increasing at W361-2. In response to these exceedances additional groundwater sampling of local private wells was completed by the NPCA in partnership with the Region of Niagara Public Health Unit in October 2008 and November 2009. The purpose of the additional sampling was to determine the extent of nitrate contamination near PGMN wells (W384-1 and W361-2) and to notify affected residents of potential health concerns related to elevated nitrate concentrations in drinking water. Sampling results indicated that none of the private wells tested exceeded the Ontario Drinking Water Standard (ODWS) for nitrate (MOE 2003) near W384-1 and one private well was found to exceed the ODWS near W361-2. The well exceeding the ODWS was determined to be a shallow dug well with poor construction and is likely not related to the nitrate exceedance at PGMN well W361-2.

5.2 WATER WELL DECOMMISSIONING PROGRAM

In 2019, the NPCA continued to provide grants to watershed residents interested in properly decommissioning abandoned water wells on their property through the NPCA Water Well Decommissioning Program. The grant program offers an 80% subsidy for water well decommissioning to a maximum of $1000 per well. Grant applications are prioritized in areas designated as highly susceptible to groundwater contamination in the NPCA Groundwater Study (Waterloo Hydrogeologic Inc. 2005), areas where there is a high density of private wells used for domestic purposes, and areas where a watershed plan has been completed or is underway. Numerous improperly abandoned water wells are known to exist in the NPCA watershed, and these wells can serve as a direct pathway between potential contaminants at ground surface and deeper aquifers. The implementation of this program will reduce the risk of groundwater contamination and fulfills a recommendation made in the Groundwater Management Strategy of the NPCA Groundwater Study (Waterloo Hydrogeologic Inc. 2005).

To date, 99 water wells have been decommissioned with the NPCA water well decommissioning program **Table 10**. An example of a water well decommissioning project is shown in **Figure 12**. Recently the participation with this program has been very strong with a 100% of the funding allocated. Increased participation is attributed to improved exposure of the program in the watershed through various media sources and word of mouth from licensed well contractors.

Table 10: Number and location of abandoned water wells decommissioned through the NPCA Water Well Decommissioning Grant from 2007 to 2019.

Year	# of Projects	Location of Projects
2007	4	Hamilton (2), Lincoln (1), Niagara Falls (1)
2008	1	Niagara-on-the-Lake (1)
2009	3	Grimsby (1), Lincoln (1), Niagara Falls (1)
2010	7	Grimsby (1), Lincoln (1), Pelham (3), St. Catharines (2), West Lincoln (1)
2011	9	Niagara Falls (1), NOTL (1), Pelham (2), Port Colborne (3), Wainfleet (1), West Lincoln (1)
2012	10	St. Catharines (1), NOTL (1), Pelham (1), Port Colborne (1), Wainfleet (1), West Lincoln (1), Fort Erie (2), Lincoln (2)
2013	12	St. Catharines (2), Niagara Falls (1), NOTL (3), Pelham (1), Lincoln (2), Wainfleet (2), West Lincoln (1)
2014	12	Niagara Falls (1), Fort Erie (1), NOTL (2), Pelham (3), Lincoln (1), Welland (2), Port Colborne (1), Thorold (1)
2015	9	NOTL (1), Pelham (3) Colborne (1), St. Catharines (2), Wainfleet (2)
2016	9	Hamilton (1), Lincoln (2), Niagara Falls (1), NOTL (1), Pelham (1), Wainfleet (3),
2017	8	Hamilton (2), Pelham (1), NOTL (1), Wainfleet (2), West Lincoln (2)
2018	10	Lincoln (4), NOTL (2), Pelham (1), St. Catharines (2), West Lincoln (1)
2019	5	Grimsby (1), Hamilton (1), Lincoln (1), Niagara Falls (1), Pelham (1)

Figure 12: An example of a NPCA Water Well Decommissioning Project. Left photo shows an abandoned drilled well in need of decommissioning and the right photo shows same dug well after decommissioning had been completed by a licensed well contractor.

6.0 OTHER PROJECTS

6.1 HAMILTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Since 1998, the NPCA has been commissioned and funded by the Hamilton International Airport (HIA) to complete annual biological assessments of water quality near their property. The goal of the annual assessment is to determine if stormwater runoff and de-icing fluids such as propylene glycol are impacting surface water quality in two headwater tributaries of the Welland River. The annual biomonitoring is part of the airport's commitment to fulfilling a recommendation in the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan to improve degraded water quality in the Welland River. The NPCA generates this separate report for the HIA for their exclusive information and use. Data collected by the NPCA since 1998 indicates that water quality in the upper Welland River is impaired due to stormwater runoff and de-icing management practices at HIA. Despite the continuing water quality issues the HIA has made considerable efforts to improve water quality by: 1) Relocating the road salt storage area; 2) Sending glycol off-site for recovery where concentrations allow; 3) Increased use of recovered glycol and improved on-site glycol containment; 4) Glycol waste water is now discharged to the Hamilton sanitary sewer and 5) Using smaller salt trucks for de-icing. The NPCA supports these operational changes and strongly recommends the HIA continue to investigate new and innovated methods to improve water quality on their property.

6.2 GLANBROOK LANDFILL

Since 1998, the NPCA has been commissioned and funded by the City of Hamilton to complete biennial biological assessments of water quality for the Glanbrook Landfill. The Glanbrook Landfill is owned and operated by the City of Hamilton, and is designed to receive domestic, commercial, and non-hazardous solid industrial waste. The purpose of the biennial assessments is to determine if stormwater runoff and leachate from the landfill are negatively impacting water quality and aquatic biota in the Welland River and Buckhorn Creek. The NPCA generates this separate report for the City of Hamilton for their exclusive information and use. Results from NPCA assessments indicate that water quality in these watercourses has improved since 1996, with limited landfill impacts observed in 1996 and no impacts observed from 1998 through to 2016.

6.3 TWELVE MILE CREEK TEMPERATURE MONITORING

The upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed contains the only identified coldwater streams in the NPCA watershed and its biota are very sensitive to water temperature changes. In 2013, the NPCA reinitiated temperature monitoring in the upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed to (1) identify and classify the thermal regime for the Twelve Mile Creek surface water sampling stations; (2) identify possible areas of restoration within the Twelve Mile Creek watershed; and (3) identify any changes that may have occurred to the thermal stability of Twelve Mile Creek. The results of this monitoring are found in **Appendix K**.

6.4 Lake Niapenco Perfluorinated compound Monitoring

Since 2012 the NPCA has been monitoring for perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in Lake Niapenco and groundwater supply well at Binbrook Conservation Area. PFCs were found in the plasma of snapping turtles at Lake Niapenco in 2009 and 2010 by an Environment Canada (EC) scientist as part of an organic toxins accumulation study (de Solla et al. 2012). PFC trackdown studies by MECP confirmed the presence of PFCs in Lake Niapenco and identified John C. Munro International Airport as the source of the contamination (Fowler 2011).

NPCA collected a water sample at Lake Niapenco on July 24 2019. A raw water sample could not be collected from the water supply well because of the new water treatment infrastructure prevented access. **Figure 13** shows the sample location in the Conservation Area. Water samples were collected following the same protocol used by the NPCA's Operation Department. This protocol was as follows: 1) Lake Niapenco samples were collected in waist-deep water at the beach (**Figure 14**); and 2) Samples were collected and placed in a cooler with ice and shipped the next day for PFC analysis.

Figure 13: Sample Location at Lake Niapenco

Figure 14: Sample location at the beach Lake Niapenco

Lake Niapenco

The water chemistry results from Lake Niapenco indicate the presence of PFOS (a PFC of concern) at concentrations below Health Canada Provisional Drinking Water Guidelines (**Figure 15**). The concentration of PFOS generally matched the PFOS concentrations observed in previous NPCA sampling events but higher than the range of mean concentrations detected by de Solla *et al.* (2012) shown in **Figure 15**. Another PFC of concern, Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was not detected but several other PFCs were detected in the Lake Niapenco. These included Perfluorohexane Sulfonate (PFHxS), Perfluorohexanoic Acid (PFHxA) and Perfluoropentanoic Acid (PFPeA) (**Figure 16**). These concentrations generally matched previous sampling event concentrations and PFPeA concentrations were higher than those detected in the study by de Solla *et al.* (2012). These PFCs (PFHxS, PFHxA and PFPeA) have no drinking water guidelines.

Lake Niapenco was contaminated by historic PFC usage from John C. Munro International Airport in Hamilton (de Solla 2012 and Fowler 2011). The NPCA's monitoring at Binbrook Conservation Area continues to support the evidence that PFCs and specifically PFOS are present in Lake Niapenco but not at concentrations above Health Canada drinking water guidelines. It is expected that PFCs will continue to be present in Lake Niapenco due the persistence of PFCs in the environment and due to the delay to contain upstream sources. It should be noted that Hamilton Public Health has evaluated previous PFC water quality data at Binbrook Conservation Authority and determined that the PFC concentrations detected would not adversely affect the park users.

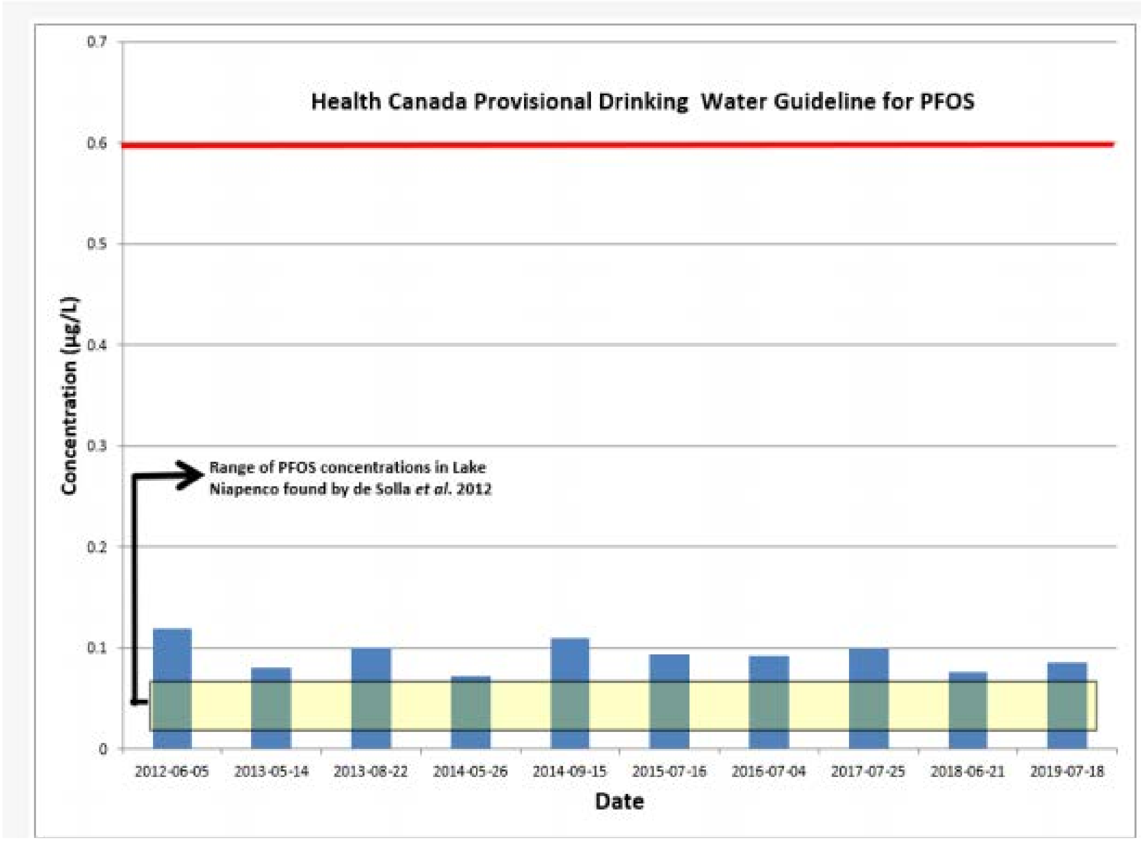

Figure 15. PFOS concentrations found in Lake Niapenco by NPCA monitoring 2012-2019

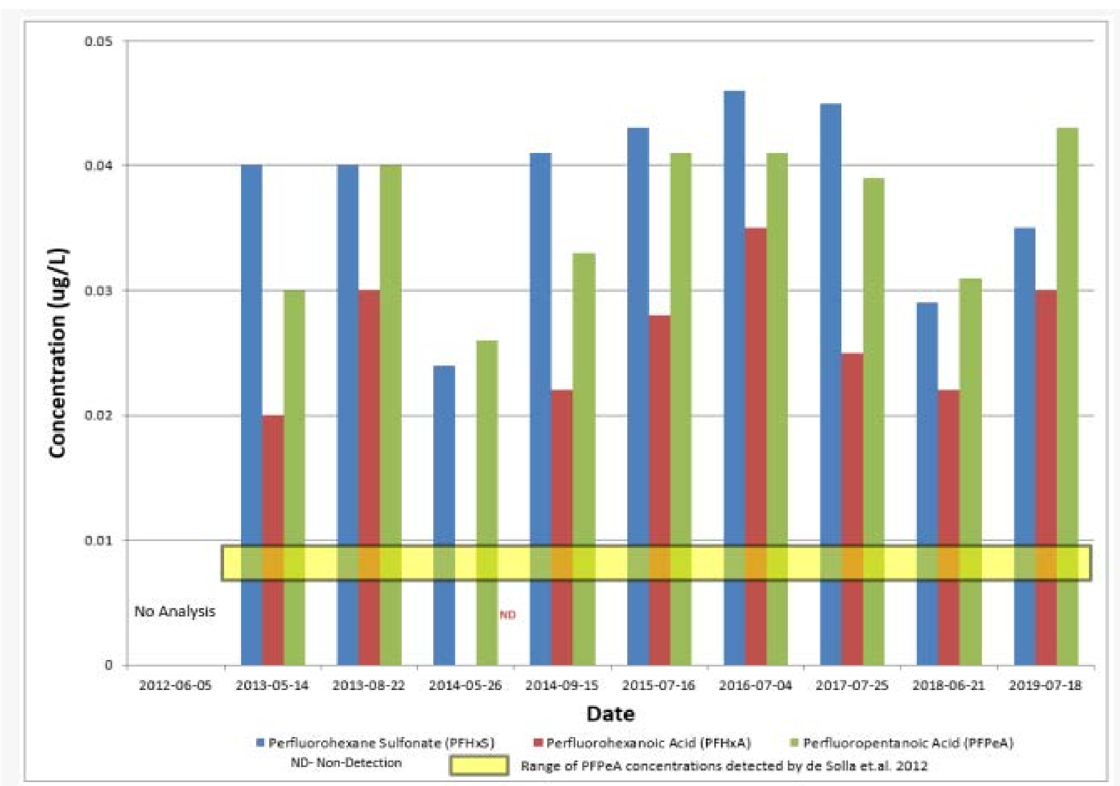

Figure 16: PFHxS, PFHxA and PFPeA concentrations found in Lake Niapenco by NPCA monitoring 2012-2019.

6.5 Canada Ontario Agreement Climate Change Monitoring Networks Review Project

A climate change sensitivity assessment completed by the MECP in 2009 identified the NPCA watershed as one of several southern Ontario watersheds that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Indicators used in their analysis were related to water quality and quantity for both surface and groundwater resources. These indicators included frequency of low water levels, water use, water quality at active PWQMN stations, shallow well vulnerability, and baseflow. As a follow-up to this assessment, the NPCA conducted a detailed assessment in 2009-2010 of their existing monitoring networks and made specific recommendations for climate change detection and adaptation monitoring. Based on the NPCA and MECP assessments the existing monitoring station at Balls Falls Conservation Area was upgraded to an integrated monitoring site in 2015 which includes a rain gauge, soil moisture sensors and extended laboratory analysis for event sampling.

6.6 NPCA Data Requests

The NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program generates a large wealth of scientific data that is a valuable resource to several clients. In 2019, the NPCA water quality monitoring program received 55 data requests from a variety of agencies and the public. These include:

- Ontario Ministry of the Environment
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Academia (McMaster University & University of Waterloo)
- Environment Canada
- Municipalities (Upper and Lower Tier)
- Health Units (Hamilton and Niagara)
- Consultants
- Non-Governmental Agencies
- Public

NPCA staff collecting a grab sample for laboratory analysis.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing, the NPCA offers the following conclusions:

- Based on the results of the 2015 to 2019 WQI, 60% of the NPCA surface water monitoring stations are rated as *poor*, 33% are rated as *marginal*, 5% are rated as *fair* and 2% is rated as *excellent*.
- Based on the results of the 2015 to 2019 biological assessments using the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI): 21% of the NPCA monitoring stations had water quality rated as very poor, 36% rated as poor, 21% rated as fairly poor, 4% rated as fair and 18% have not been assessed.
- Generally, the WQI ratings at water quality stations were relatively stable when compared to historic NPCA data. None of the NPCA monitoring site showed improvement in WQI ratings. The Welland Canal (Port Colborne) has the highest water quality rating in the NPCA watershed. This is not unexpected as the water found in the Welland Canal is from Lake Erie. The other monitoring sites with high WQI ratings include the Point Abino Drain (Fort Erie), the Effingham tributary of Twelve Mile Creek (Pelham), the upper Welland River (Hamilton), the Welland River under the influence of the Niagara River (Niagara Falls) and Beaver Creek (Fort Erie).
- WQI ratings decreased in Lyons Creek (Niagara Falls) and the Welland Canal (St. Catharines) because of increased exceedances of water quality parameters. WQI ratings improved in Bayer Creek (Niagara Falls), Gavora Ditch (Lincoln) and Twelve Mile Creek (Pelham and Thorold) this is due to decreases in the number and magnitude of water quality exceedances.
- The NPCA watershed has total phosphorous exceedances of the Provincial Water Quality Objective at virtually all monitoring stations owing to the higher population densities, and larger concentration of agriculture and industry. Based on the data collected to date, elevated concentrations of total phosphorus are the most frequent (over 95% observations) and widespread cause of water quality impairment in the NPCA watershed. The relative high frequency and magnitude of these exceedances is the driving factor in lowering the WQI at all stations. However, the NPCA is now observing statistically significant decreases of total phosphorus concentrations in approximately 8% of NPCA's long-term monitoring stations. There are many potential reasons for these decreases such as a change in agricultural practices, improve nutrient management initiative, implementation of the watershed stewardship initiatives and climatic conditions. It should be noted that despite these decreases most of these stations are still 5 to 20 times the PWQO. Also, these trend results did not indicate whether such an change in ecologically significant.
- Exceedances of *E. coli* also contribute greatly to lower WQI ratings in the NPCA watershed. Approximately 60% of the NPCA stations have median *E. coli* concentrations greater than the PWQO. *E. coli* concentrations in the 5 watersheds (One Mile Creek, Two Mile Creek, Walkers Creek and Prudhommes Drain) are high relative to other watersheds and the sources of these exceedances need to be examined further. The NPCA initiated a trackdown of *E. coli* sources in Two Mile Creek Conservation Area and discovered a storm sewer outfall as the likely source of the *E. coli* contamination. This information has been provided to the Town of the Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Town staff are investigating the

neighbouring subdivision for a source. The NPCA has also observed elevated *E. coli* concentrations in Walkers Creek (St.Catharines) and Prudhommes Drain (Lincoln). The NPCA will continue to work with municipalities to identify *E. coli* sources.

