

GENERAL COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Past and new RAP participants were contacted to re-establish the Implementation Committee and Public Advisory Committee that will serve as forums to facilitate cooperation and information exchange and solicit input on the restoration of the Area of Concern. The Inaugural Joint Meeting of the IC/PAC was hosted in March 2018
- ◆ Updated content of RAP website and added a searchable document library, produced monthly E-newsletters, created and maintained social media accounts, developed advertising and events to seek input on proposed BUI re-designation
- ◆ Organized various public participation events (attendance in brackets):
 - ◆ Niagara River AOC bus tour (35)
 - ◆ Public information open house (20)
 - ◆ Screening of Waterlife for the general public (150) and local high school students (350)
 - ◆ Two community tree plantings events
- ◆ Updated various RAP communication materials (e.g., brochures, factsheets) and began developing materials to educate people on eating safe fish from the Niagara River.

GET INVOLVED!

Are you interested in Niagara River issues?
Want to be a part of the progress and help remove it from the list of AOCs?
Contact us to find out how you can participate.

www.ourniagarariver.ca
info@ourniagarariver.ca

The Niagara River Remedial Action Plan initiative is made possible through the financial support of the Governments of Canada and Ontario, in partnership with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.



NIAGARA RIVER PROGRESS UPDATE

APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018

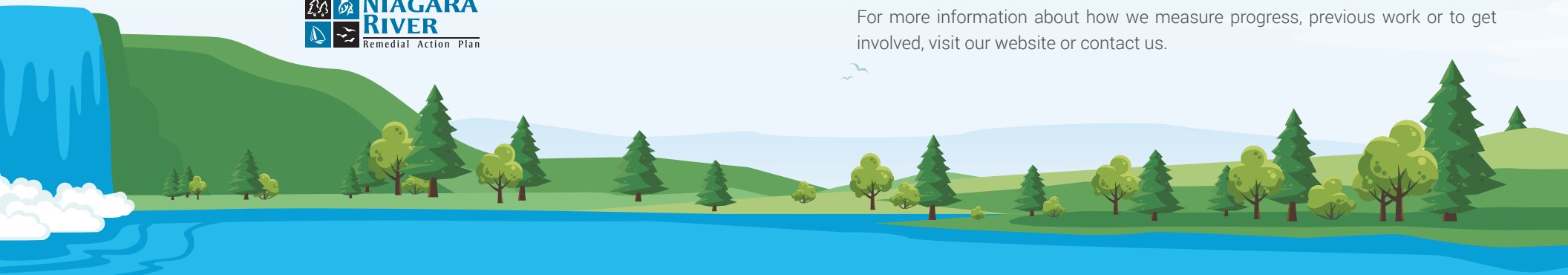
The Niagara River is a 58-km connecting channel that links Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. It provides many beneficial uses for humans and wildlife including serving as a source of drinking water, power generation, and provides numerous recreational opportunities such as fishing, sightseeing, and boating.

In 1987, the Niagara River was identified as one of 43 Great Lakes' Areas of Concern (AOC) due to water pollution and ecosystem degradation. As part of the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, a cleanup plan and partnership group referred to as Remedial Action Plan (RAP) was developed for each AOC, including the Niagara River. Although the Niagara River is listed as a bi-national AOC, there are separate (but complementary) efforts on both sides of the border. This update is for the Ontario side of the Niagara River AOC.

All AOCs keep track of progress and challenges using a suite of 14 ecosystem indicators related to the enjoyment of water, called a beneficial use impairment or BUI. The overall goal of the RAP is to identify and complete actions to improve these indicators and remove the Niagara River from the list of AOCs.

This document is to share progress completed in **2017-2018** by various RAP partners related to the remaining 'Impaired' indicators. As of March 2018, six indicators were listed as 'Impaired', seven were considered 'Not Impaired', and one required further assessment. A major accomplishment for the RAP in 2017 was the completion of two scientific reports which suggest that two of these indicators should be changed to 'Not Impaired'. The documents underwent community review and were submitted to Canada and Ontario for final approval.

For more information about how we measure progress, previous work or to get involved, visit our website or contact us.





BUI #1

RESTRICTIONS ON FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSUMPTION

- Developed a research approach and survey to determine details about the fish consumption habits of local shoreline and on-water fishers in the Niagara River (Ontario).
- Wildlife consumption is not an issue in the Niagara River AOC.



BUI #3

DEGRADATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS

Fish Populations

- An assessment of fish populations was reviewed by experts which indicated fish populations are *Impaired* in the Upper Niagara River (Lake Erie to top of the Falls) and *Not Impaired* in the Lower Niagara River (Falls to Lake Ontario). Issues may be linked to a loss of coastal wetland habitat in the Upper Niagara River.
- Refer to the Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat BUI for details on related projects.

Wildlife Populations

- Scientists met in November 2017 to discuss available information and determine data required to assess the condition of wildlife populations in the Niagara River AOC.
- Priority actions were identified and research is set to begin in 2018-2019.



BUI #6

DEGRADATION OF BENTHOS

- The condition of sediment-dwelling insects (benthos) is related to contaminants in sediment. An assessment completed in 2016 indicated the BUI was *Not Impaired*; however, current monitoring indicates there may still be issues in Lyons Creek East.
- The RAP Team is reviewing information and will follow-up with the community when more is known.



BUI #8

EUTROPHICATION OR UNDESIREABLE ALGAE

- A technical assessment report was released for public review and comment. The results suggest that the indicator should be changed to NOT IMPAIRED.
- Several opportunities for public participation were offered to collect feedback on the recommended change in status, including an online survey, social media engagement, a bus tour (October 2017) and open house (November 2017), and advertising at local theatres, mall information boards, bus shelters, coffee shops. Results of the review period were compiled into a report which will be submitted to the Canada-Ontario AOC representatives for approval.
- To read or download the document: ourniagarariver.ca/document-library.



BUI #10

BEACH CLOSINGS

- The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (as part of a two-year funding agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada) is investigating possible bacterial contamination in storm sewers near Queen's Royal Beach. Presently, the beach continues to exceed the locally-defined delisting criteria.
- In 2017, the Niagara Region conducted weekly sampling of *E. coli* at Queen's Royal Beach during the swimming season (May-Sept). Results are posted online: www.niagararegion.ca/living/water/beaches



BUI #13

DEGRADATION OF PHYTOPLANKTON AND ZOOPLANKTON POPULATIONS

- A technical assessment report, suggesting the indicator should be changed to NOT IMPAIRED, was released for public review and comment.
- Several opportunities for public participation were offered to collect feedback on the recommended change in status, including an online survey, social media engagement, a bus tour (October 2017) and open house (November 2017), and advertising at local theatres, mall information boards, bus shelters, coffee shops. Results of the review period were compiled into a report which will be submitted to the Canada-Ontario AOC representatives for approval.
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BUI #14

LOSS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- Up to seven coastal wetland habitat sites in the Upper Niagara River (at or near the mouths of tributaries) were identified as priority sites to improve fish populations.
- In 2017-2018, three coastal wetland habitat sites were constructed in the Upper Niagara River by the Niagara Parks Commission with funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

