

FAQS: REGULATORY MAPPING

Q1. What are Conservation Authorities (CAs) required to map and regulate?

CA's are the public agencies in Ontario responsible for mapping natural hazards, watercourses and wetlands. Natural hazards include land that could be unsafe due to flooding, erosion, or due to unstable soil or bedrock. Once hazards are mapped, conservation authorities are required to regulate alterations and development within areas of identified risk.¹

Q2. Why was floodplain mapping done/not done in my area?

MVCA has completed flood plain mapping for less than 50% of its watercourses and has focused on areas under development pressure, that have a known history of flooding, or that have undergone other significant changes in land use.

Maps in higher risk areas are updated periodically to reflect changes in provincial regulations, and changes in the watershed such as the conversion of farmland to urban development and changes in climate as these can significantly affect run-off.

Q3. How accurate is floodplain mapping?

All new mapping undergoes a technical 3rd-party review. As well, MVCA notifies affected landowners of *draft* results and staff are available upon request to visit properties to review specific mapping concerns. Once finalized, MVCA's Board of Directors approves the new floodplain limit. Staff conduct field checks during major flood events to take measurements to validate models and maps over time.

Q4. What farming activities are permitted within regulated areas?

Nothing in MVCA's policies prevents continuation of existing livestock and crop farming within regulated areas. New structures like livestock shelters may be permitted within the floodplain where no reasonable alternative is available. Landowners should check with both MVCA and their local municipality prior to erecting any structures or making any alterations within a regulated area to understand permit requirements.

¹ Section 28 of the [Conservation Authorities Act](#); and Section 4 of [O. Reg. 41/24](#)

Flood Plain Mapping Available in MVCA's Jurisdiction



Q5. Are wet farm fields considered wetlands?

The *Conservation Authorities Act* definition of a “wetland” excludes periodically soaked or wet land used for agricultural purposes that no longer has the following wetland characteristics:

- hydric soils caused by the presence of abundant water; and
- a predominance of hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants indicating an abundance of water.

Q6. What wetlands does MVCA regulate?

MVCA has regulated and mapped wetlands ≥ 0.5 ha that are connected to a watercourse or drainage feature since 2017. MVCA maps are used to screen development and permit applications that may impact the hydrologic function of a regulated wetland. MVCA's wetland mapping is updated as new information becomes available. All land meeting MVCA's definition of a wetland is regulated regardless of whether it has been mapped by MVCA.

Q7. What if I disagree with MVCA's wetland mapping?

Landowners wishing to alter/develop an area shown as wetland can contact MVCA at info@mvc.on.ca or call 613-253-0006 to arrange a site visit to assess the wetland boundary.

Q8. How do I know if my property is regulated?

Regulated areas include the area of natural hazard plus a setback buffer.

<https://mvc.on.ca/interactive-property-map/>

Q9. Where can I view flood plain maps?

<https://mvc.on.ca/engineering/floodplain-mapping/>

Q9. How is CA mapping used?

Conservation authorities examine development occurring within regulated areas to ensure that the natural hazard and a wetland's hydrologic function are not affected by the proposal. We are concerned with the impact a proposal may have on the direction, elevation and velocity of water flow, slopes and soil stability within and abutting watercourses and wetlands, and the potential impact of the natural hazard on the proposed development or other properties.

Municipalities are responsible for land use planning and use regulatory mapping to delineate areas for development, and the permitted (or prohibited) land uses within those areas. They may also refer to our mapping to plan and design new drainage and stormwater outlets and the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure.

Landowners should use natural hazard and wetland mapping to guide where they site outbuildings, plan expansions, and to understand where the alteration of grades, drains, and culverts may impact water levels and flows.

If a landowner wishes to develop within a flood plain or wetland, or alter a watercourse on their property, they should speak with an MVCA planner to understand potential restrictions and how best to approach their project and submission of the permit application.

Call: 613-253-0006

Submit a property enquiry: <https://mvc.on.ca/development-permits/>