- WQI ratings and Hilsenhoff Biotic Index results did not agree at every station (i.e. where the WQI rating is *marginal* the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index rating is *very poor*) indicating that the benthic invertebrate data does not entirely support the chemical data. There may be other factors which are beyond the scope of this analysis such as the availability of in-stream habitat, size of the dataset used to calculate the WQI rating, and influence of parameters not monitored by the NPCA that may be affecting this agreement. Nonetheless biological and chemical monitoring remain important tools to evaluating water quality.

- Exceedances for chloride, metals (copper, lead, and zinc), nitrate, and total suspended solids were uncommon in the NPCA watershed. Elevated copper exceedances in Beaver Dam Creek (Port Colborne) and Eighteen Mile Creek warrant further investigation. Zinc exceedances in the Welland River are related to Hamilton Airport operations and the NPCA and MECP are working with the HIA to reduce concentrations. Chloride exceedances are related to road salt impacts and groundwater discharge to surface water. Nitrate exceedances in the Richardson Creek and the upper Twelve Mile Creek may be related nearby commercial operations in the area. Total suspended solids are mainly related wet weather events and inadequate riparian buffers along watercourses.

- The water quality at most PGMN monitoring wells meets the ODWS and therefore can be characterized as good water quality. Some of the PGMN monitors where found to have exceedances in boron, fluoride and sodium that were attributed to natural conditions of the groundwater. Nitrate exceedances found in two PGMN wells were attributed to agricultural landuse near the monitoring well. Follow-up monitoring in 2008-2009 by the NPCA and Niagara Public Health determined that these nitrate exceedances were site specific to the PGMN monitoring well only. It is recommended that residents using groundwater near these monitoring wells regularly test their water not only for bacteria but also for metals, general chemistry and nutrients.

- The NPCA's 2019 water temperature monitoring of the Upper Twelve Mile Creek headwaters classified seven stations as coolwater. None of the stations were classified as coldwater or warmwater. Changes in the landscape in the upper Twelve Mile watershed since 2006 have not affected the thermal stability classifications of the NPCA monitoring stations in this watershed at the stations the NPCA monitors.

- The NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program continues to generate a large wealth of scientific data that is a valuable resource to the public, environmental consultants, community groups, educational institutions, and other governmental agencies. In addition, this program continues to provide technical support to other NPCA programs, including Technical, Stewardship and Development Services.

8.0 Recommendations

Recommendations from this NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program Report are summarized as follows:

1. It is recommended that the NPCA continue the Water Quality Monitoring Program to collect up-to-date and reliable water quality data and continue to make this information freely accessible to the public.

2. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to analyze all collected water quality data with the intent to identify significant trends or abnormalities.

3. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to work with our partner municipalities and the MECP to identify and mitigate abnormally high sources of water pollution as they are identified through the Water Quality Monitoring field sampling program.

4. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to monitor summer water temperatures within streams that have been identified as being cool or cold water systems which are sensitive to temperature change.

5. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to undertake annual water quality assessments for the Hamilton International Airport (presently commissioned and funded by the Hamilton Airport Authority). and the City of Hamilton's Glanbrook Landfill (presently commissioned and funded by the City of Hamilton).

6. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to offer the 'Water Well Decommissioning Program' to the public to help reduce the risk of groundwater contamination by removing old and abandoned wells.

7. As it is no longer typical to have watercourses completely frozen from December to March, it is recommended that the NPCA continue to pursue opportunities to expand the surface water quality monitoring program outside of the months of April to November to address water quality data gaps which presently exist for the winter months.

8. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to monitor Perfluorinated Compounds in Lake Niapenco to provide the public with up-to-date information on PFC concentrations within the lake. Yearly surveillance is an appropriate time interval for monitoring based on lab analysis costs and contaminant variability and concentrations.

9. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to monitor winter dissolved oxygen concentrations in Lake Niapenco in order to assess any impacts on the resident crappie fish population if conditions permit.

10. It is recommended that the NPCA continue to support and MECP Climate Change project for Twenty Mile Creek at Balls Falls Conservation Area by continuing to operate and maintain this enhanced monitoring station.

9.0 References

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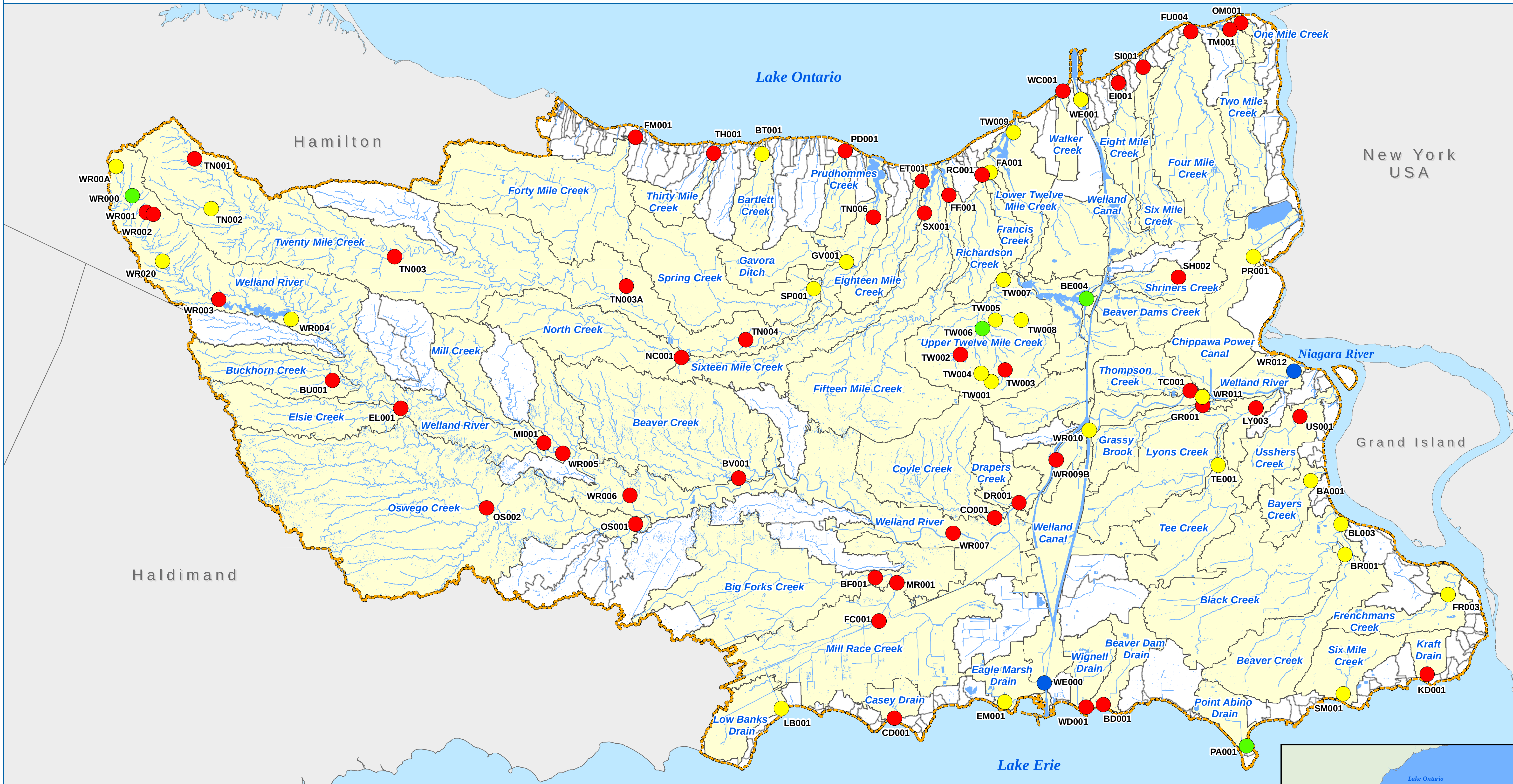
10.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NPCA would like to thank the City of Hamilton, Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Regional Municipality of Niagara, and Haldimand County for their support of the NPCA Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Appendix A

Water Quality Ratings 2015-2019



Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Water Quality Index Rating

- Excellent
- Marginal
- Fair
- Poor

- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

0 5 10 20 30

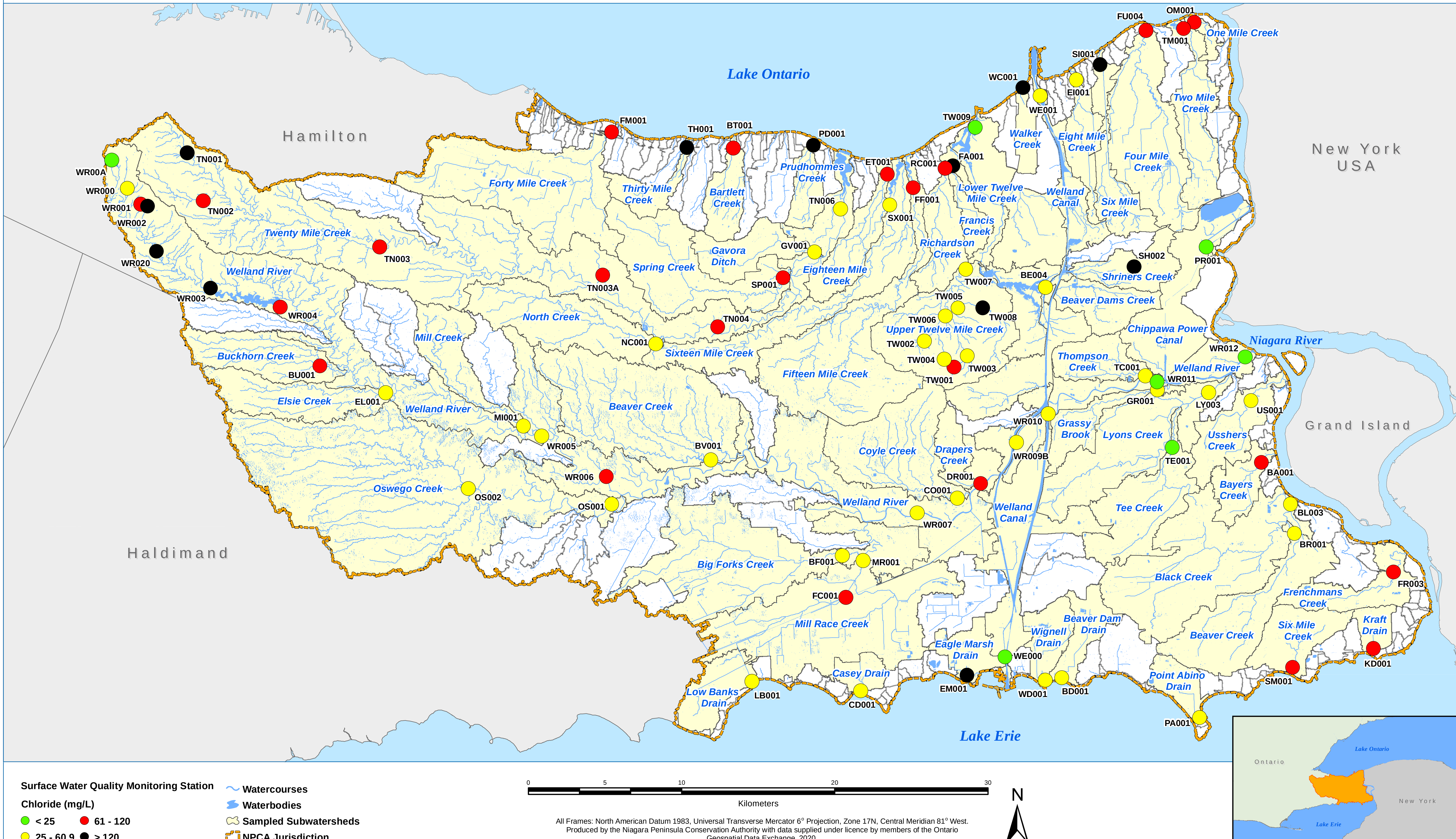
Kilometers

N

All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix B

Median Chloride Concentrations 2015-2019

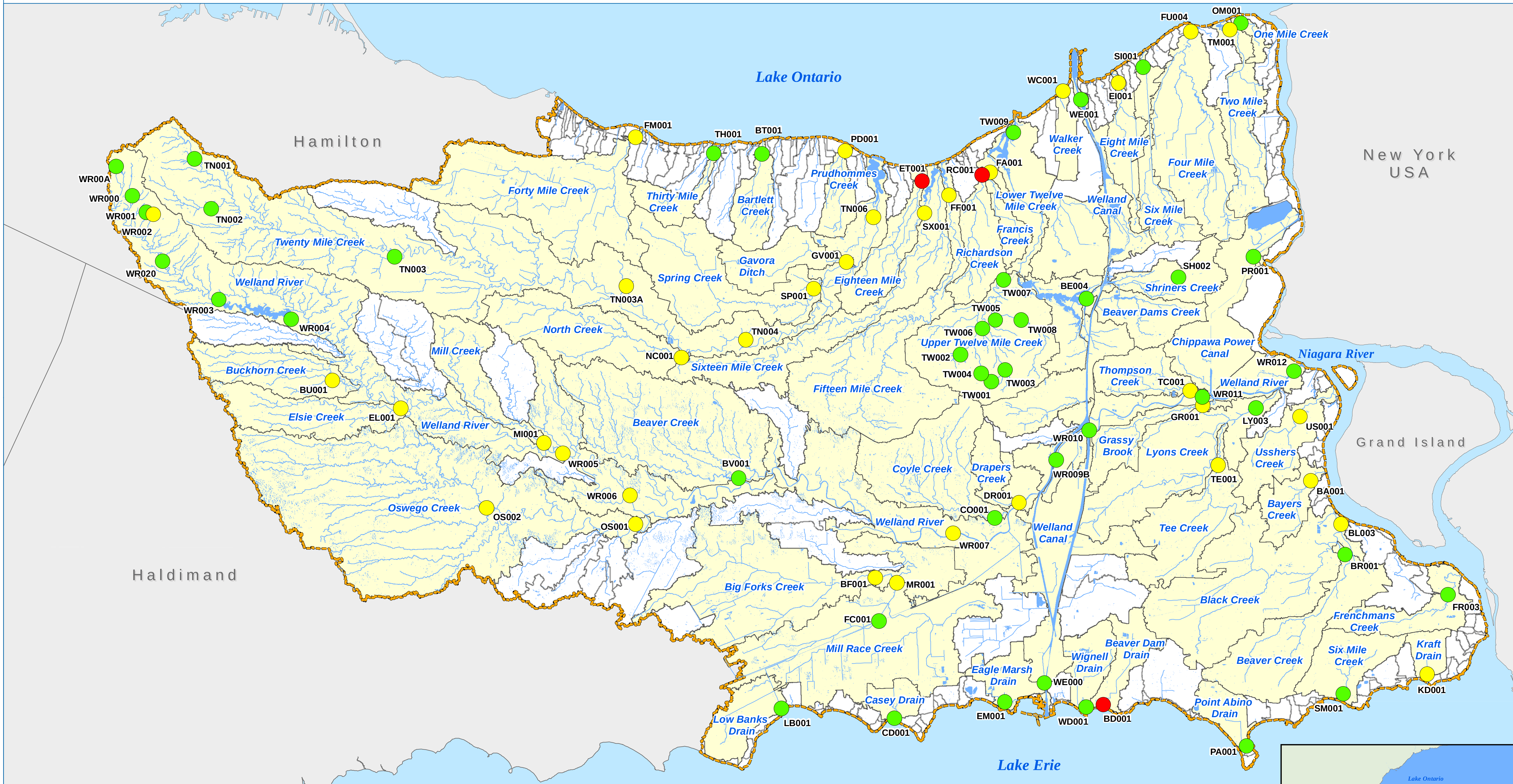


All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix C

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Median Copper Concentrations 2015-2019



Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Copper (ug/L)

- < 2.5
- 5.1 - 10
- 2.5 - 5.0
- > 10

- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

0 5 10 20 30

Kilometers

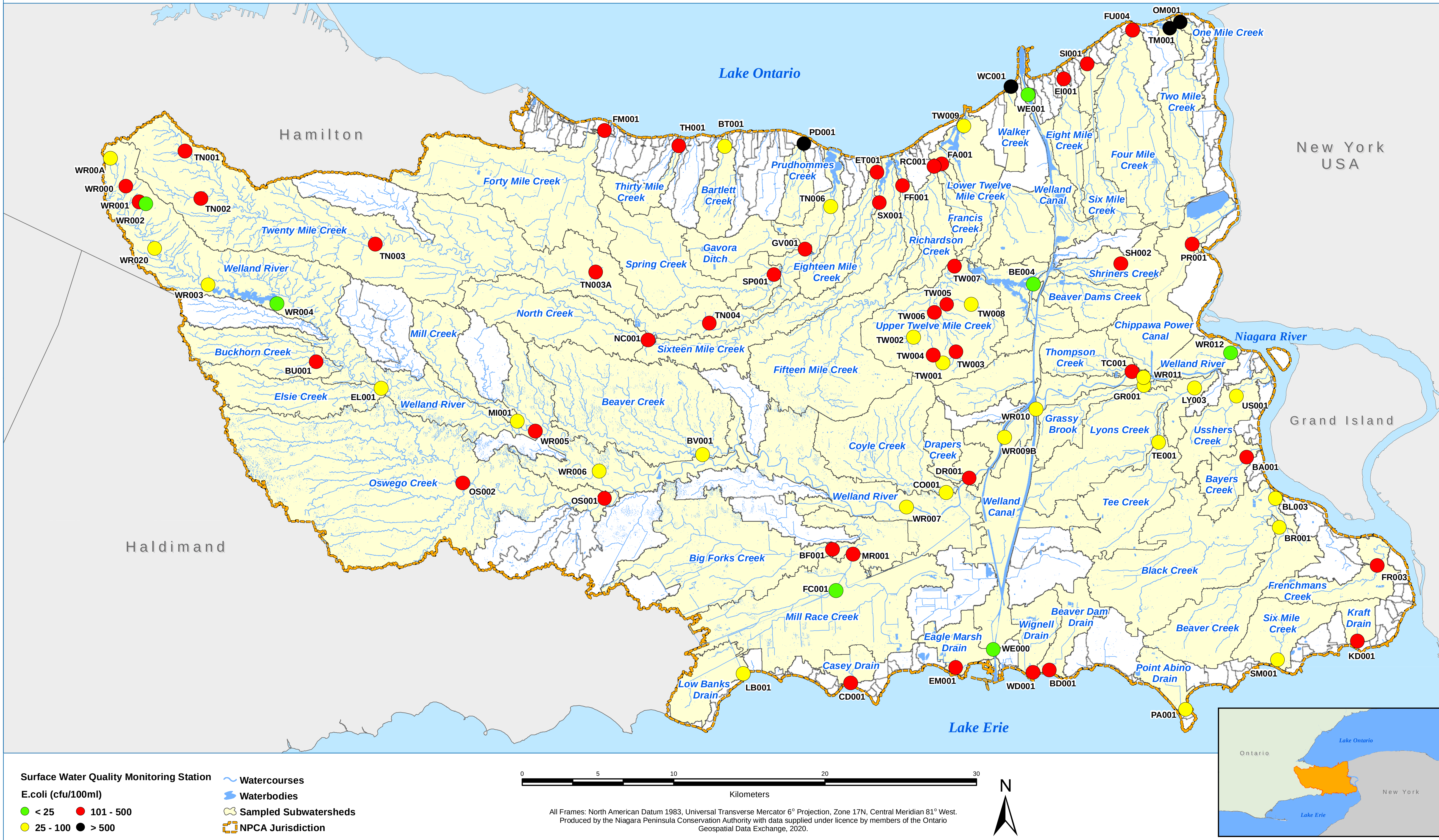
N

All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix D

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Median E.coli Concentrations 2015-2019



