



Lynde Creek Watershed

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LYNDE CREEK WATERSHED EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT CHAPTER 2 – HUMAN HERITAGE

June 2008

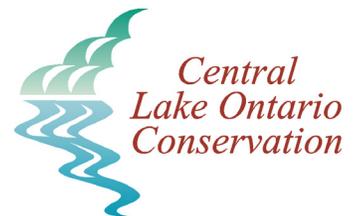


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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lynde Creek has played a role in the lives of the local human population since the time when only First Nations people inhabited this land. Initial European settlers and their descendants also made use of the creek, and the legacy of their interaction with the watercourse is still apparent in the landscape today. Lynde Creek has gone by many names:

- In the northern watershed, it was once known as Bickell’s Creek, named after a local mill owner.
- It was also called Lloyd’s Creek after David Lloyd who owned property near the mouth of the creek until about 1804 when it was then referred to as Lynde Creek after Jabez Lynde.
- Lynde (apparently properly pronounced “lined”) also has historic spellings as Lyons and Leaned.

Despite these changing names, the creek has consistently played a key role in the lives of those who settled on adjacent lands (Whitby Historical Society, 1983; Winter, 1999).

History is an important backdrop for a watershed management plan. Understanding the historical interactions between the creek and its surrounding community assists in understanding the relationship between the land, water and human populations in the watershed. In other words, current issues within the Lynde Creek watershed are better understood in the context of the history of the local area. This chapter explores some of the historical interactions between the watershed’s human population and the creek that runs through their area.

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2.0 STUDY AREA AND SCOPE

Lynde Creek and its tributaries drain an area of approximately 130 km² (Figure 1). The watershed is located entirely within the Regional Municipality of Durham and traverses five local municipalities (Town of Uxbridge, Township of Scugog, City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, and the Town of Whitby). The watershed’s headwaters originate in the Oak Ridges Moraine and the water drains south to its outlet into Lake Ontario through the Lynde Creek Marsh. The watershed is divided into five subwatersheds: Lynde Main, Heber Down, Kinsale, Ashburn, and Myrtle Station.

Both urban and rural land uses persist within this watershed with the urban area occupying most of the south portion of the watershed. The majority of the village of Brooklin is also located within the watershed. In addition, there are a number of hamlets situated within the Lynde Creek watershed: Almond Village, Macedonian Village, Kinsale, Myrtle Station, Myrtle, and Ashburn. With the exception of Kinsale, these Hamlets are all located within the Town of Whitby.

Some information is available regarding the historic development of the Township of Whitby, Town of Whitby, hamlets and the Township of Pickering. Much of this information is site specific and as such is relevant to the historical settlement of certain subwatersheds. The historic settlement and development of the Town of Whitby offers a framework and valuable insight into present day Whitby and the Lynde Creek watershed. Admittedly the historic development of the Town of Whitby occurred predominantly within the Pringle watershed, yet its influence on Lynde Creek cannot be overlooked.

Information on the historic development of the Township of Pickering is also available and is relevant in the development of the Kinsale subwatershed in particular.

Native history is presented on a broader scale, partly due to the limited knowledge that exists regarding native settlement within the watershed.

