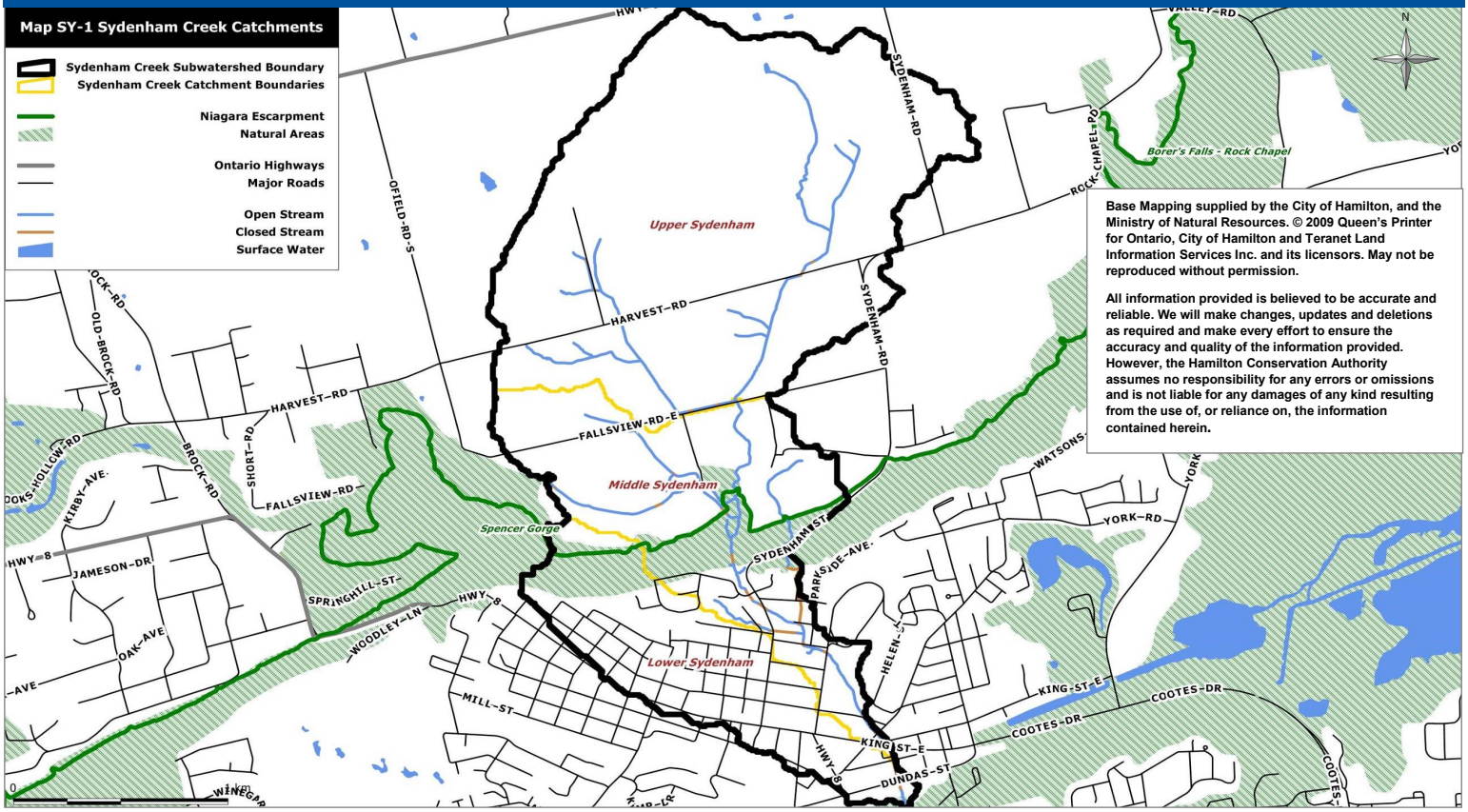
SYDENHAM CREEK SUBWATERSHED



The Sydenham Creek subwatershed is part of the Spencer Creek watershed and is located north of and within the former Town of Dundas and spans the former municipal boundaries of Dundas and Flamborough. The headwaters of Sydenham Creek begin south of Highway 5 between Ofield Road South to the west and Sydenham Road to the east.

The main channel of Sydenham Creek passes over the Sydenham, Middle Sydenham and Lower Sydenham Waterfalls into the former Town of Dundas below the Escarpment. The southernmost extent of Sydenham Creek crosses Dundas Street as it flows into Lower Spencer Creek.

Sydenham Creek is considered to be a warmwater creek system. The total length of the creek and its tributaries is 11.9 km.

Sydenham Creek subwatershed in comparison to Environment Canada's 'How much Habitat is Enough' Guidelines		
Landscape Feature	**Guideline**	**Subwatershed Status**
Wetland	**6%**	**0 (no historic record)**
Streambanks Naturally Vegetated	**75%**	**21.1%**
Forest	**30%**	**7.6%**
Impervious Surface	**<10%**	**7.6%**

Some of the rare species that have been observed in this watershed are the Loggerhead Shrike (in 1985), Yellow-breasted Chat and American Chestnut.

Yellow-breasted Chat

Below the escarpment, at the mouth of the Sydenham Creek, the settlement of Dundas began with the establishment of mills along Spencer Creek. The creation of the Desjardins Canal allowed the town to thrive as a shipping and transportation hub for the surrounding farms and mills. Dundas officially became a town in 1847. Residential land use now predominates below the escarpment with commercial and industrial land use concentrated along major transportation routes, specifically King Street West in the Town of Dundas. As of 2009, the population density of the urban portion of the subwatershed was approximately 3,673 persons per square kilometer.

Currently, agriculture is the primary land use above the escarpment. In 2009, the Sydenham Creek subwatershed had a population density of approximately 28 persons per square kilometer in rural areas.

Some stresses in the Sydenham Creek subwatershed identified within the Spencer Creek Stewardship Action Plans:

- **Insufficient riparian buffers, erosion, habitat fragmentation**
- **Inadequate stormwater management, increased impervious surfacing, stormwater**

What can landowners do to restore and protect the health of Sydenham Creek and its watershed?

1. Re-establish riparian buffers where there are none.
2. Increase the width of existing riparian buffers.
3. Re-establish habitat connectivity between tracks of natural area.
4. Retire marginal farmland.
5. Implement soil best management practices to reduce water erosion, wind erosion, sheet or tillage erosion, rill or gully erosion.
6. Wherever possible, use water more efficiently, for example disconnect downspouts and collect water in rain barrels.
7. Replace impermeable surfaces with permeable surfaces.
8. Replace shallow rooted lawns with deeper rooted plants.

Riparian buffer on Both Sides of Creek

Sources: Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA). 2009. Sydenham Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan and the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, Fourth Edition Workbook, 2013.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

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Are you interested in information about how you can protect water quality and habitat on your property?
Call to arrange a free on-site consultation!