All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix E

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Median Lead Concentrations 2015-2019

Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Lead (ug/L)

- < 2.5
- 2.5 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 10
- > 10

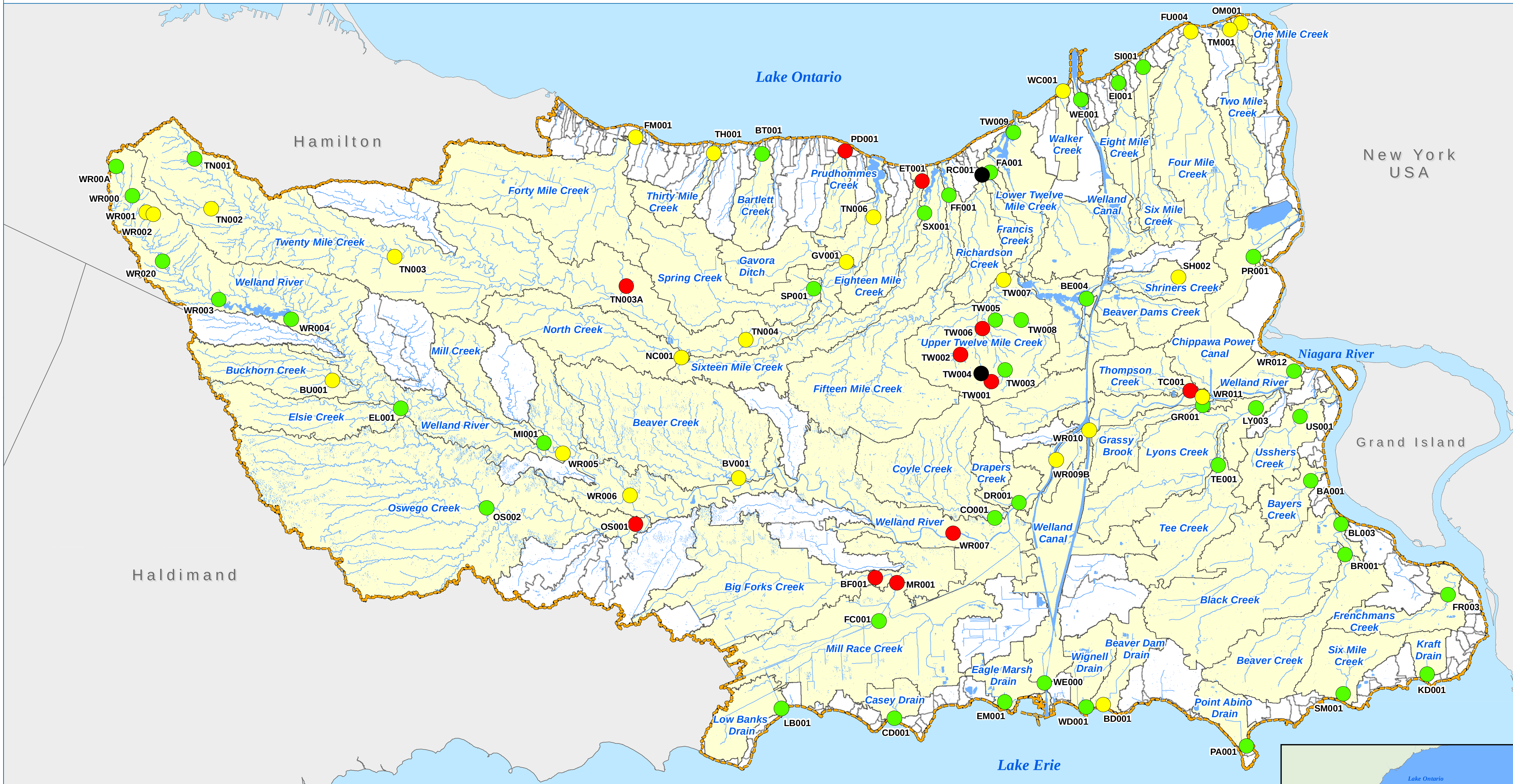
- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix F

Median Nitrate Concentrations 2015-2019

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Nitrate (ug/L)

- < 500
- 500 - 1300
- 1301 - 2900
- > 2900

- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

0 5 10 20 30

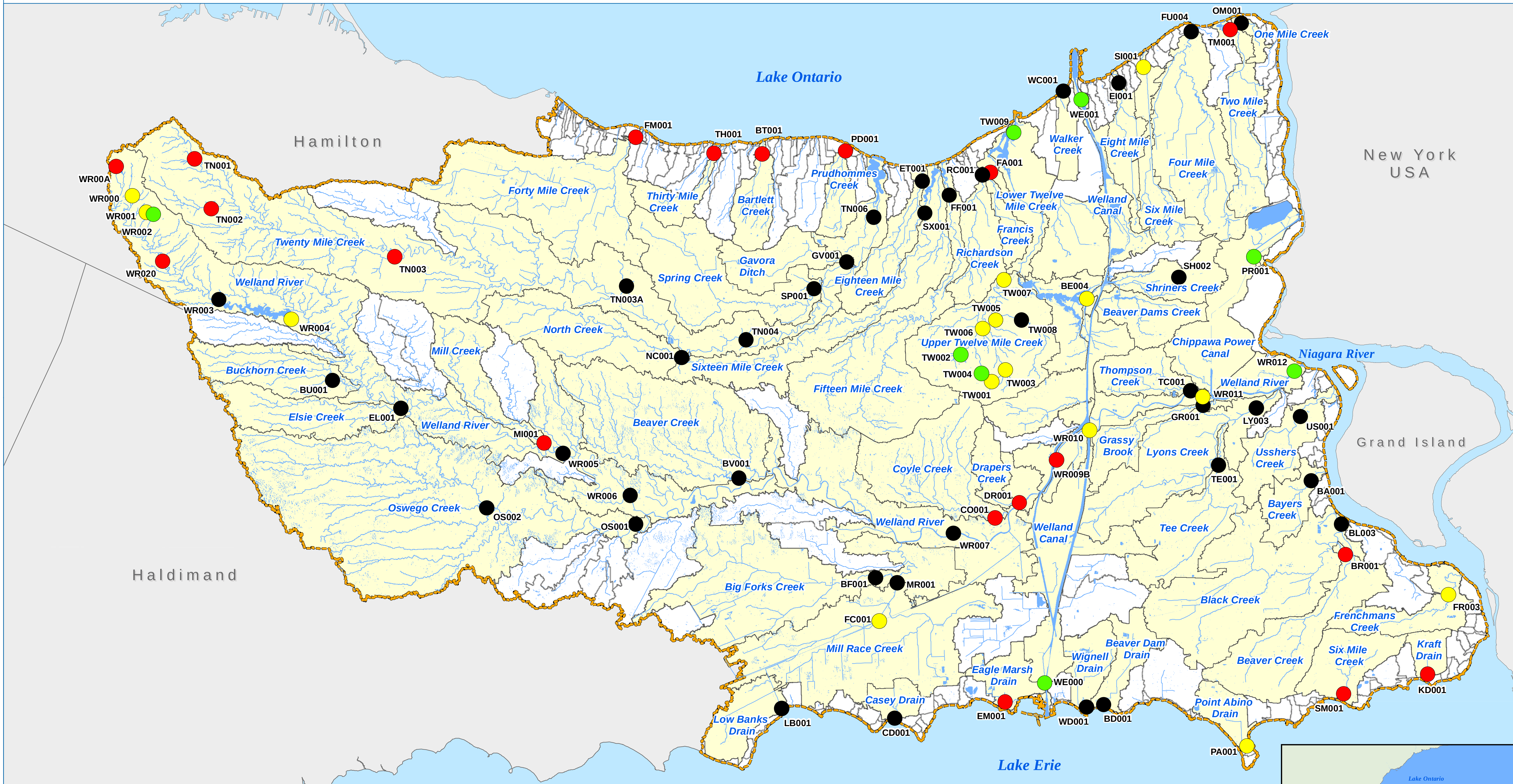
Kilometers

N

All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix G

Median Total Phosphorus Concentrations 2015-2019



Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Total Phosphorus (ug/L)

- < 30
- 30 - 60
- 61 - 120
- > 120

- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

0 5 10 20 30

Kilometers

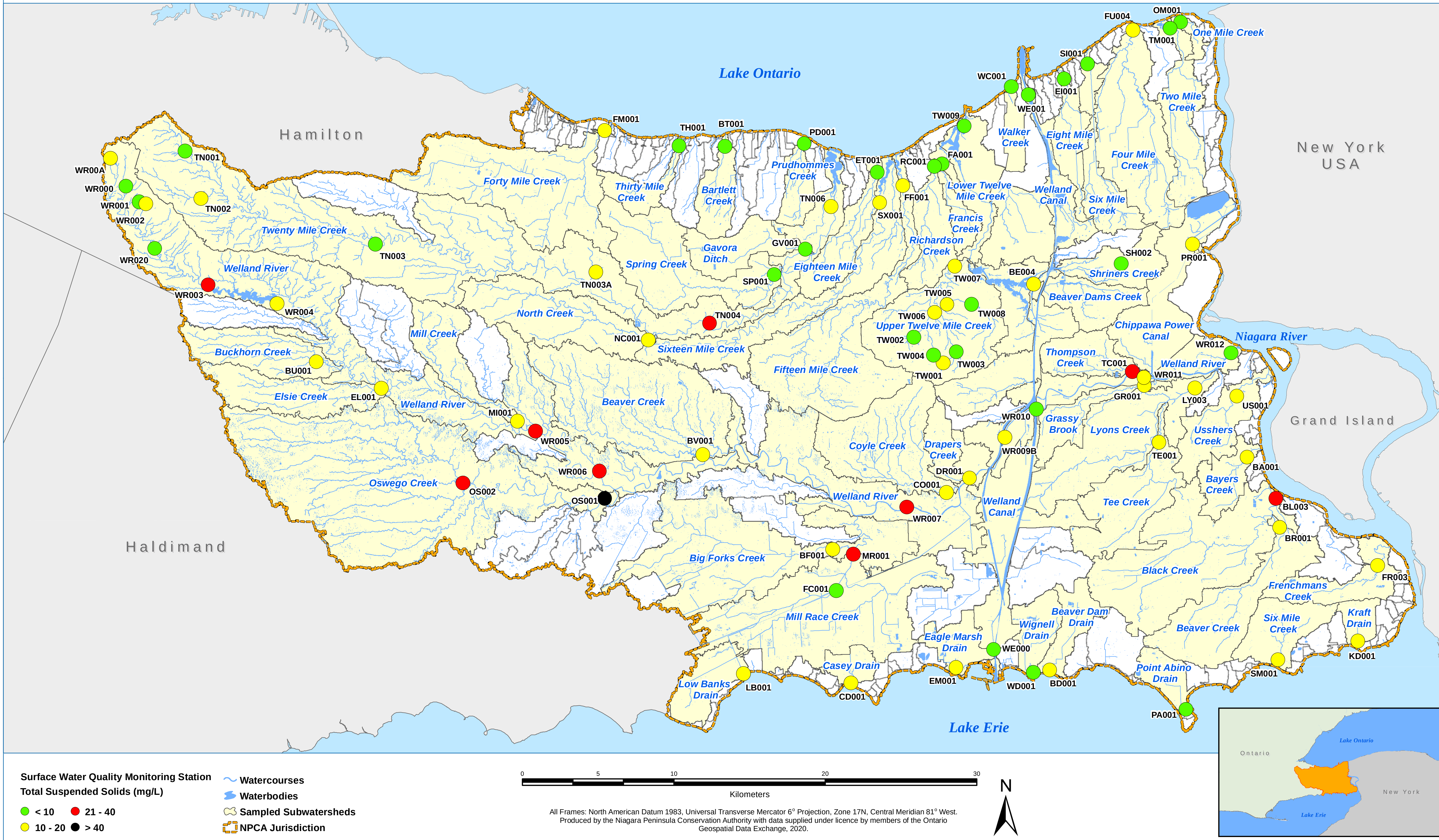
All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

N

Appendix H

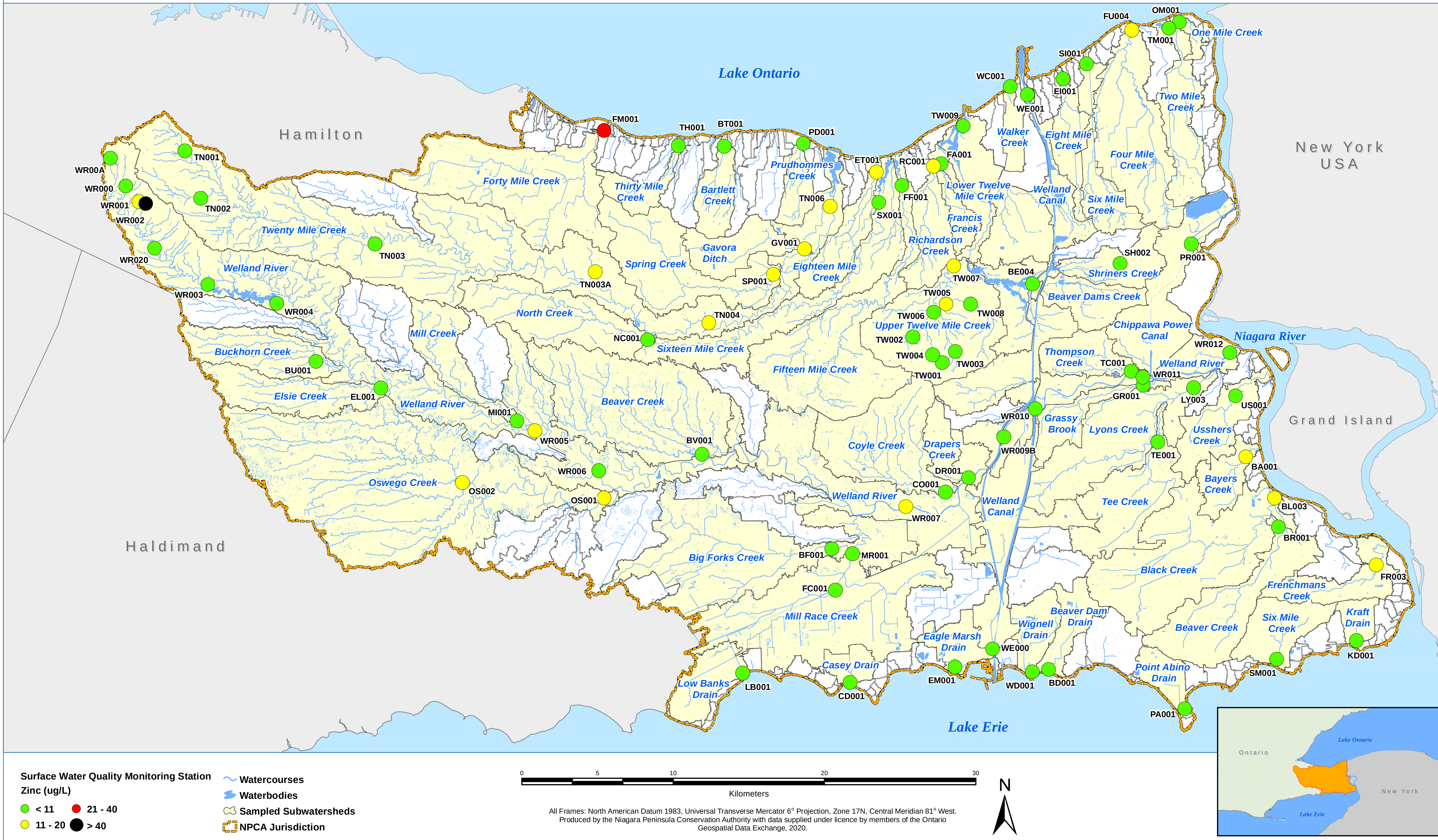
NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Median Total Suspended Solids Concentrations 2015-2019