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Lynde Creek Watershed

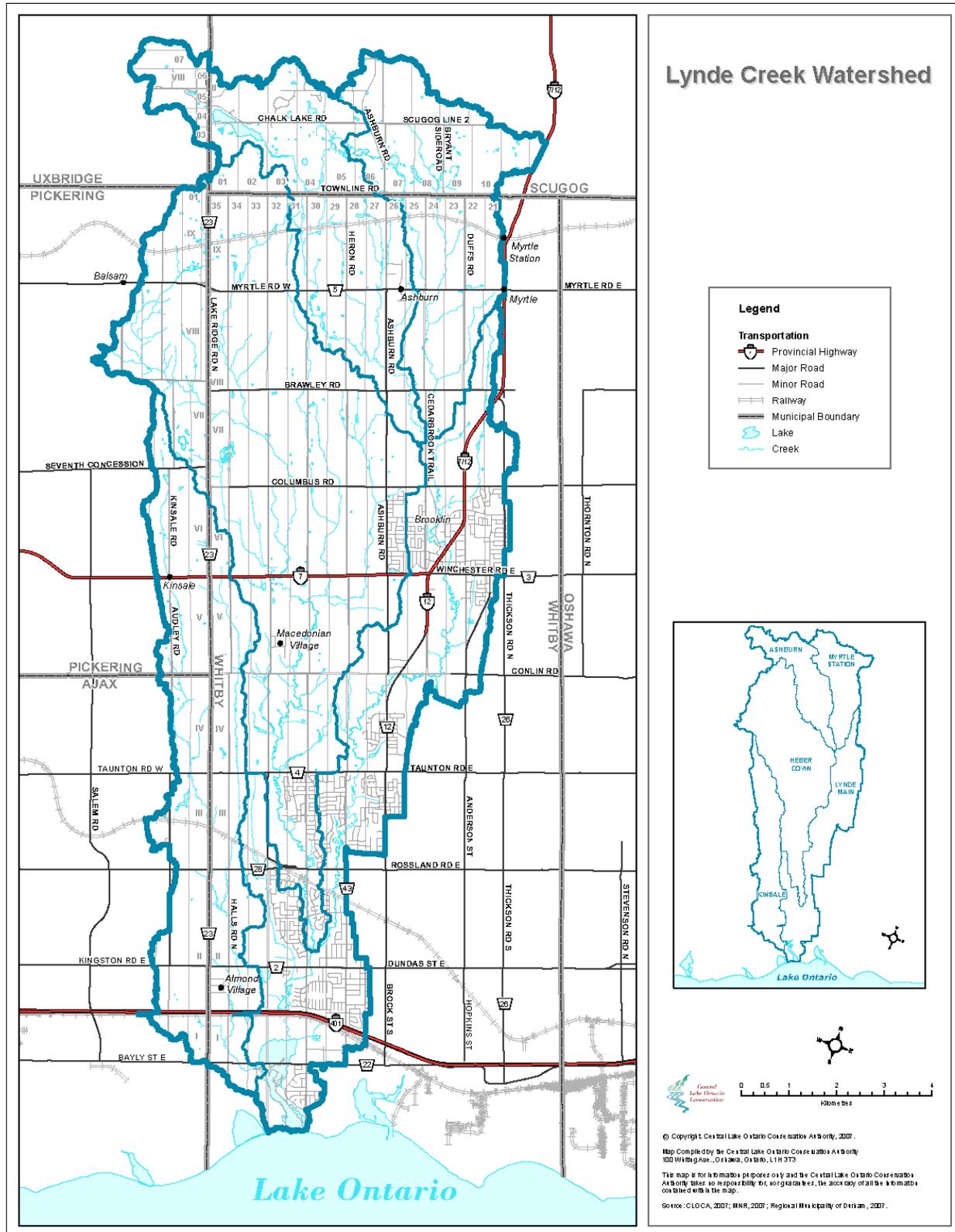


Figure 1: Lynde Creek watershed.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Information was collected predominantly by means of a literature review, with much of the information coming from a couple of authors as well as the Whitby Historical Society, Whitby Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) and the Town of Whitby.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Settlement of the Lynde Creek Watershed

Native History

In the early seventeenth century the Algonkians and the Iroquoians lived in present day southern Ontario. The Iroquoians included the Hurons and the Five Nations or Iroquois Confederacy and lived south of the Algonkians. The Iroquoians were hunters and gatherers, but they also relied on horticulture for their survival (Smith, 1991).

By the eighteenth century, the Algonkians (the Ojibwa) had expelled the Iroquoians from southern Ontario and took control of the territory. Europeans called all the Ojibwa peoples "Mississauga" despite the fact that very few of them were actually from that band (Smith, 1991). A brief description of the lifestyle that those who utilized Lynde Creek may have had is provided by Smith (1991):

"During the winter the Mississauga traveled to their hunting grounds (which reached from the lake to the heads of the watersheds of the rivers draining in to the north shore of Lake Ontario). In the early spring they gathered at their maple sugar bushes to collect the sap needed to make maple sugar. During the summer they speared salmon at their river encampments by the river mouths. In the late summer the women harvested the corn that they had planted on the river flats in the spring. When fall arrived the small villages broke up into family hunting groups who again returned by foot or by canoe to their inland ranges."

Printed sources of Native history specific to the Lynde Creek area are limited, yet there is some indication that Native peoples occupied this watershed. An archaeological excavation conducted in the 1990's resulted in the discovery of an assortment of artifacts along the north shore of Lake Ontario around the Lynde Creek Marsh (Archaeological Services Inc., 1997.). The artifacts indicate that Native peoples made

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seasonal use of the area during the Archaic, Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Early and Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland periods of history. These historical eras date back from 10,000 years ago. It appears that the area was used as a seasonal camp because it provided excellent resources such as waterfowl, vegetation, and possibly large game (Archaeological Services Inc., 1997). Local historical records also contain some speculative accounts regarding Native peoples' presence in the Brooklin area (Batty, undated).

