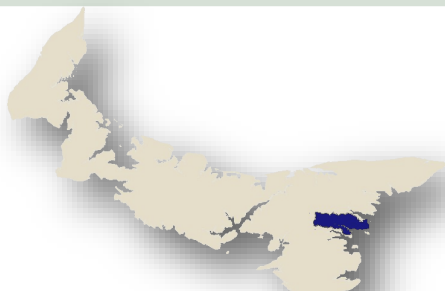


Cardigan River and Area Watershed



A watershed is an area of land that drains into a particular river, lake or other body of water. In the Southeast Environmental Association (SEA) region there are six main watershed areas, made up of 26 sub-watersheds, covering 731.6km². One of the main watershed areas is the Cardigan River watershed. It is made up of five sub-watersheds.



Map of Prince Edward Island with the Cardigan River and Area Watershed highlighted in blue.

Location

The Cardigan River and Area watershed is located in central Kings County. The five sub-watersheds drain into the Cardigan River, Cardigan Bay and Launching Bay. Communities include:

Cardigan	Glenfanning
Cardigan North	Head of Cardigan
Cardross	Launching
Degros Marsh	Lorne Valley
Georgetown	St. George's
Georgetown Royalty	



Simple diagram explaining how a watershed works.

Cardigan River and Area

Sub-watersheds:

- Cardigan River
- Byrnes Creek
- Launching
- Mitchell River
- Seal River

Total length of streams: 109km

Area of watershed: 9752 ha (98km²)

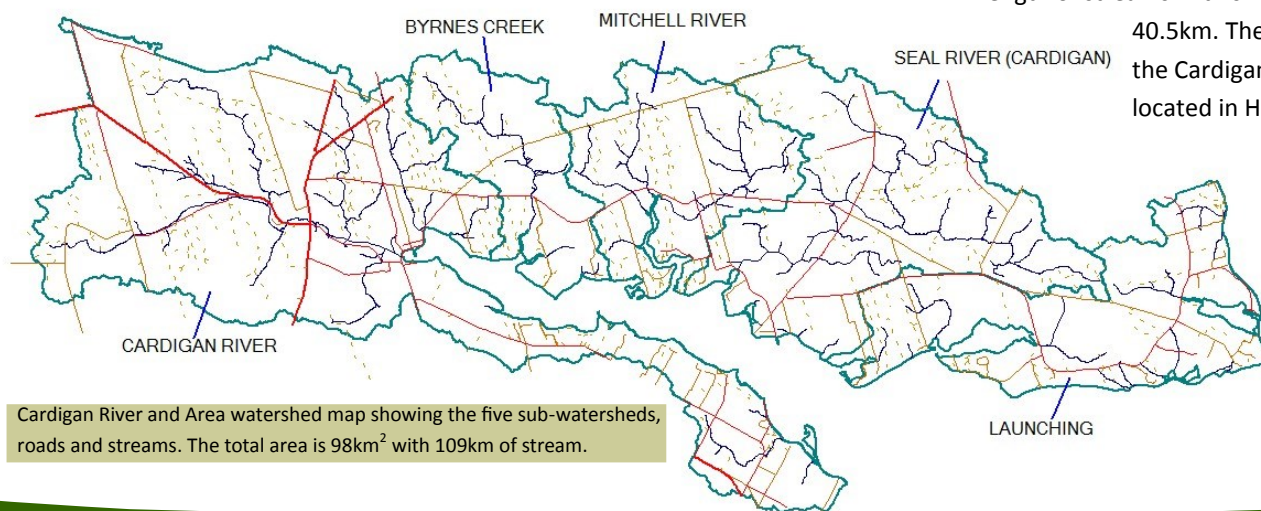
Basin Name:

- Cardigan Bay
- Launching Bay

Largest Land Use: Forest (63.2%)

Physical Description

Cardigan River watershed drains into Cardigan Bay which flows into the Northumberland Strait. The watershed covers an area of 41.5km². The total length of streams in this watershed is 40.5km. The headwaters of the Cardigan River are located in Head of Cardigan.



Cardigan River and Area watershed map showing the five sub-watersheds, roads and streams. The total area is 98km² with 109km of stream.

Byrnes Creek watershed is the smallest in the Cardigan area, covering 8.4km². It has 9.2km of streams that drain into Cardigan Bay before moving out into the Northumberland Strait.