Appendix I

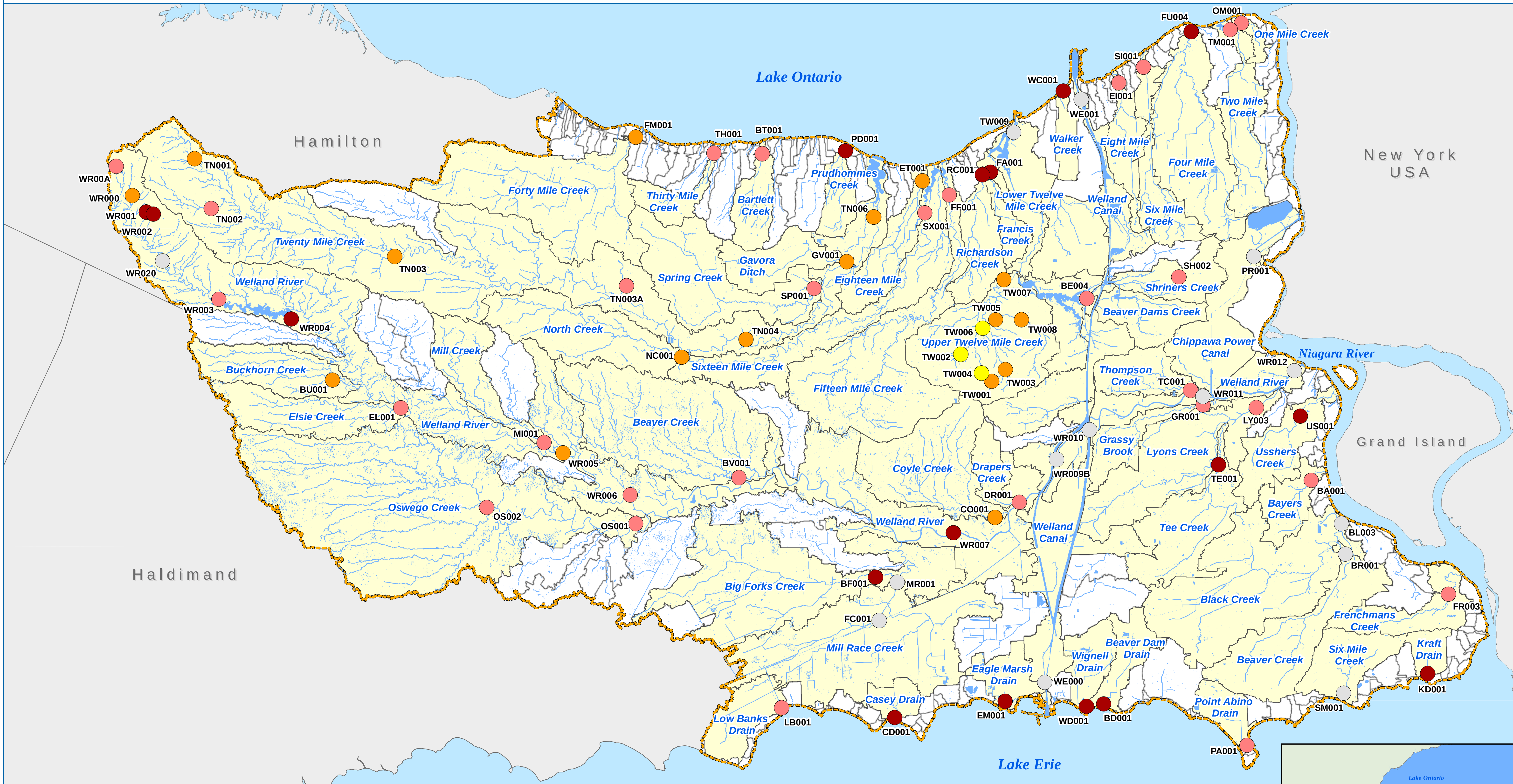
Median Zinc Concentrations 2015-2019



Appendix J

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Hilsenhoff Family Biotic Index 2015-2019



Surface Water Quality Monitoring Station

Hilsenhoff Family Biotic Index Rating

- Fair
- Very Poor
- Fairly Poor
- Insufficient Data
- Poor

- Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Sampled Subwatersheds
- NPCA Jurisdiction

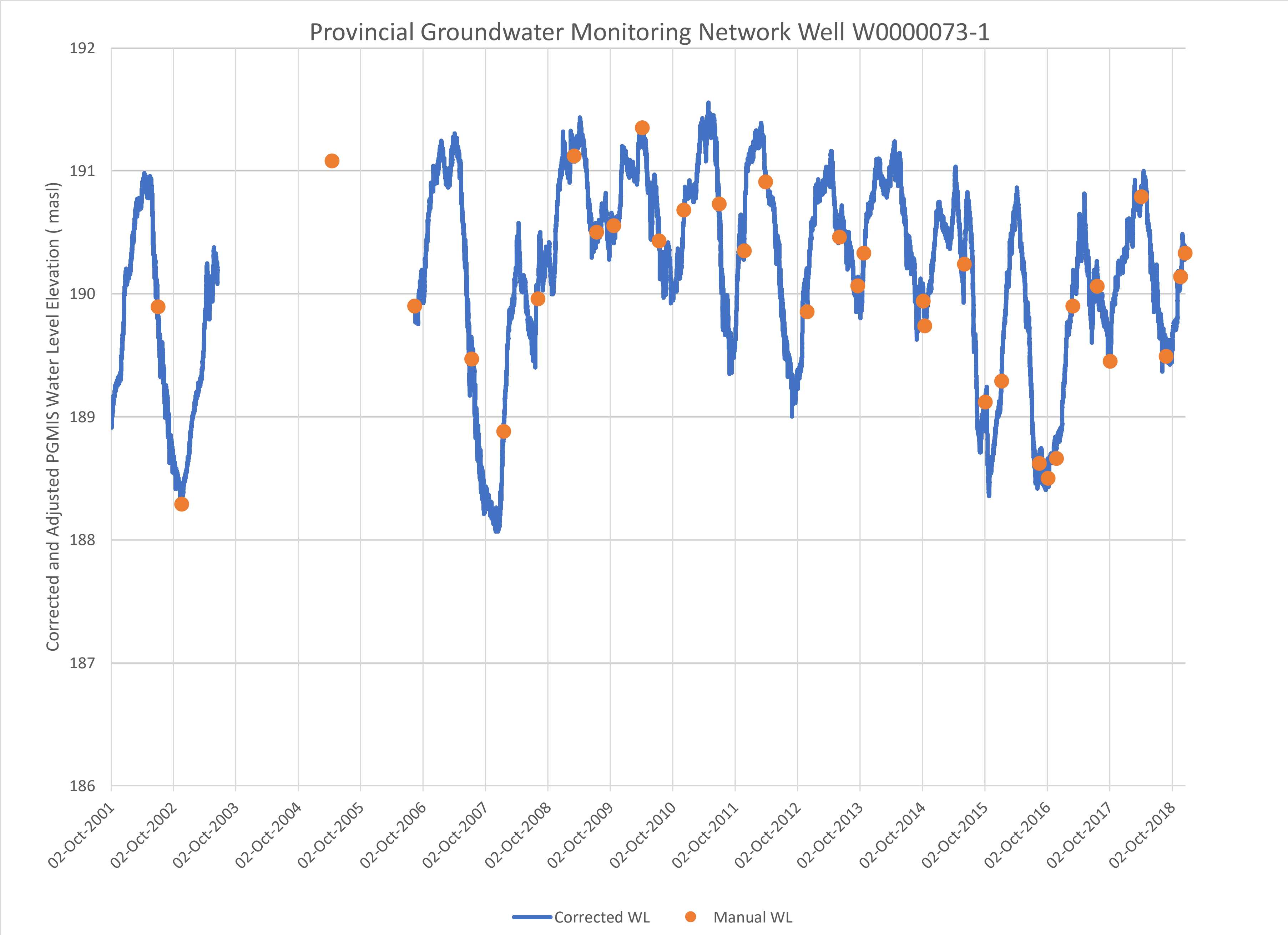
0 5 10 20 30

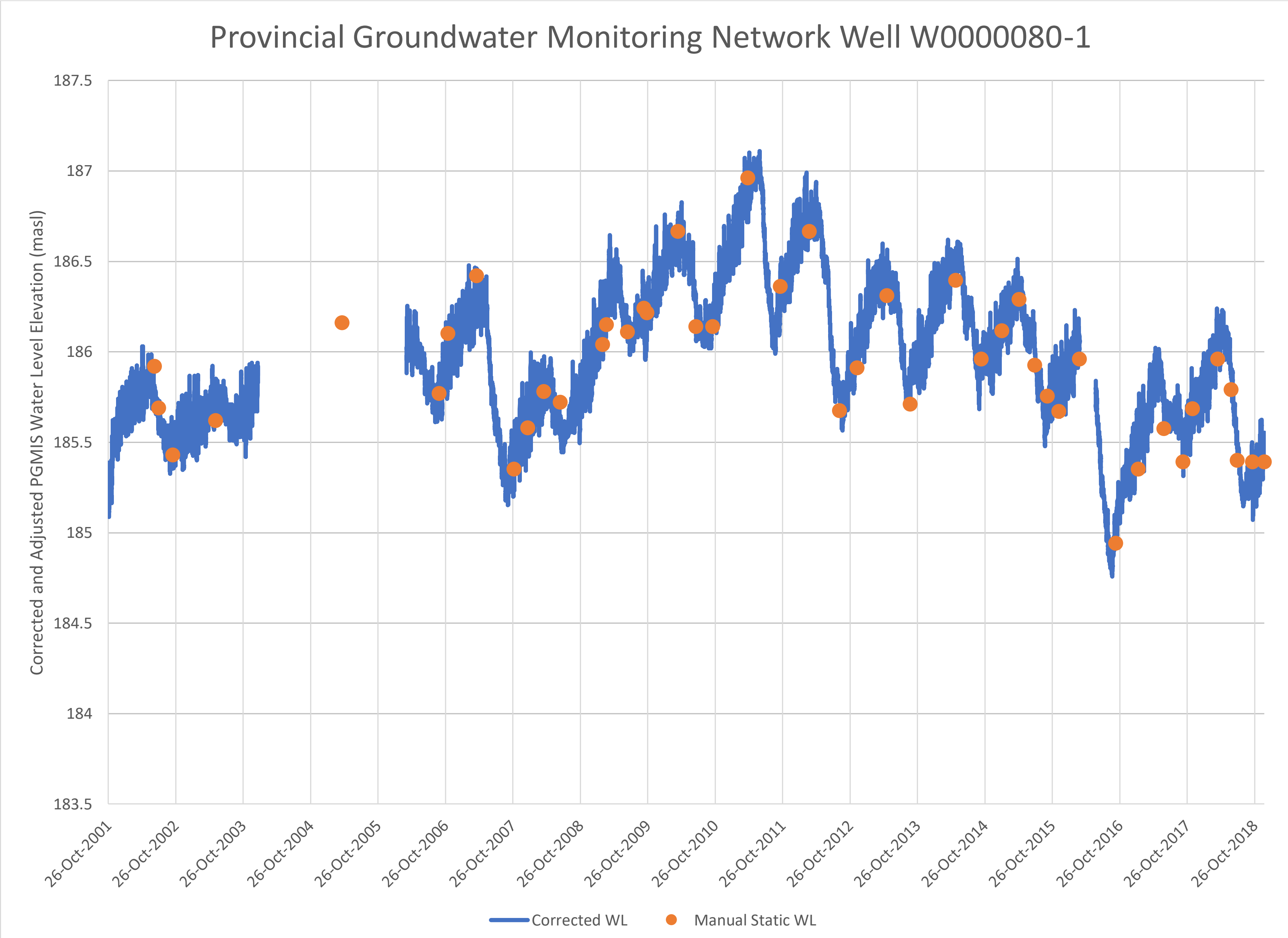
Kilometers

N

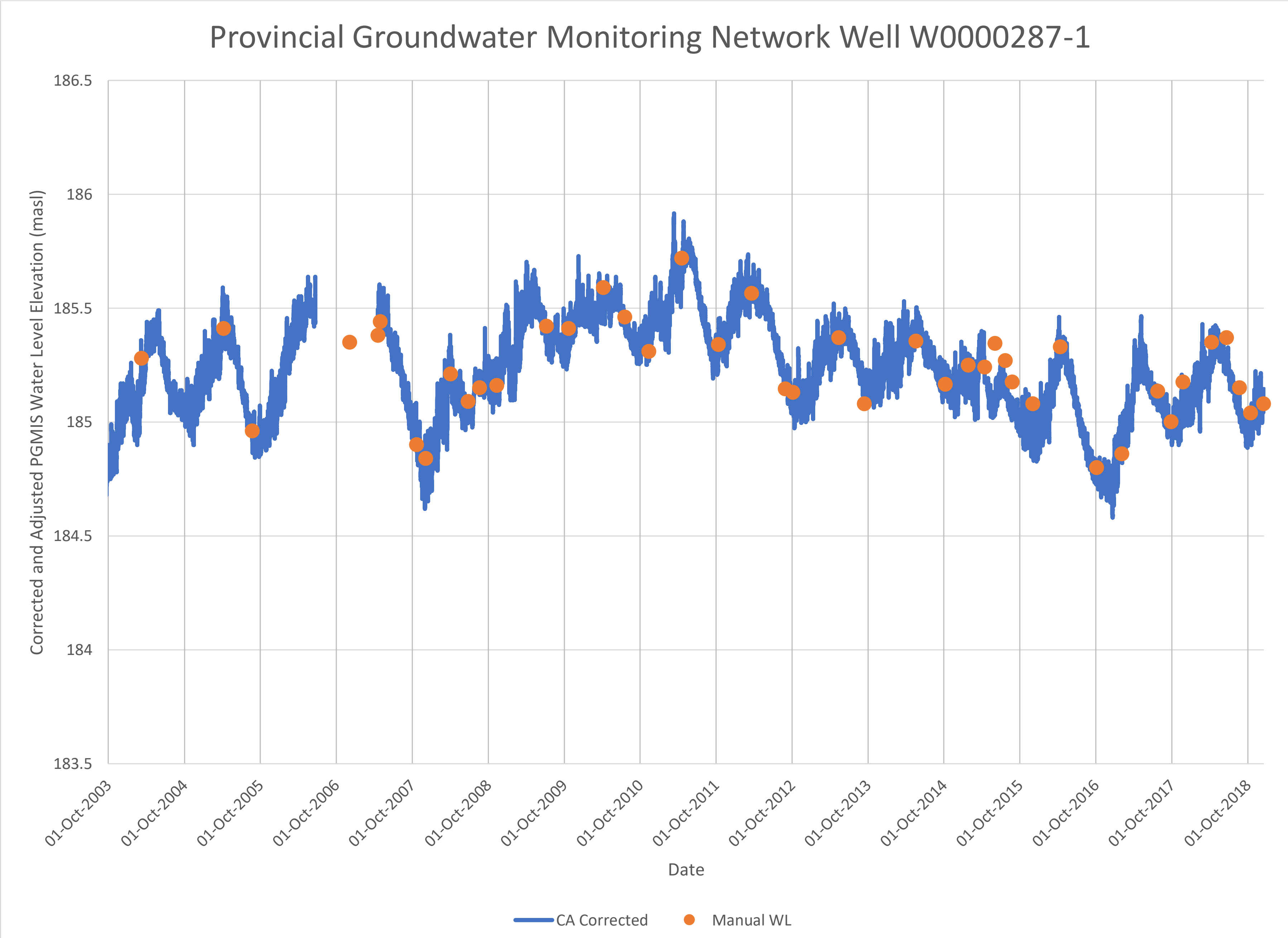
All Frames: North American Datum 1983, Universal Transverse Mercator 6° Projection, Zone 17N, Central Meridian 81° West.
Produced by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with data supplied under licence by members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange, 2020.

Appendix K


Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000073-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
192
191
190
189
188
187
186
02-Oct-2001
02-Oct-2002
02-Oct-2003
02-Oct-2004
02-Oct-2005
02-Oct-2006
02-Oct-2007
02-Oct-2008
02-Oct-2009
02-Oct-2010
02-Oct-2011
02-Oct-2012
02-Oct-2013
02-Oct-2014
02-Oct-2015
02-Oct-2016
02-Oct-2017
02-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000080-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
187.5
187
186.5
186
185.5
185
184.5
184
183.5
26-Oct-2001
26-Oct-2002
26-Oct-2003
26-Oct-2004
26-Oct-2005
26-Oct-2006
26-Oct-2007
26-Oct-2008
26-Oct-2009
26-Oct-2010
26-Oct-2011
26-Oct-2012
26-Oct-2013
26-Oct-2014
26-Oct-2015
26-Oct-2016
26-Oct-2017
26-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual Static WL