4.2 Settlement in the Lynde Main Subwatershed

In 1795, the Township of Whitby was surveyed and mapped for the first time by the British, establishing the lots, concessions and side roads still used today. The British intended to provide a new colony and land for resettlement of the Loyalists in the Township of Whitby. However, this did not occur, and the land was sold to those who could afford it, in this case mostly Americans (Whitby LACAC).

Before 1805, the creek was called Lloyd Creek after David Lloyd who had settled at the mouth of the creek (Ontario Ministry of Culture, undated.). In 1804, Jabez Lynde, an American, arrived, settling near the current intersection of Kingston Road (Dundas Street) and the creek that now bears his name. It was at this time that the creek became commonly referred to as Lynde Creek.

Although settlement of the area dates back to 1800, it was not until 1836 that the Town's founder, Peter Perry, established a downtown business centre. The Town experienced its first period of extensive growth in the 1850's when its population grew from 1,000 to 3,500 within five years. The Town of Whitby was incorporated in 1855, three years later it was chosen as the seat of government for the new County of Ontario.

After the 1850's, Whitby's population remained stable for about 80 years. The McKinley Tariff Act in the United States ended the grain trade at the harbour in the 1890's and Whitby became known as a retired farmers' town. After the Second World War, Whitby began attracting industry from Toronto and began to grow again, reaching a population of 15,000 in 1957.

In the 1960's the Town of Whitby and the Township of Whitby were amalgamated. This was also the time when Whitby started to experience new residential development in the form of subdivisions. This growth has continued and in 2007 Whitby's population is 116,000 (Town of Whitby, 2007). It is anticipated that Whitby's population in 2031 will be 226,190 (Region of Durham, 2006).

Brooklin

The majority of Brooklin is situated within the Lynde Main subwatershed of the Lynde Creek (Figure 2). The western portion of Brooklin is located within the Heber Down subwatershed and the eastern most part being in the Pringle Creek watershed.

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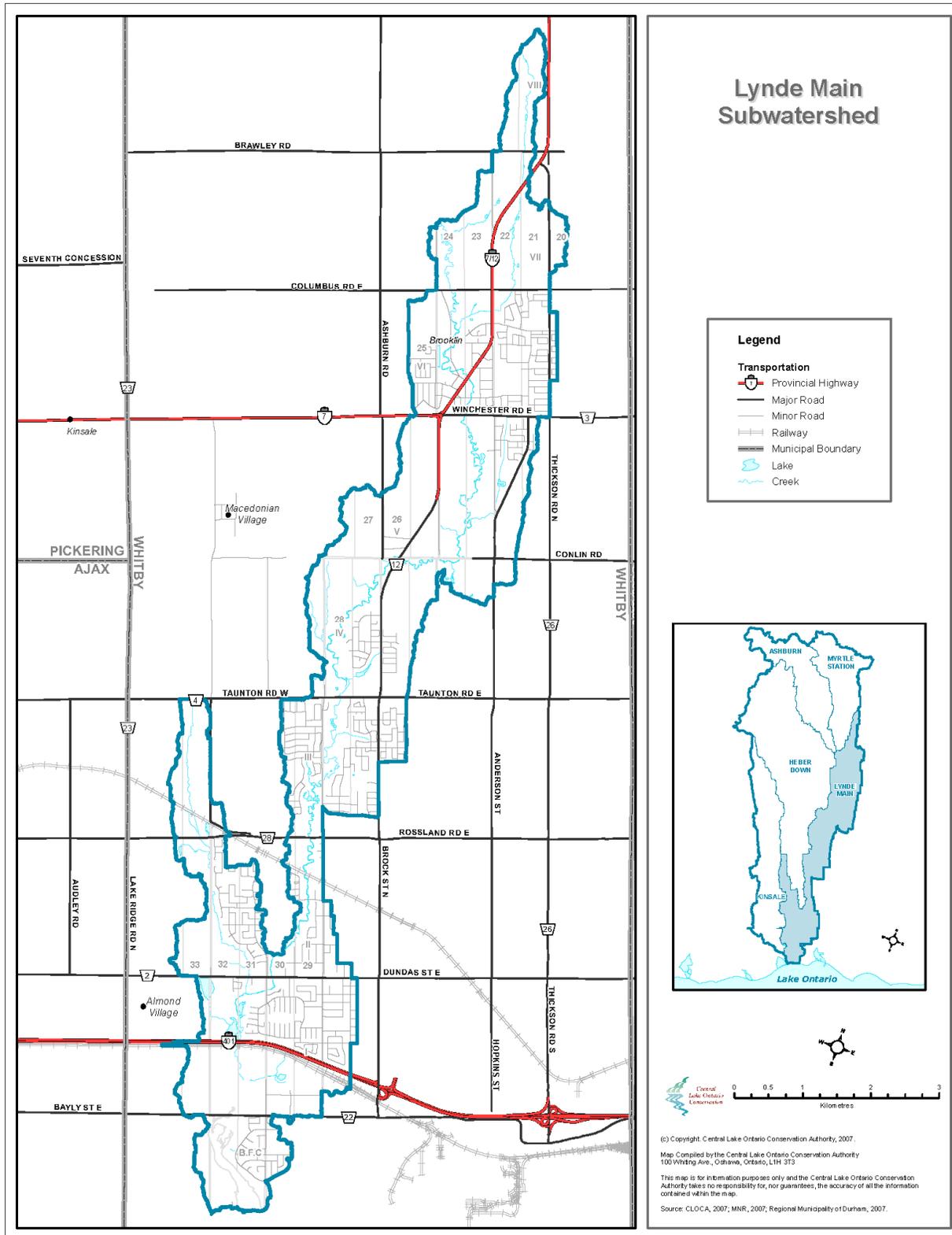


