



Ottawa Gatineau Watershed Atlas Project

Project Summary

Project Background:

Watershed management is a process of managing human activities in an area defined by watershed boundaries in order to protect and rehabilitate land and water, and associated aquatic and terrestrial resources, while recognizing the benefits of orderly growth and development. This requires the cooperation of multiple organizations across jurisdictions.¹

Problem:

Decision-making on a Greater Ottawa-Gatineau watershed basis is currently hindered by the jurisdictional fragmentation of information. Data and information are critical for developing and implementing Watershed Management Plans. While each province is moving towards watershed management; neither addresses the inter-jurisdictional nature of the Ottawa-Gatineau region of the Ottawa River.

In addition, public understanding of, or opportunities for, engagement in water issues is limited. By providing communities with easy access to relevant water-related data at their local watershed level, data can be transformed into information and knowledge that is meaningful to community members. In this way the public can share information, understanding, and responsibility for the management of this watershed.

Project Purpose:

“to demonstrate an approach to overcome the jurisdictional challenges of watershed management through data-sharing and communication, and to provide the public with the tools required to actively participate in informed “place-based” decision making.”

Project Objectives

The Ottawa-Gatineau Watershed Atlas (OGWA) Project will:

- integrate data from multiple regional agencies;
- support cross-jurisdictional communication and information sharing;
- raise community awareness to educate and engage community members;
- support and stimulate the development of a watershed management plan for the Ottawa –Gatineau urban area of the Ottawa River through the provision of a website

¹ Ministry of the Environment. (1997). An Evaluation of Watershed Management in Ontario Final Report. Page 2.

and a regional atlas, which displays water quality, quantity, and land use planning data to provide the most comprehensive, integrated view of the watersheds;

- provide lessons and challenges about collaborative inter-jurisdictional data sharing; and
- promote and increase the use of CGDI standards and the GeoConnections discovery portal.

The long-term objective is to provide support for the development of a watershed plan for the larger Ottawa River watershed, through the development of a gradually expanding regional atlas including water, land-use planning and socio-economic data.

Project Description:

The OGWA Project is an exciting endeavor that will integrate watershed management on both sides of the Ottawa River in addition to providing a comprehensive public educational tool to improve the management of one of the region's most valuable resources. The project will take an ecosystem approach, utilizing a watershed boundary, rather than political boundaries, for the inclusion of collaborating partners, data, and information.

Pollution Probe in collaboration with the project partners will develop a web application for the sharing, exploration and exchange of geo-spatial data amongst agencies using web map features (WMF) and web map services (WMS). The application will also take advantage of existing distributed geospatial data through the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CDGI) that compliment and inform the project. The use of web map and web feature services will ensure data and information are maintained by the data providers.

Acknowledgements

The Ottawa-Gatineau Watershed Atlas Project has received financial support from GeoConnections, a national program initiative led by Natural Resources Canada. GeoConnections and its program participants are working to enhance the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure, an on-line resource that enables decision-makers to access, combine, and apply geographic information to gain new insights into social, environmental, and economic issues.

For more information on Pollution Probe's Ottawa-Gatineau Watershed Atlas Project please contact:

Elli MacDonald – Project Manager, Water Programme
Pollution Probe Ottawa
63 Sparks Street Suite 101
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A6
www.pollutionprobe.org

emacdonald@pollutionprobe.org
(613) 237-4815