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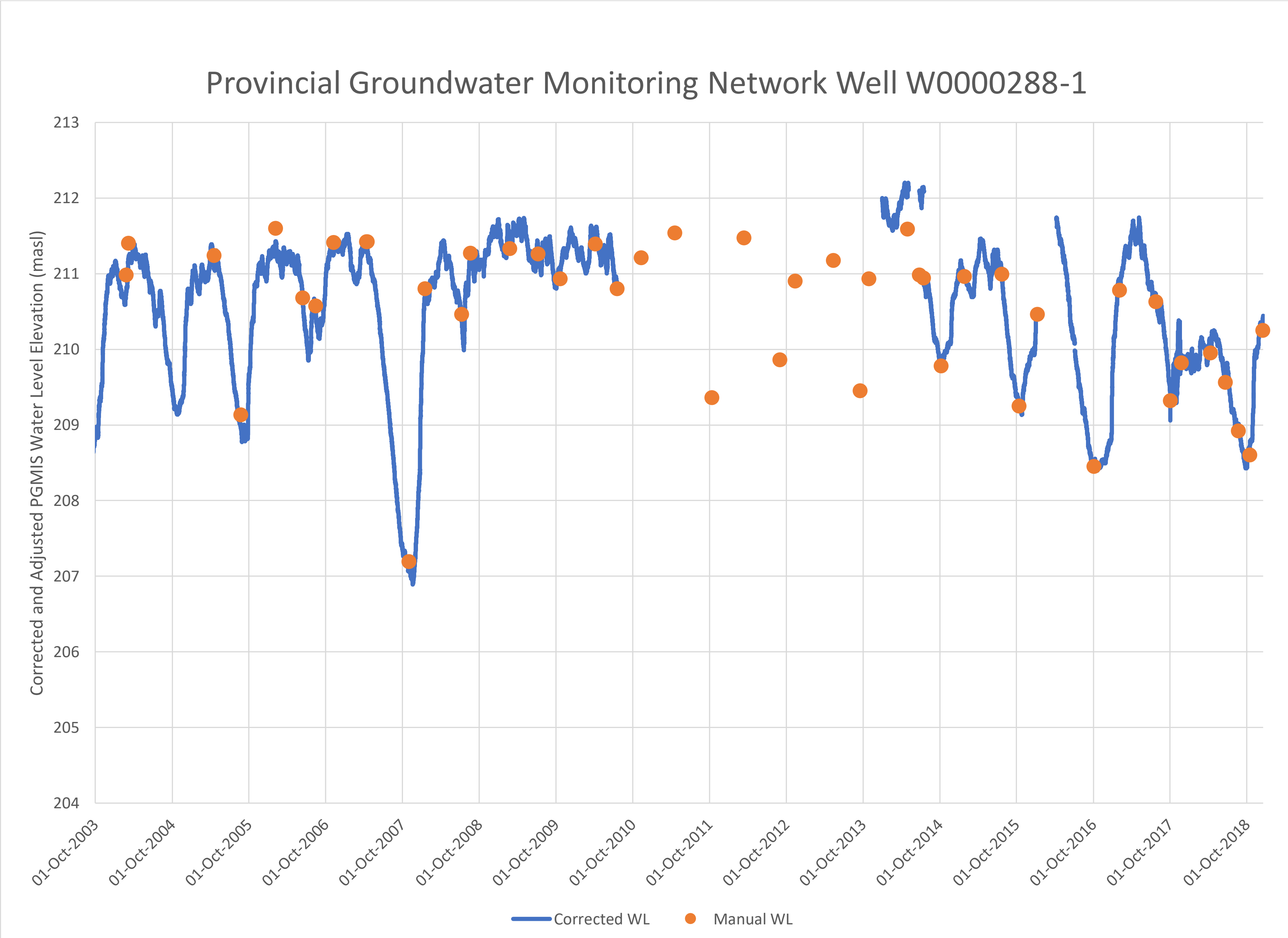
186.5
186
185.5
185
184.5
184
183.5
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
Date
CA Corrected
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000288-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
213
212
211
210
209
208
207
206
205
204
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
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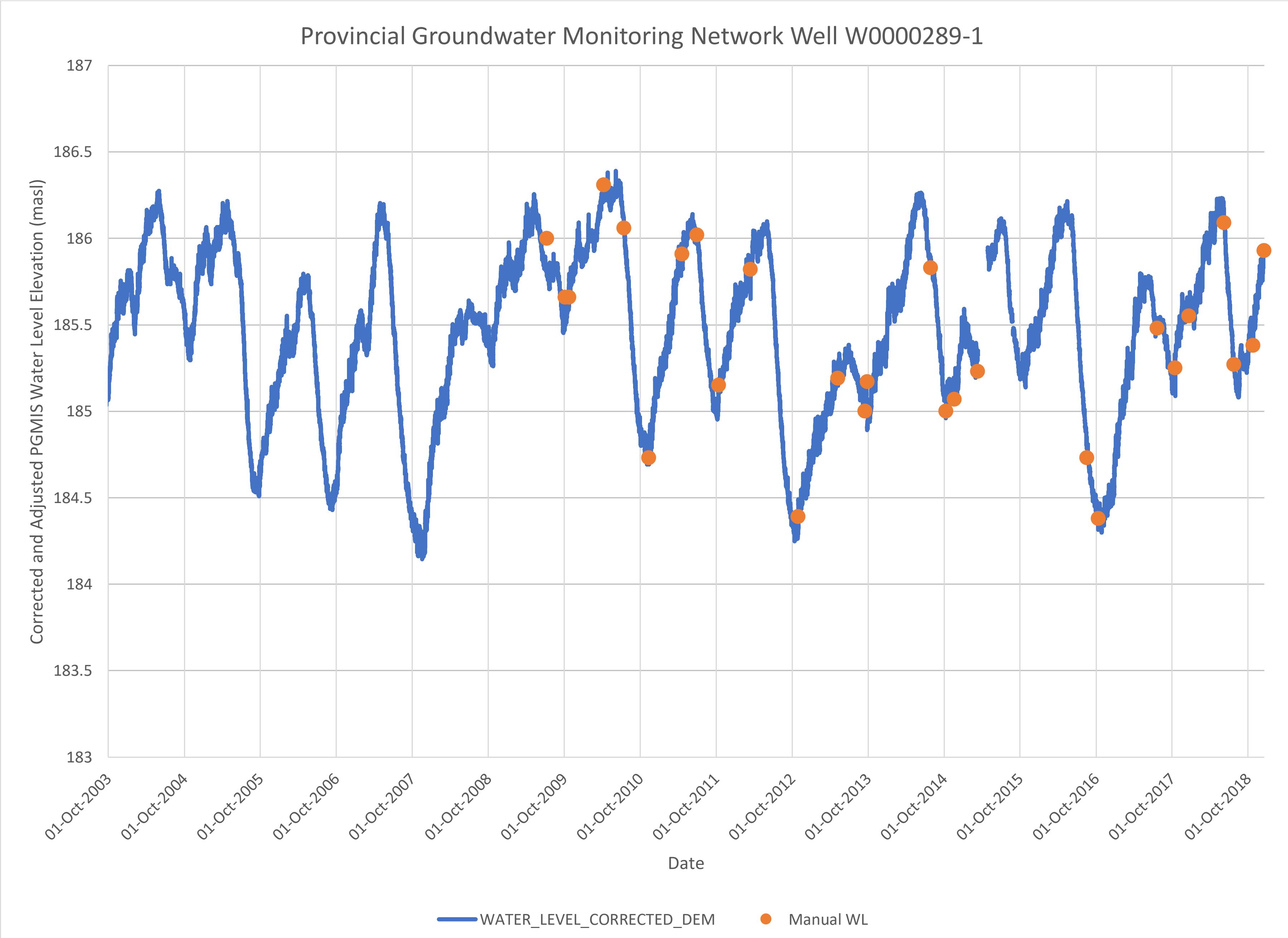
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL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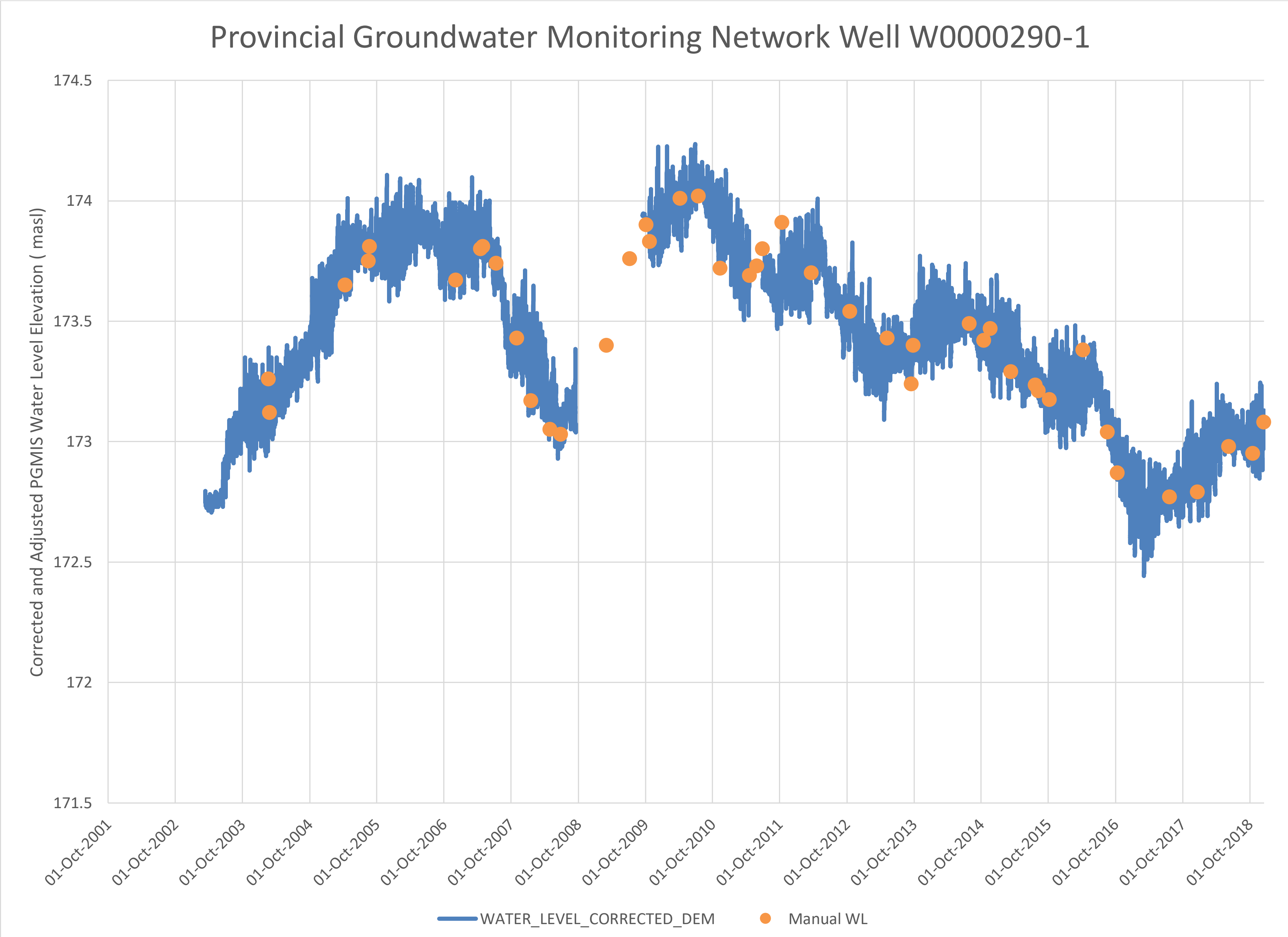
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
187
186.5
186
185.5
185
184.5
184
183.5
183
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
Date
WATER_LEVEL_CORRECTED_DEM
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000290-1
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174
173.5
173
172.5
172
171.5
01-Oct-2001
01-Oct-2002
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
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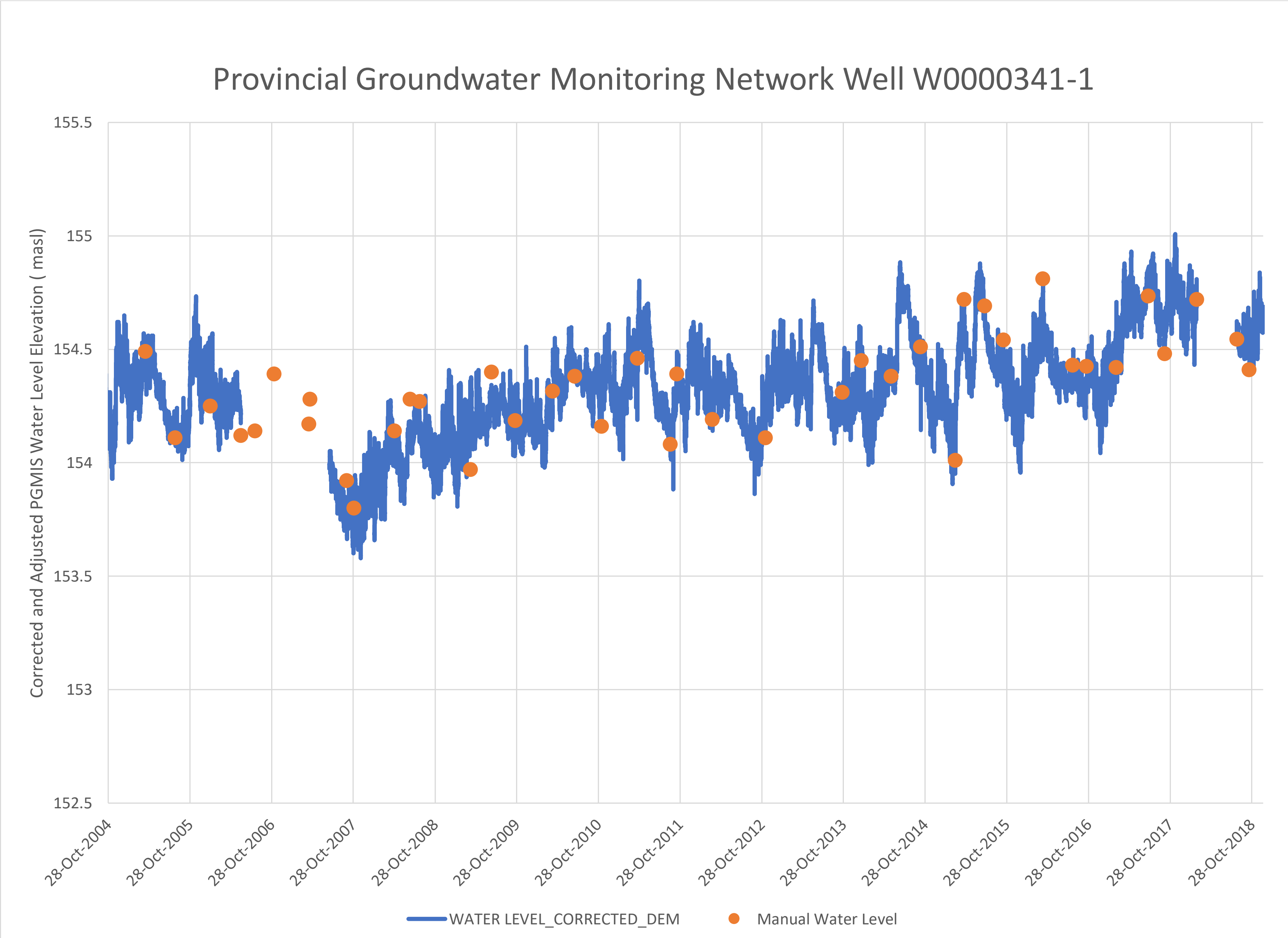
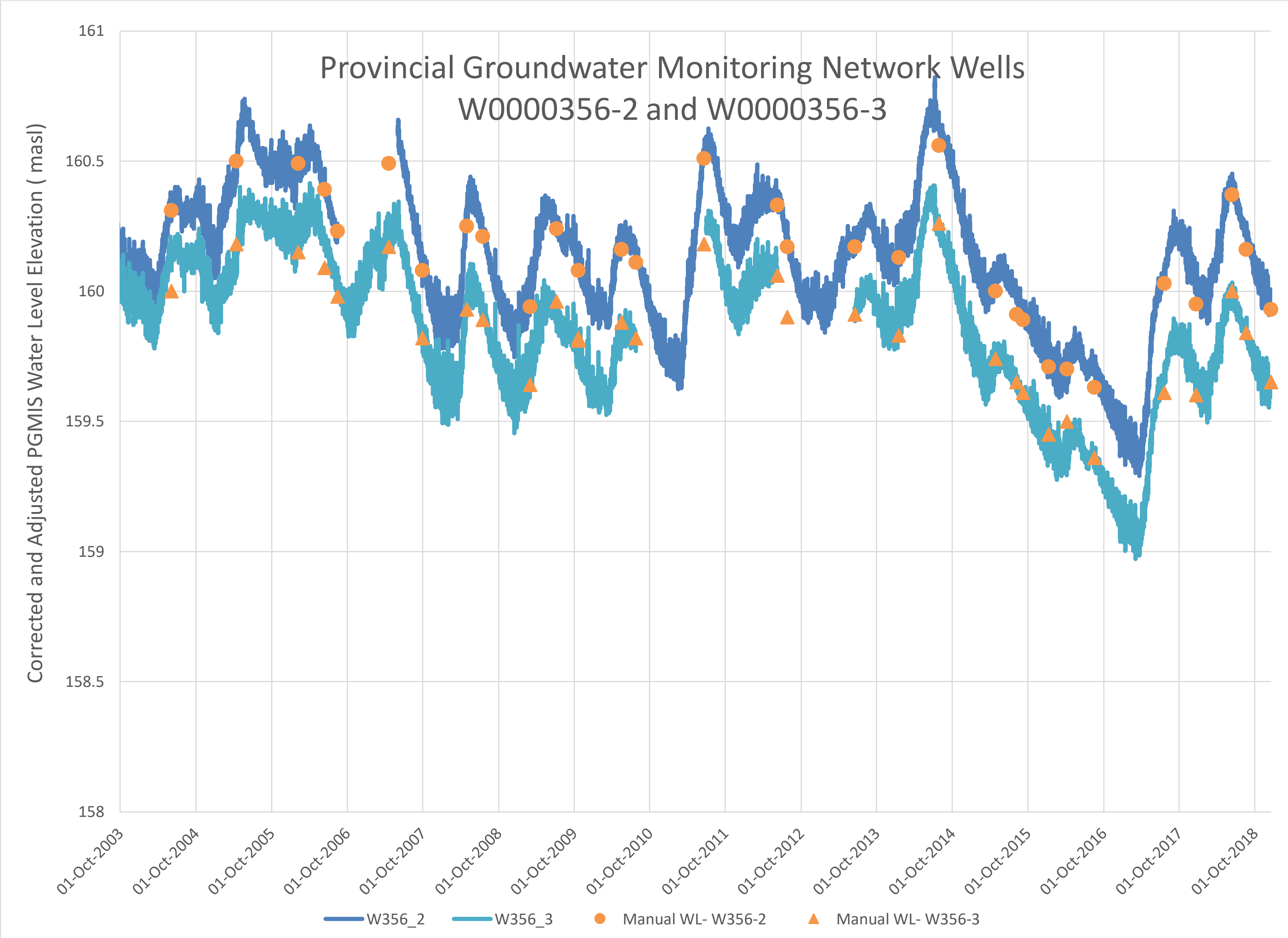
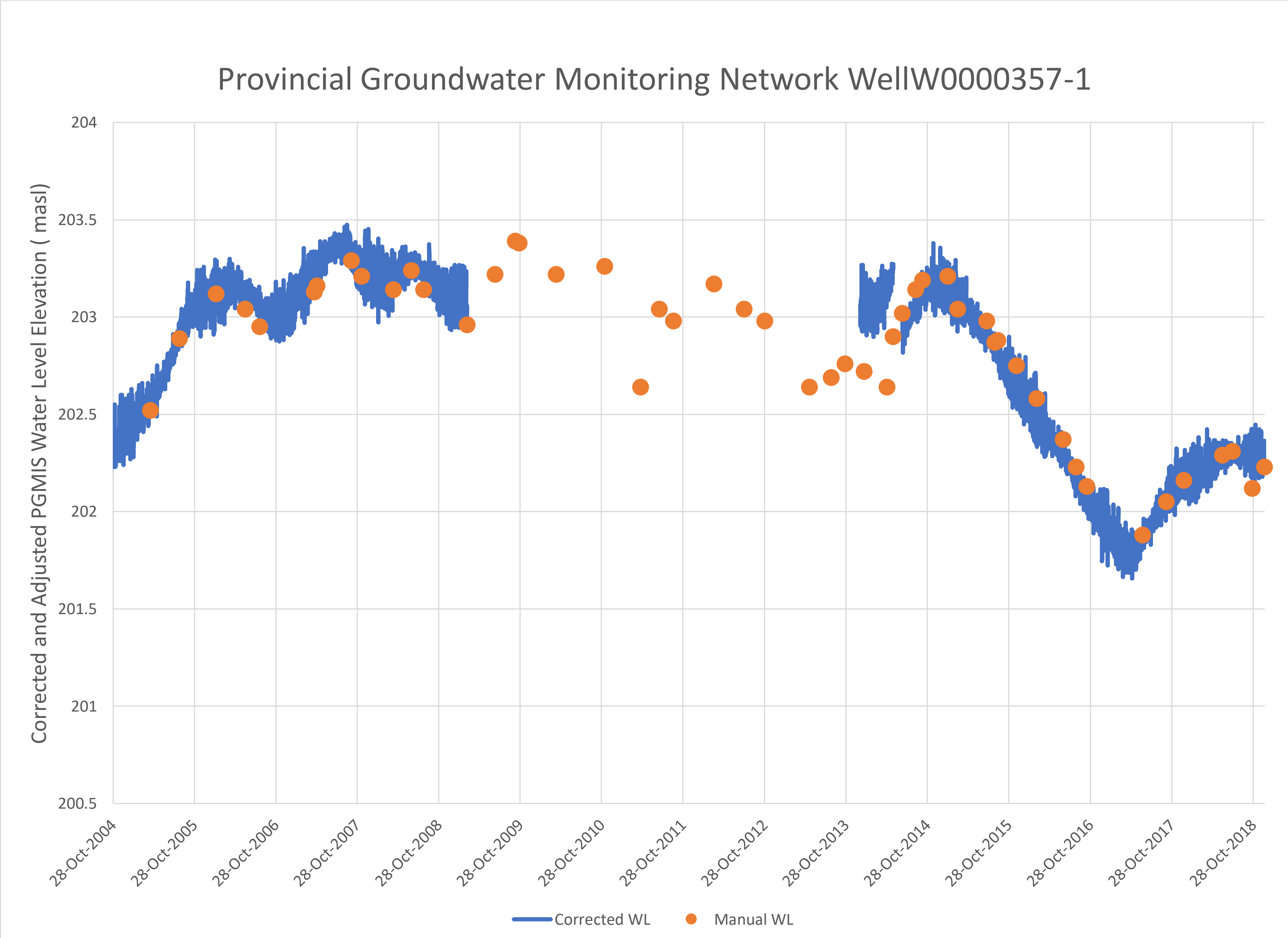
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
WATER_LEVEL_CORRECTED_DEM
Manual WL

