



Why a Biodiversity Action Plan?

On March 31st, 2009, the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) portion of the Sudbury Soils Study was released. One of the most comprehensive studies of its kind ever undertaken in North America, the ERA evaluated the ecological risks associated with seven Chemicals of Concern (COCs): arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, copper, lead, nickel, and selenium. While the COCs occur naturally in the area, their levels in the soil have increased over the years through particle deposition from smelter emissions.

The ERA found that terrestrial plant communities in large areas of Greater Sudbury have been and continue to be impacted by the COCs in soil. The study also found that local plant communities are affected by other factors, such as soil erosion, low nutrient levels, lack of soil organic matter, and soil acidity.

As for wildlife, the ERA concluded that the COCs are not exerting a direct effect on local wildlife populations. The COCs' impact on area plant communities, however, has affected habitat quality and therefore is likely having an indirect influence on birds and mammals in Greater Sudbury.

A Biodiversity Action Plan provides a comprehensive way to address the risks to plant communities and wildlife habitat identified by the ERA. While biodiversity is a broad topic, this Plan focuses primarily on ecological recovery in Greater Sudbury.

For more information on the Sudbury Soils Study visit:

www.sudburysoilsstudy.com