

# Worksheet #1 - Getting to Know Your Property

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Use this worksheet to gain a better understanding of your property and its features.

## Why Should You Be Concerned?

- In this region, you are your own LAND AND WATER STEWARD!
- Upstream practices WILL affect your property.
- Provincial regulations and municipal bylaws are designed to protect shorelines and waterways, these can restrict how you use your property.
- A property's soil and landforms can influence water quality. Your development and use of your property can affect its environmental quality, which may impact value and your enjoyment of it.



## What Can You Do?

1. You (or your contractor or other legal representative) can contact your local municipality or provincial government office to learn about any alteration restrictions (especially shorelines) and how these may affect any future projects on your property.
2. Talk with long-time residents to learn more about how the property may be affected by natural processes and potential hazards (e.g. severe storms, winter conditions, flooding).
3. Make a map of your property and store it with other important property and household files. Identify physical and environmental characteristics such as soil type and depth, vegetation communities, and ponding areas. Learn how these can affect the vulnerability of your property to natural hazards and contribute to a healthy ecosystem on and off your property. Accept these natural conditions and modify your activities accordingly to protect yourself, your property, and your shoreline.
4. Determine if current services (e.g. water, sewage) are adequate for your planned/intended use of the property through consultation with your municipality or other applicable entity.
5. Look beyond your property lines with a view to identifying the potential for erosion and the contamination of surface water and groundwater.

# Mapping Your Property

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## Why Make a Map?

A map will help you understand the natural characteristics of your property and how your development and use of your property may affect them. It will also serve as a written record of your property's features, which can be a valuable tool to revisit in the future. Sometimes a small change in your actions is all that is needed to avoid problems. A map can help you identify potential risks to water quality and ensure property use is compatible with legal restrictions.

You could draw your map on standard graph paper, enlarge a copy of the survey of your property, or download an image from an online map provider such as the West Parry Sound Geography Network.

## What to include on your map?

### 1. Natural Features

- Wetlands, streams, and ponding areas (seasonal and year-round)
- Naturally vegetated areas including types of plants (trees, shrubs, etc.)
- Rock outcrops
- Aquatic areas with boulders or aquatic plants

### 2. Proposed or Existing Structures

- Cottage, home, and other buildings
- Orientation of all living spaces
- Docks and boathouses
- Roads, driveways, parking, and/or other hard/compacted surfaces
- Septic system leaching bed, outhouses
- Foundation drains and outlets, all drinking wells (including dry or abandoned wells) or location of surface water intake
- Eavestrough drains, direction of drainage from them

- Sump pump drains, swimming pool backwash drain, area used for swimming pool or hot tub drainage water
- Dog house/dog run, chicken coops, livestock areas
- Hazardous materials storage (paints, solvents, etc.) and any underground or aboveground storage tanks of fuel oil, gasoline, or other petroleum product
- Any buried cables/lines (e.g. hydro, water lines, cable, phone) or underground infrastructure including fuel tanks

### 3. Landscaped Features

- Trees, flower beds, lawns, vegetable garden(s), or any other cultivated area(s)
- Area for snow piles and snowmelt

### 4. Legal Considerations

- Municipal zoning
- Property setbacks, conservation easements, floodplain restrictions, shoreline road allowances, and rights-of-way
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) - designated zones of valuable ecological features or habitat that need special protection due to their surrounding landscape, wildlife, or historical value
- **Note:** The government retains ownership of land to the high watermark, erection of fences or other obstructions below this point is illegal



# Resource List

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## Conservation & Stewardship

- Building in the Biosphere Habitat Screening Tool  
[www.gbbr.ca/building-in-the-biosphere-habitat-screening-tool](http://www.gbbr.ca/building-in-the-biosphere-habitat-screening-tool)
- North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority  
[www.nbmca.ca/planning-permits](http://www.nbmca.ca/planning-permits)

## Government

- Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca)
- Environmental Permissions  
[www.ontario.ca/page/environmental-permissions](http://www.ontario.ca/page/environmental-permissions)
- Zoning Bylaws  
[www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/zoning-bylaws](http://www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/zoning-bylaws)

## Maps

- West Parry Sound Geography Network  
[www.wpsgn.ca](http://www.wpsgn.ca)
- Muskoka Geo Hub  
<https://map.muskoka.on.ca>
- Ontario GeoHub  
<https://geohub.lio.gov.on.ca/>