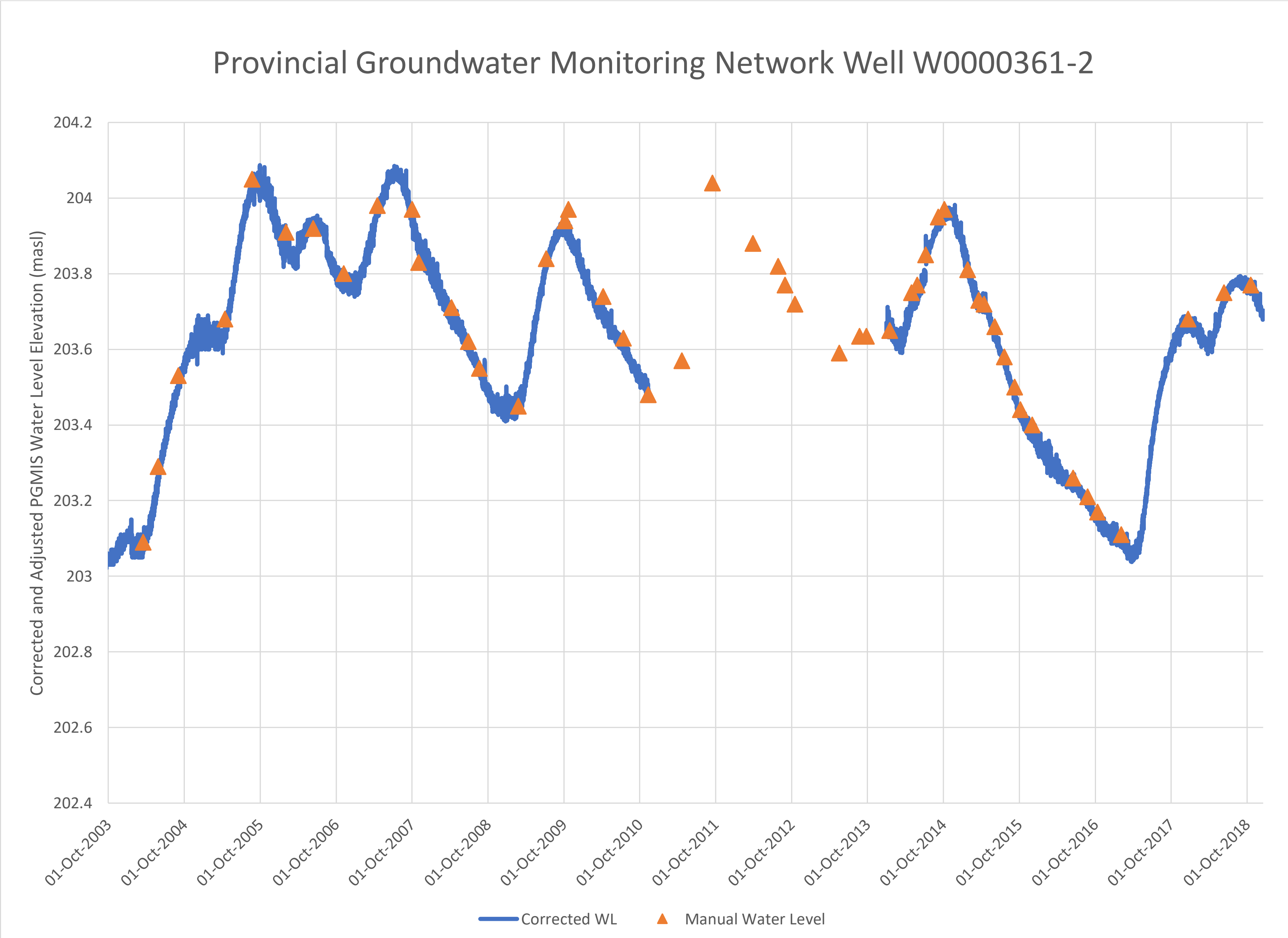

Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000341-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
155.5
155
154.5
154
153.5
153
152.5
28-Oct-2004
28-Oct-2005
28-Oct-2006
28-Oct-2007
28-Oct-2008
28-Oct-2009
28-Oct-2010
28-Oct-2011
28-Oct-2012
28-Oct-2013
28-Oct-2014
28-Oct-2015
28-Oct-2016
28-Oct-2017
28-Oct-2018
WATER LEVEL_CORRECTED_DEM
Manual Water Level



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Wells
W0000356-2 and W0000356-3
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
161
160.5
160
159.5
159
158.5
158
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
W356_2
W356_3
Manual WL- W356-2
Manual WL- W356-3



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network WellW0000357-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
204
203.5
203
202.5
202
201.5
201
200.5
28-Oct-2004
28-Oct-2005
28-Oct-2006
28-Oct-2007
28-Oct-2008
28-Oct-2009
28-Oct-2010
28-Oct-2011
28-Oct-2012
28-Oct-2013
28-Oct-2014
28-Oct-2015
28-Oct-2016
28-Oct-2017
28-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000361-2
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
204.2
204
203.8
203.6
203.4
203.2
203
202.8
202.6
202.4
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
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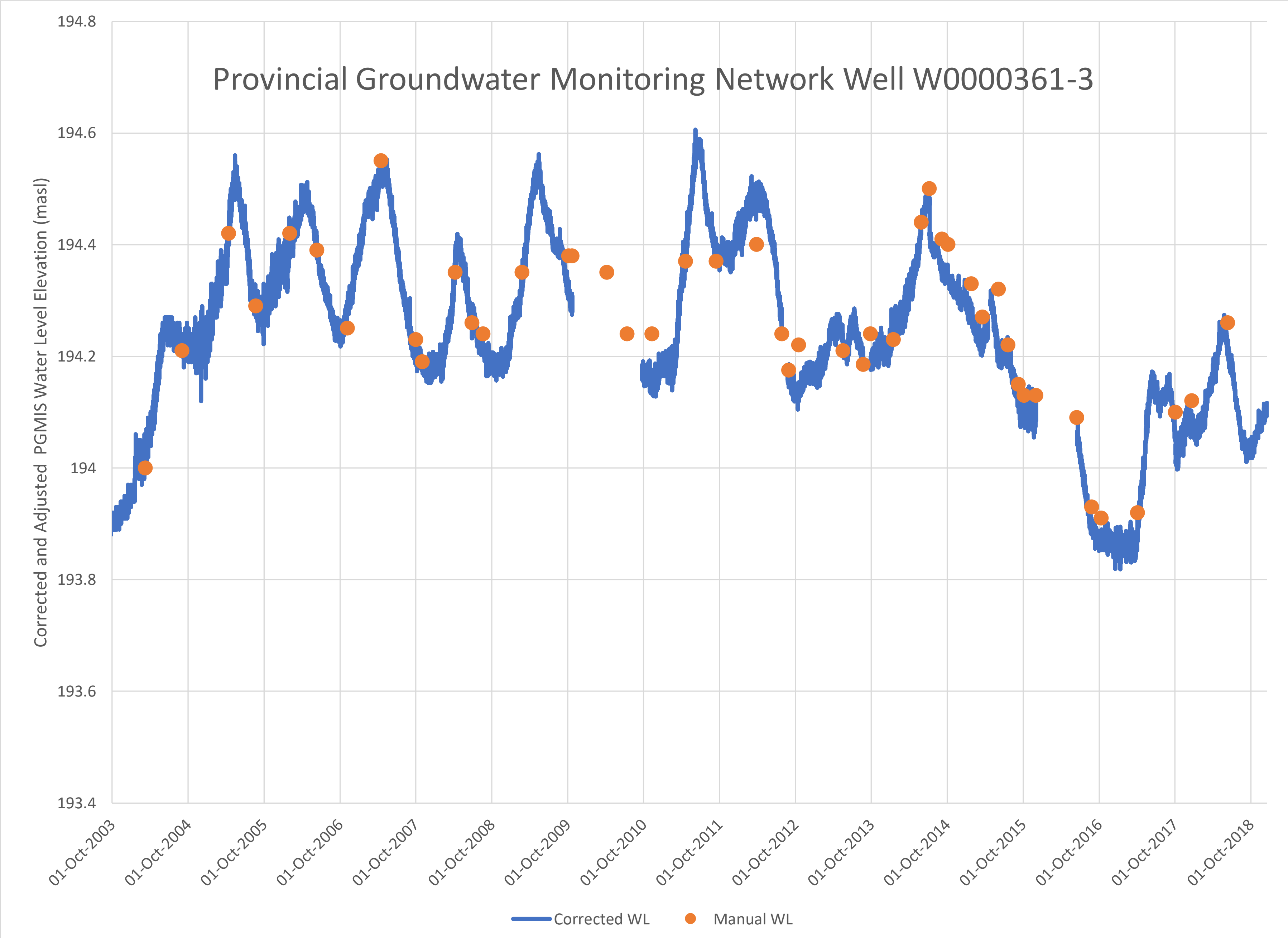
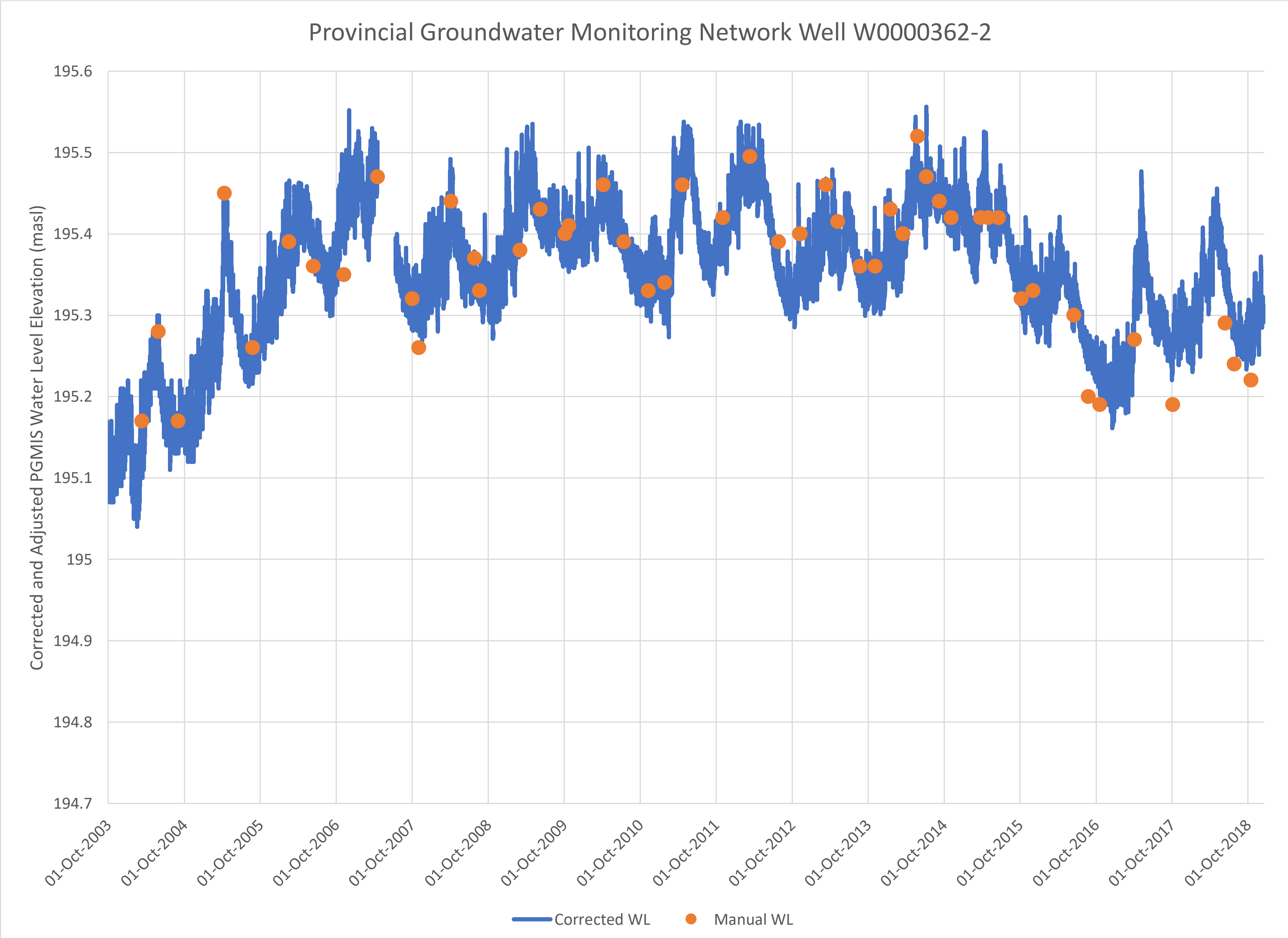
Corrected WL
Manual Water Level


Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000361-3
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
194.8
194.6
194.4
194.2
194
193.8
193.6
193.4
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000362-2
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
195.6
195.5
195.4
195.3
195.2
195.1
195
194.9
194.8
194.7
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
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01-Oct-2016
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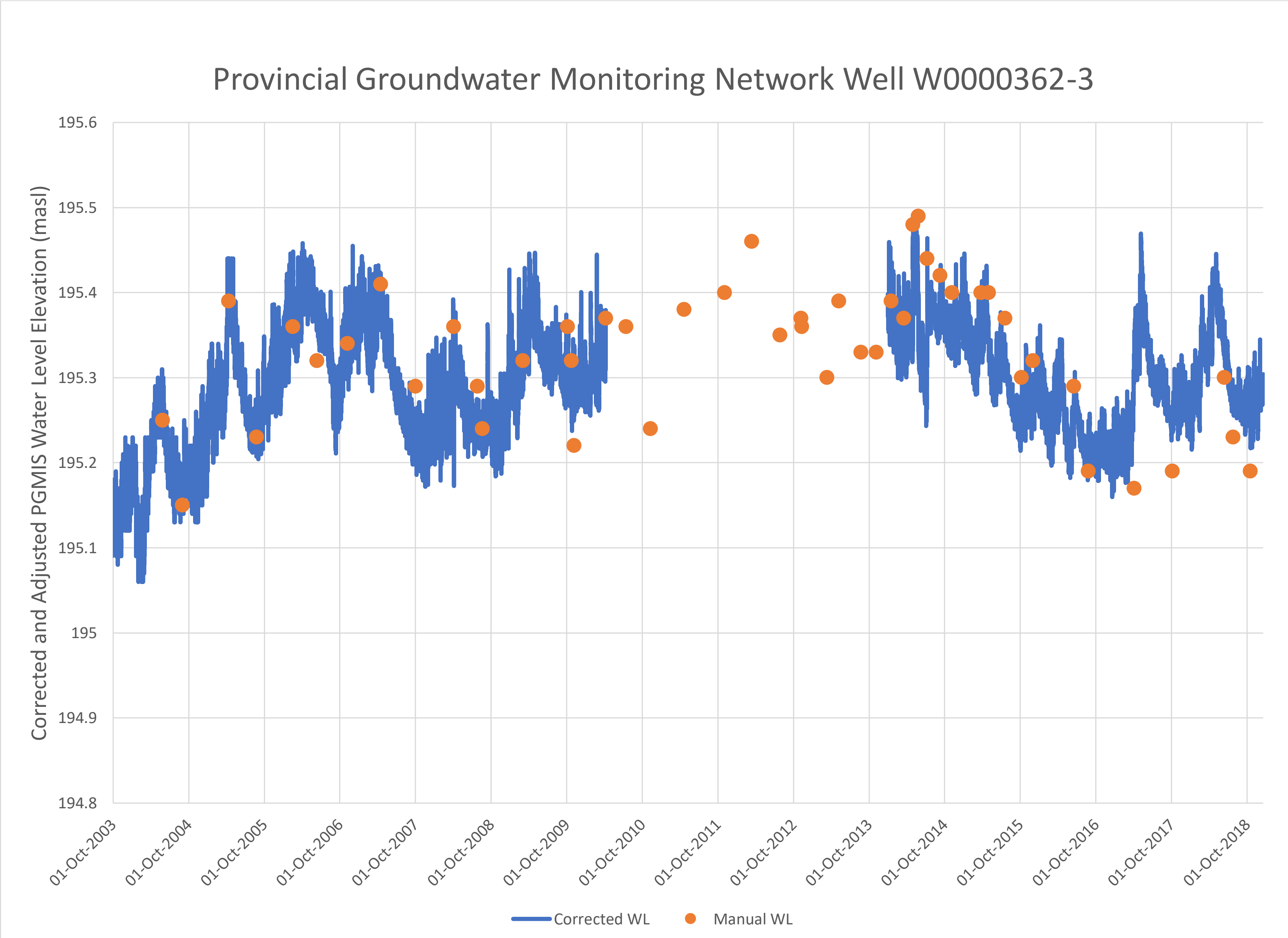
01-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000362-3
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
195.6
195.5
195.4
195.3
195.2
195.1
195
194.9
194.8
01-Oct-2003
01-Oct-2004
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
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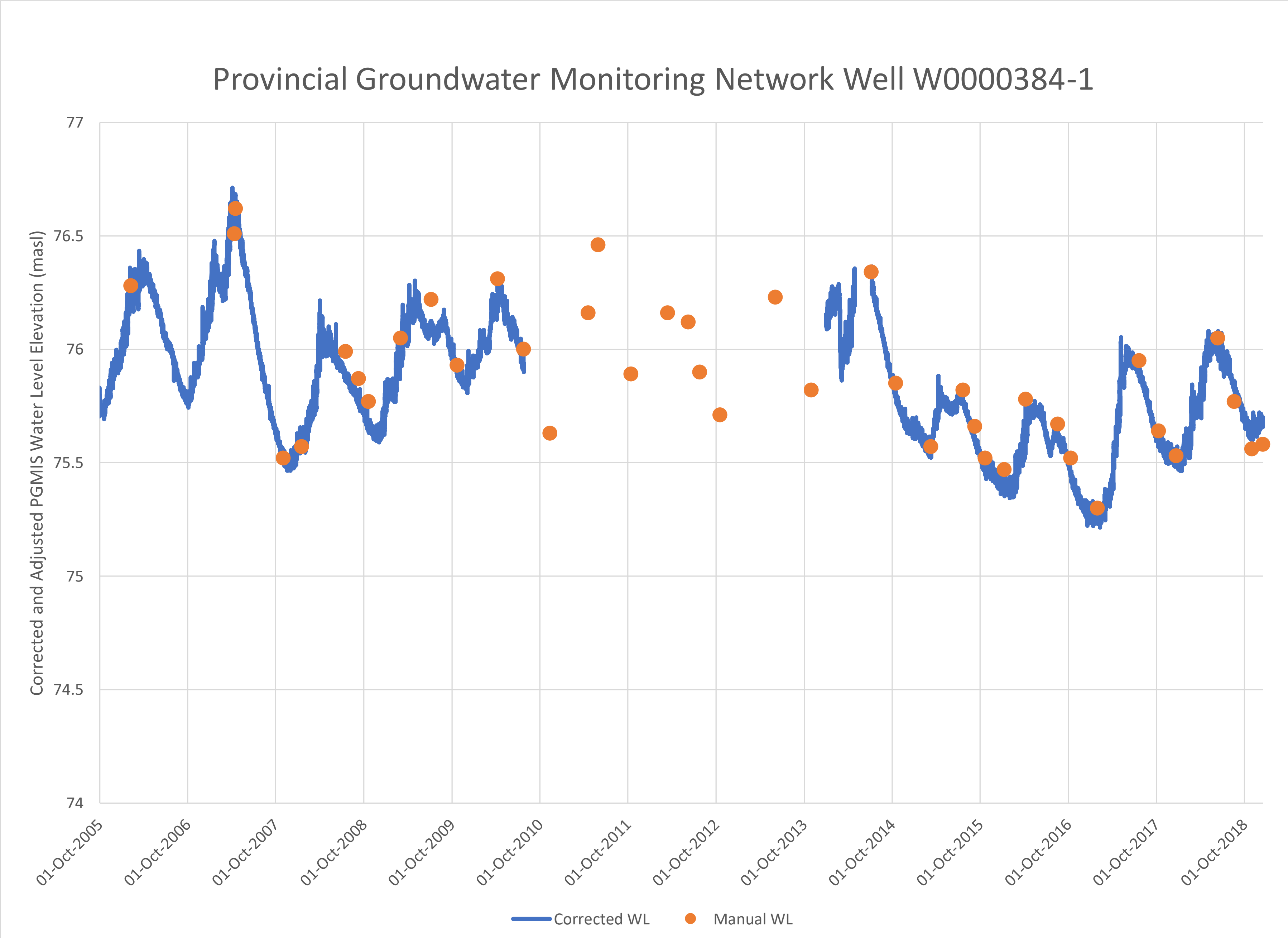
01-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network Well W0000384-1
Corrected and Adjusted PGMIS Water Level Elevation (masl)
77
76.5
76
75.5
75
74.5
74
01-Oct-2005
01-Oct-2006
01-Oct-2007
01-Oct-2008
01-Oct-2009
01-Oct-2010
01-Oct-2011
01-Oct-2012
01-Oct-2013
01-Oct-2014
01-Oct-2015
01-Oct-2016
01-Oct-2017
01-Oct-2018
Corrected WL
Manual WL