Mitchell River watershed is 11.9km². All the water in this area drains into 16.9km of streams which flows into Cardigan Bay.

Seal River watershed covers an area of 20.4km². The Seal River is made up of 28km of streams that drain into Cardigan Bay.

Launching Watershed is made up of 13.7km of streams that drain into Launching Bay, or directly into the Northumberland Strait. This watershed is 15.3km².

History

The Cardigan River is one of the heritage rivers that make up the Three Rivers System along with the Brudenell and Montague Rivers. It is part of one of the earliest human travel corridors in PEI.

Stone tools, such as in scrapers, flakes, bifaces and celt, have been recorded from Launching Pond. No aboriginal settlements have been found, but the use of the area by the Island's first people is evident by the Mi'kmaq name for Cardigan Bay (Samcook, meaning "sandy shore").

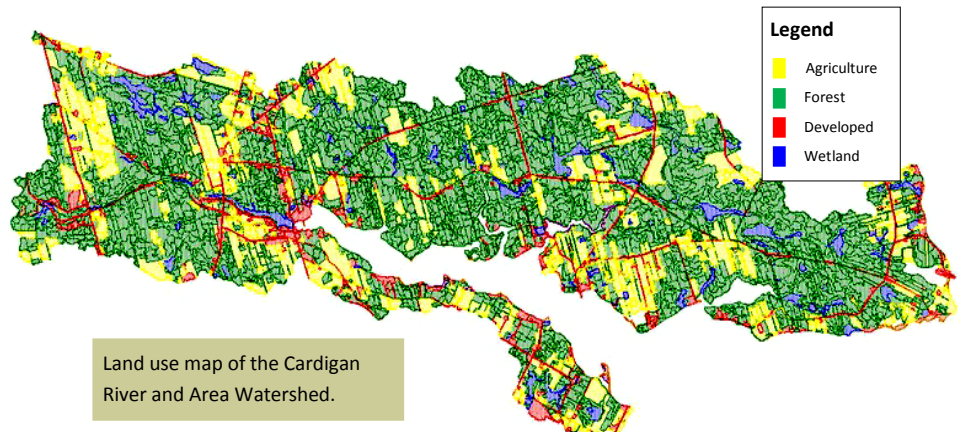
The Cardigan Fish Hatchery, established in 1937, continues to provide Salmonids for research.

Watershed and Area Land Use

Based on land use data from 2010, forested areas dominate 63.2% of the land in the Cardigan River and Area Watershed, followed by agricultural land at 21.7%. Developed land includes commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, residential, transportation and urban and makes up 7.0%.

Land Use	Cardigan River (Hectares)	Byrnes Creek (Hectares)	Mitchell River (Hectares)	Seal River (Hectares)	Launching (Hectares)	Total Area (Hectares)	%
Agriculture	1030.6	165.6	85.5	489.3	347.0	2118.0	21.7%
Developed	427.6	21.5	48.4	86.1	103.3	681.9	7.0%
Forest	2349.8	614.2	984.3	1283.2	928.8	6160.3	63.2%
Wetland	192.8	22.9	69.3	146.1	100.9	532.0	5.5%
Non-evident	144.9	17.3	4.9	40.2	52.3	259.6	2.6%

Breakdown of the land use for the six sub-watersheds in the Cardigan area.



Land use map of the Cardigan River and Area Watershed.

Conservation Issues

Riparian assessments of the Cardigan River began during the summer of 2013. A total of 15.5km of stream was surveyed. The following summer another 4.8km was assessed. It was determined that the majority of the tributaries assessed were healthy but need work to restore them to full function. Some of the issues include:

- Natural blockage
- Beaver activity
- Runoff
- Poor or damaged crossings
- Invasive species

These issues are a concern because they can lead to :

- Anoxic events/eutrophication
- Fish kills/population loss
- Loss of habitat
- Loss of biodiversity



Hanging culvert, which can make fish passage difficult, found during a riparian assessment of the Cardigan River.

With groundwater being the only source of drinking water in PEI. It is important that residents protect the environment that provides it.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Get Involved!

A management plan for the Cardigan River and Area Watershed needs to be developed. SEA requires public support and input for this to be successful. We urge you to get involved. Please contact us if you are interested in improving the watershed you live in.