
CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL AREA

Critical Area Determination

Areas adjacent to waterbodies are considered critical for two reasons. First, they are most likely to be affected by adverse water quality. Second, the critical area is defined in order to narrow the geographic scope, which allows efforts to be focused on areas that may be contributing the majority of nonpoint source pollution.

USGS topographic maps and USDA Soil Surveys were utilized to delineate the critical areas. The criteria used to determine the critical area included the following:

1. Areas within 1000 feet of the Main Branch of the Thunder Bay River.
2. Designated tributaries, including intermittent drainages.
3. Inland lakes within the watershed.
4. Contiguous wetlands, defined as being within 1,000 feet of the Thunder Bay River, or within 500 feet of streams or lakes within the watershed.
5. Urban areas which drain to surface waters.
6. Contiguous steep slopes, defined as 10% slope or greater.
7. Areas of ground water recharge.

The critical area for the Thunder Bay River Watershed is approximately 193 square miles (123,735 acres) and served as the main focus of the plan. *Map 6* shows the critical areas shaded in orange for the Thunder Bay River Watershed.

Map 6