Appendix L

Twelve Mile Creek Temperature Monitoring: 2019 Summary Report

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, 2020

Table of Contents

Tables and Figures

Twelve Mile Creek Temperature Monitoring: 2019 Summary Report

1.0 Introduction

The following report is the yearly update on the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's stream temperature monitoring program in the Upper Twelve Mile Creek subwatershed.

The Twelve Mile Creek watershed covers 178 km^2 of the Niagara Peninsula and is over 22 km in length. Twelve Mile Creek's headwaters can be found in the Fonthill Kame Delta Complex in Pelham, Ontario. The creek runs north through urbanized St. Catharines and empties into Lake Ontario at Port Dalhousie. The Upper Twelve Mile Creek tributaries are groundwater fed. The St. John's and Effingham Tributaries, located in the Upper Twelve watershed, are the only identified coldwater streams in Niagara and are therefore the only stream supporting naturally reproducing Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in Niagara.

Stream temperature directly influences the physiology, metabolic rates and life history traits of aquatic species and influences processes such as nutrient cycling and productivity. Fluctuating and permanent natural and human induced changes to water temperature can render suitable habitat unusable to native species of fish, invertebrates and native aquatic communities (Coker *et al* 2001).

Brook Trout are indicators of high quality coldwater habitat. Once abundant throughout the Lake Ontario basin, Brook Trout populations have experienced severe declines since the mid-1900s because of habitat loss and stream temperature increases from forest clearing for agriculture and urban development activities (Coker *et al.* 2001). Brook Trout requirements include forested riparian cover, clean low nutrient water quality, base flow sufficient to maintain flow rates, cold water temperature, and up-welling groundwater or spring fed streams to aerate incubating eggs. The upper lethal temperature limit for Brook Trout is 24˚C with an optimum temperature range of 13˚C to 17˚C (Coker *et al*. 2001). The absence or impairment of any of these conditions can negatively affect the viability of individual populations.

To prevent the degradation and disruption of sensitive Brook Trout habitat and populations it is essential to establish monitoring programs to safeguard stream water quality. Water temperature, a key indicator and attribute of Brook Trout habitat health and viability, is easily monitored using temperature dataloggers.

Prior studies found that most upper tributaries fall within the healthy range for Brook Trout. Moving downstream leads to higher stream temperatures and eventually temperatures out of the optimal range for Brook Trout.

2.0 Objectives

The objectives of the 2019 temperature monitoring study are to:

- Continue the yearly temperature monitoring program of the Upper Twelve Mile Creek.
- Identify and classify the thermal regime for selected locations.
- Identify any changes that may have occurred to the thermal stability of Twelve Mile Creek.
- Identify sites that exceed the optimal range and/or lethal limit for Brook Trout.
- Identify locations that require restoration and stewardship.
- Look for any long-term warming changes that may pose risk in the future.

3.0 Methodology

Nine stream locations were monitored in 2019. The stations were chosen due to the availability of background data, including water chemistry, benthic macroinvertebrate data, fisheries, stream morphology, hydrology data and stream temperature data.

Onset HOBO Water Temp Pro dataloggers were deployed at nine locations identified in Table 1. Loggers were deployed in June 2019 and collected in November 2019, recording at one-hour intervals. Figure 1 below shows station locations on a map within Twelve Mile Creek. Figure 2 is the model of logger (Pro v2 Data Logger).

The dataloggers were installed in the stream bed at each location and anchored using metal spikes and aircraft cable. Stream bed locations were selected to provide shading from direct sunlight (where possible) and ensure adequate water depth to keep the datalogger fully submerged throughout the summer.

Sulphur Spring Drive data were taken from a stream gauge operated by the NPCA. This included air temperature data. TW007 stream temperature was taken from an Onset HOBO Conductivity logger deployed for a separate study with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

A monthly maintenance schedule was implemented for this study. Temperature loggers were cleaned and downloaded monthly to ensure they were in working order.

The data is downloaded via HOBOware Pro Software and then organized into excel worksheets with air temperature data from an air temperature sensor located on Sulphur Spring Road in Pelham. The box and whisker plot is used to show here the data lies in relation to the Brook Trout's optimum temperature range. The box represents where 50% of the temperature values fall. The line within the box represents the median value, and the whiskers represent the minimum and maximum values that were recorded. The red line represents the lethal limit of 24°C for Brook Trout and the blue line represents the maximum of the optimum temperature range lf 13 °C to 17 °C.

Modified nomograms were created to observe the stream thermal stability and identify the thermal regime of each creek. The method used to create this figure was taken from Stoneman and Jones (1996), where a simple method to classify stream thermal stability with single observations of daily maximum air temperatures and water temperatures at 16:00 hours from July 1 to September 10. Their method determines whether a watercourse is to be classified as coldwater, coolwater or warmwater. For the purpose of this study, the monitoring period has been expanded from June 5th to September 30th. This protocol is an approximation of the classification.

Table 1: 2019 Monitoring locations

Station	Watershed	UTM Coordinates	Location Description
TW000	St. Johns	639434, 4767542	Small headwater tributary located in Marlene Stewart Streit Park
TW001	St. Johns	639604, 4768717	St. John's branch on Pelham Street near Overholt Road
TW002	Effingham	637665, 4770341	Effingham branch on Effingham Street, upstream of Sulphur Spring Drive
Sulphur Spring Drive	Effingham	638301, 4771206	Effingham branch located on Sulphur Spring Drive, downstream of TW002
TW003	St. Johns	640455, 4769347	St. Johns branch located on private property near McSherry Lane.
TW004	Effingham	638942, 4769132	Effingham branch located on Metler Road near Haist Street, downstream of golf course
TW005	St. Johns	639056, 4771938	St. Johns branch located on Roland Road, near the confluence of both branches
TW006	Effingham	639021, 4771975	Effingham branch located on Roland Road, near the confluence of both branches
TW007	Main branch	640329, 4775029	Main branch near 1st Street Louth, downstream of Short Hills Provincial Park

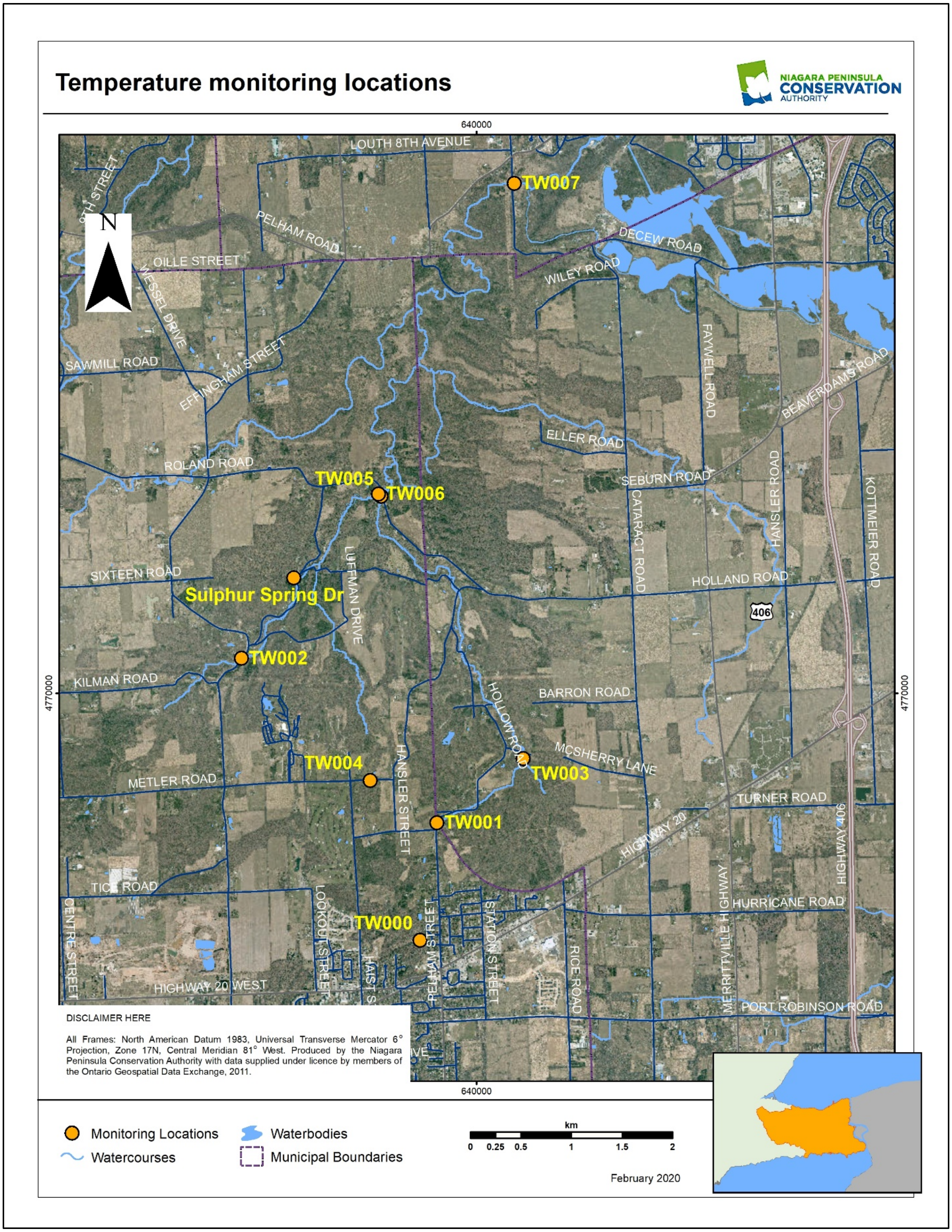


Figure 1: Map of temperature monitoring locations

Figure 2: Onset HOBO Water temperature Pro v2 Data Logger

4.0 Results

Table 2: Summary of data collected

Stations	Mean Temperature (°C)	Minimum Temperature (°C)	Median Temperature (°C)	Maximum Temperature (°C)	Time out of optimal range (%)	Consecutive Hours over lethal limit
TW000	13.09	11.05	12.99	17.94	0.18	0
TW001	16.62	12.56	16.58	22.11	41.61	0
TW002	15.09	11.37	15.08	19.77	12.19	0
Sulphur Spring Drive	15.31	11.08	15.28	20.59	17.40	0
TW003	14.61	11.35	14.46	19.87	5.67	0
TW004	15.68	12.05	15.70	20.27	22.73	0
TW005	17.33	12.12	17.46	22.71	56.66	0
TW006	17.19	12.00	17.23	23.09	53.38	1
TW007	20.10	15.2	20.19	25.23	94.15	13

Table 2 above displays a summary of data collected for the 2019 field season. In total, 2838 data points were collected at all stations, with the exception of TW007 where only 2085 data points were collected.

Maximum temperatures exceeded the lethal limit at one location, TW007. More than half of the data collected was over the optimal range at TW005, TW006, and TW007. The lethal limit was only exceeded for a significant portion of time in one instance, from July 20th to July 21st at TW007 for 13 consecutive hours.

4.1 St. Johns tributaries and main branch

St. Johns tributaries and the main branch of the Upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed were monitored for a total of five stations. Figure 2 below shows a box and whisker diagram of the five locations for the 2019 field season. The main branch at TW007 (1st Street Louth) exceeds the lethal limit and is above the optimal range for most data collected. TW005 data falls above the optimal range. TW000, TW001, and TW003 fall below the optimal range.

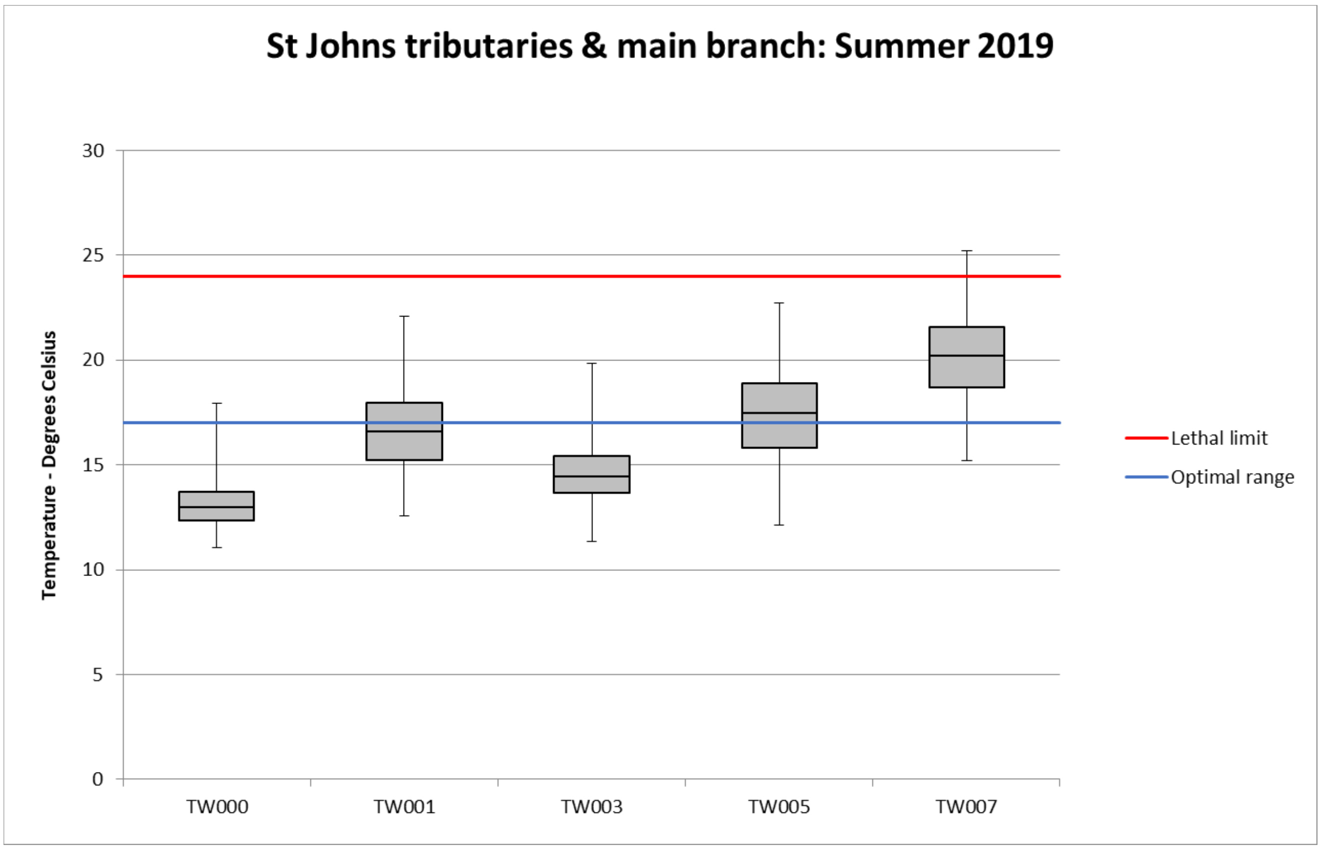


Figure 3: Box and whisker plot for St. Johns tributaries and main branch

Figure 3 below is a scatter plot nomogram that represents the classification of stream thermal stability. Maximum daily air temperature is plotted against the corresponding water temperature at 16:00hrs from June 5th to September 30th. This nomogram is created based on the protocol outlined by Stoneman and Jones (1996).

The nomogram for St Johns and the main branch of Twelve Mile Creek show that TW000 and TW003 can be classified as coldwater. TW001 and TW005 are classified as coolwater. TW007 (main branch) is classified as warmwater. The classifications are determined by where the majority of data fit into the graph below.

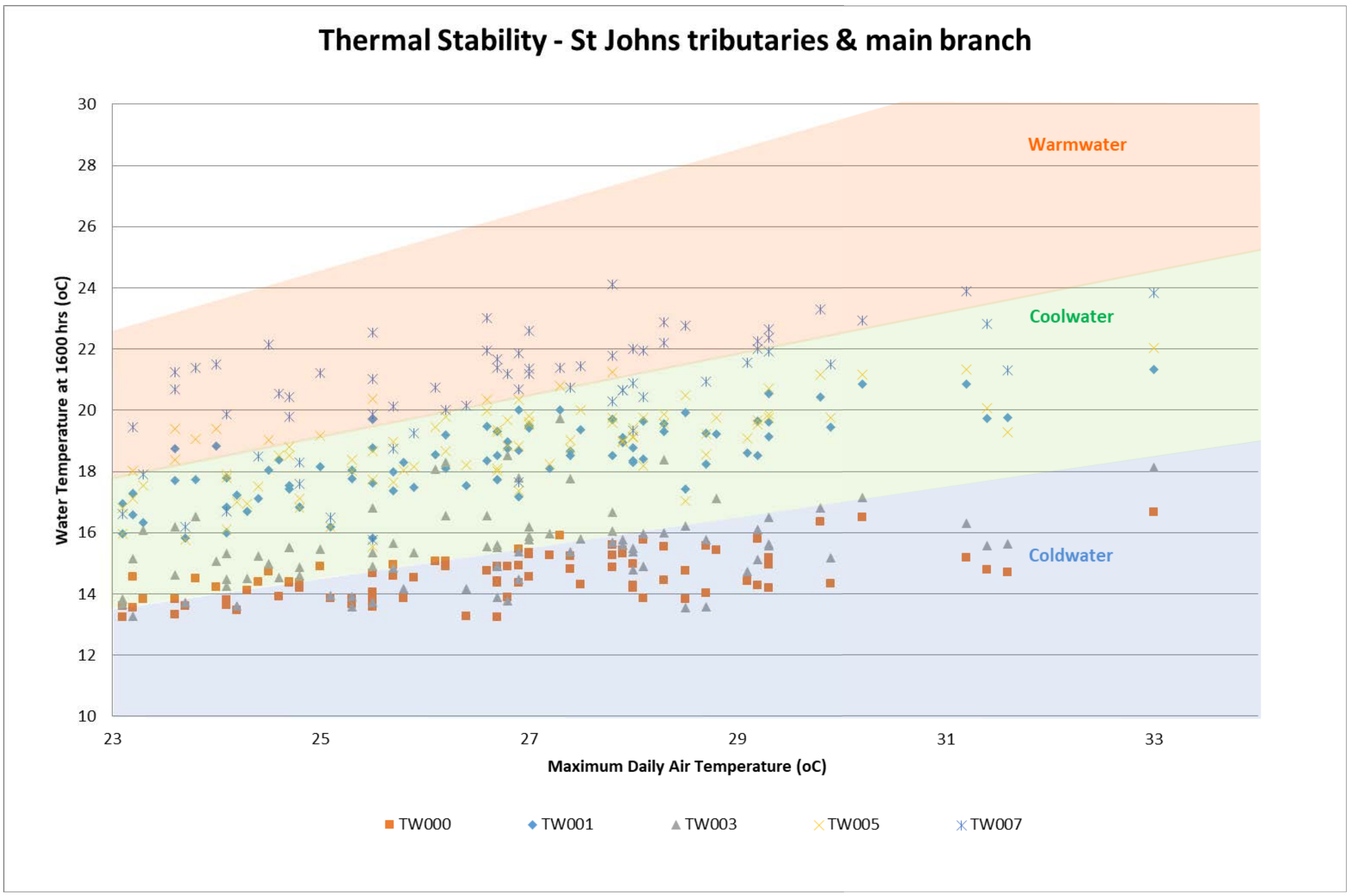


Figure 4: Thermal stability nomograms for St. Johns and main branch

4.2 Effingham tributaries

Stream temperature was monitored at four locations in the Effingham branch of Twelve Mile Creek. Figure 4 below is a box and whisker plot from the four stations with optimal range and lethal limit plotted. TW002, Sulphur Spring Drive, and TW004 fall mostly within the optimal range with maximum air temperatures well below the lethal limit. TW006 near the confluence of both branches sits slightly higher with a significant portion of data falling above the optimal range. The maximum temperature for TW006 falls slightly below the lethal limit.

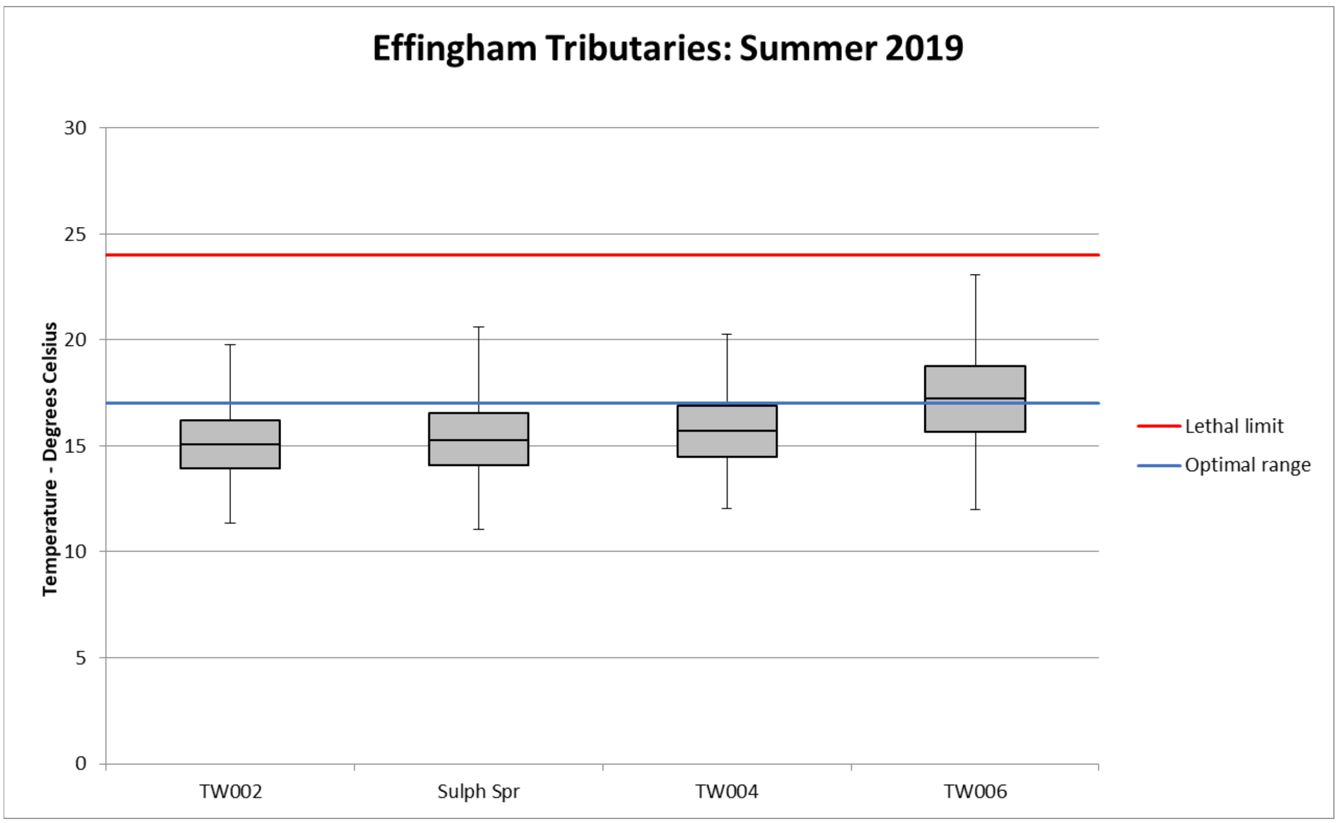


Figure 5: Box and whisker plot for Effingham tributaries

Figure 5 below is the scatter plot nomogram of thermal stability for the Effingham branch. The same protocol was followed as above. All Effingham branch tributaries are classified as coolwater, according to the 2019 nomogram.

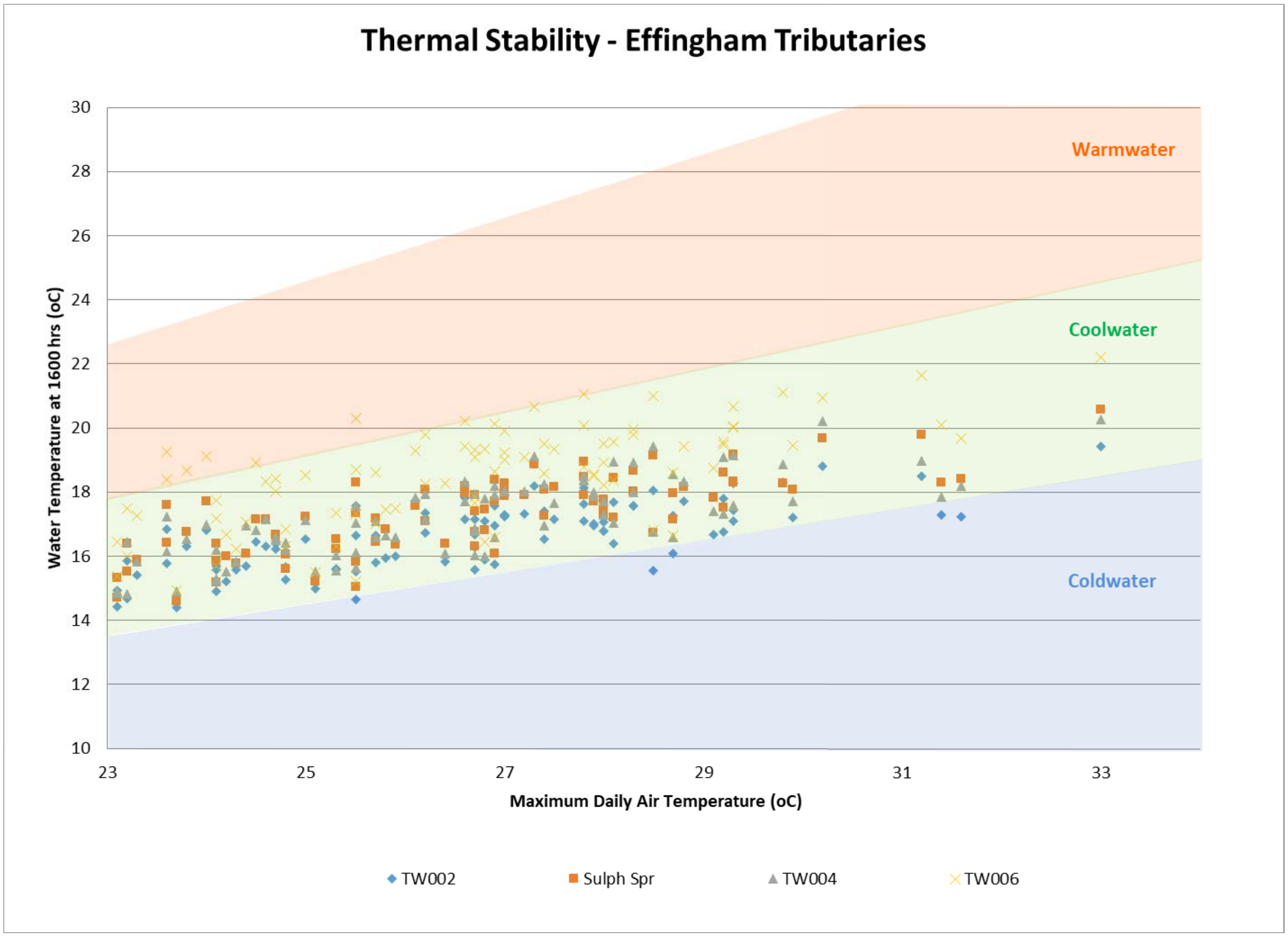


Figure 6: Thermal stability nomograms for the Effingham branch

4.3 Summary of results

Table 3 below is a summary of stream classifications between 2011 and 2019. The summary shows both classifications according to nomograms and indicates whether the maximum temperature exceeded the lethal limit for that summer.

In 2019, only TW007 exceeded the lethal limit and is classified as warmwater. TW000 and TW003 are both classified as coldwater. The only changes in classification are for TW003 and TW007. TW003 is classified as coldwater in 2019 for the first time since 2015. TW007 returns to warmwater classification from coolwater the last time it was monitored in 2017.

Table 3: Stream classification summary 2011-2019

		Hamilton Sanctuary	TW000	TW001	TW002	Sulphur Spring Dr	TW003	TW004	TW005	TW006	TW007
2011	Classification	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater
	Max over lethal limit		No	Yes	No		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
2013	Classification	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Warmwater
	Max over lethal limit		No	Yes	No		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
2014	Classification	Coldwater	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coldwater	N/A	Coldwater	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A
	Max over lethal limit	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	
2015	Classification	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A
	Max over lethal limit		No	No	No		No	No	No	No	
2016	Classification	Coldwater	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Warmwater
	Max over lethal limit	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
2017	Classification	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater
	Max over lethal limit		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
2018	Classification	N/A	N/A	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	N/A
	Max over lethal limit			No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
2019	Classification	N/A	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coldwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Coolwater	Warmwater
	Max over lethal limit		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

Figure 6 below displays mean stream temperatures since temperature monitoring began in 2006. In some cases, the data has not been consistently collected, but at the locations consistently collected there is no apparent pattern emerging from the data. Mean temperatures appear to go up during hotter summers in all cases and drop back down during cooler, wetter years. All monitoring locations experienced significant increases in temperature in 2016 which can be attributed to a hot and dry year.

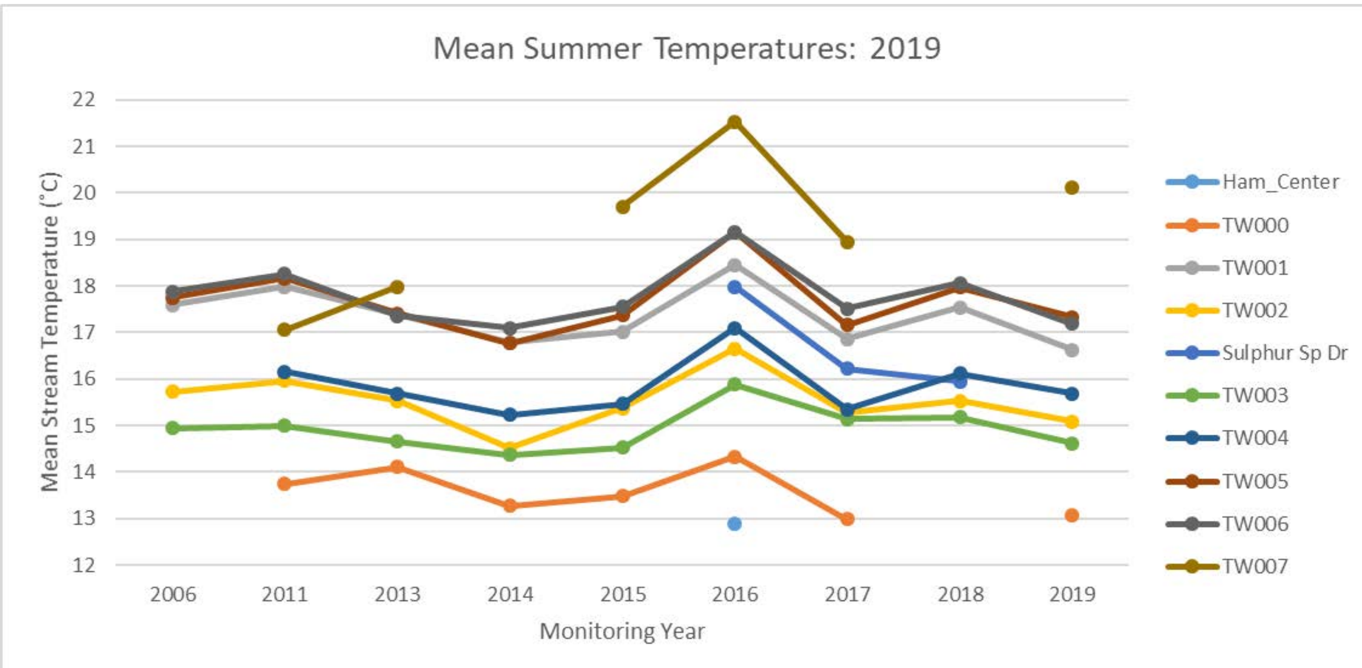


Figure 7: Mean stream temperatures recorded since 2006

5.0 Analysis

There are no obvious patterns emerging in the data, with most results being stable. Classifications remained consistent, with two minor changes that are not entirely unexpected based on past data collection.

Mean stream temperatures are fairly stable with the exception of an abnormally warm and dry summer in 2016. Streams that are classified as coldwater (TW000, TW003) appear to respond slightly less to warmer summers, perhaps being protected by the shaded woodlots they are in or are regulated by more groundwater influence than downstream locations. Downstream locations are the accumulation of upstream land uses and tend to be wider creeks, in some cases being exposed to more sunlight.

TW005 and TW006 remain a concern as they typically hover around or above optimal range and the maximum temperature is near the lethal limit. In 2019, no significant amount of time was spent above the lethal limit at either site, however, more than half time recorded was spent above the optimal range (table 2 above). On Roland Road, these two tributaries combine into one branch and enters Short Hills Provincial Park. Based on the temperature monitoring at these two locations, there is some concern for Upper Twelve Mile Creek as it runs through the park as it is entering already at elevated temperatures in the summer.

TW001 is typically a concern as that location tends to be elevated relative to the monitoring locations around it. This is due to upstream land uses (ponds) that artificially warm this location. This location is classified as coolwater, however, with the ponds upstream it could be in danger of further warming over time.

TW007 main branch appears to be unsuitable for Brook Trout. The upper tributaries are considered suitable based on thermal stability data, however, some locations such as TW001, TW005, and TW006 are close to being considered unsuitable.

6.0 Conclusion

Tributaries in the Upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed are capable of supporting Brook Trout based on temperatures monitoring. Downstream, the main branch is not considered suitable. Some locations are above the optimal range and would cause some stress to Brook Trout. Overall, the upper tributaries are considered safe as they are classified coldwater or coolwater.

Downstream locations are at risk of higher temperatures due to widening of the banks and exposure to sunlight. As the creek enters Short Hills Provincial Park at Roland Road, it is above the optimal range for over 50% of the time. While the park offers significant riparian vegetation and shade, the creek continues to widen due to erosion and bank instability in the park, eventually exiting at the final monitoring location at 1st Street Louth. At this location, the creek is now classified as warmwater and unsuitable for Brook Trout.

Significant stream rehabilitation is required within Short Hills Provincial Park and upstream to ensure that the stream temperatures are in the optimal range for Brook Trout. Current tributaries that are considered suitable must be protected from degradation, and downstream locations must be stabilized.

7.0 Recommendations

Considering the data collected from temperature monitoring of the Upper Twelve Mile Creek watershed, the following recommendations are suggested:

- The NPCA must continue annual temperature monitoring at the same locations.
- Erosion monitoring in susceptible tributaries.
- The NPCA stewardship program along with local partners and landowners must partner to provide information and opportunities for stewardship projects.
- Consider strategies to approach landowners with ponds and propose alternatives.
- Conduct fish studies in the upper tributaries including e-fishing or eDNA sampling, to determine the presence and status of Brook Trout populations to help focus restoration efforts.

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