Figure 2: Lynde Main subwatershed.

The first land cleared in the area is believed to have been on the north side of Concession 6, owned by a Mr. Huntington who arrived around 1820 (Batty, undated). Approximately 20 years later, the community of Brooklin, originally named Winchester, had 4 log homes within the village and a flour mill built by John and Robert Campbell on the banks of the Lynde Creek (BRAY Heritage, 2006). In 1847, the village became known as Brooklin and there is some speculation that the watercourse flowing through the area inspired the name (Winter, 1999; Brooklin Downtown Business Association, 1997). By 1851 the village population was about 500 people and had two grist mills with three run of stones each (BRAY Heritage, 2006).

By the 1870's, industry and commerce were thriving and Brooklin continued to service the surrounding rural community. Growth was supported by the railway and roads. The first road through Brooklin was a blazed trail that came north from Hamer's Corners (now part of the Town of Whitby). This route went all the way to Whitby Harbour and was used to transport grain from the northern townships to the lakefront for export (Wick, 1981).

Brooklin area farms produced internationally recognized milled flour and oatmeal and local stock breeders won acclaim nationally and internationally for their cattle and horses (BRAY Heritage, 2006).

The creek was important to the village's development as is reflected in the following statement:

"The stream known as Bickell's Creek exerted much productive energy through a long period of years. At least seven mills were turned by its force within a distance of three miles. These included three grist mills, two sawmills, one oatmeal mill and a woolen mill...Millpond after millpond dotted the stream...Today the bottoms of the old ponds have become pasture fields" (Batty, undated).

The creek also provided other economic benefits as is noted in the 1871 census which reported that residents living alongside the creek were able to hunt, gathering the pelts of muskrats, mink and beaver (BRAY Heritage, 2006). However, Batty offers an indication of the effect of agricultural clearing on the flows of this watercourse: "...unfortunately, as trees were cut down on this, and later on, surrounding property, the little stream dwindled to a trickle until it became only a drainage ditch for surplus surface water"

By the turn of the century, Brooklin was experiencing a downturn in its prosperity. This was in part due to the decline of the local mills and some natural disasters including flooding, fire and lightning strikes (BRAY Heritage, 2006). In 1890 high water levels in Lynde Creek swept away bridges, mill dams, railway and telegraph lines and small structures (BRAY Heritage, 2006).

Today Brooklin is experiencing growth in the form of new residential development. This growth was initiated largely due to the expansion of municipal services from Whitby to Brooklin in the 1990s. The population of Brooklin in 2005 was approximately 15,000. Brooklin's population is expected to increase to 20,000 by the year 2011 and 30,000 by 2016 (Town of Whitby, 2007). To support this residential

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growth, there has been some development of commercial and service uses in the last couple of years.

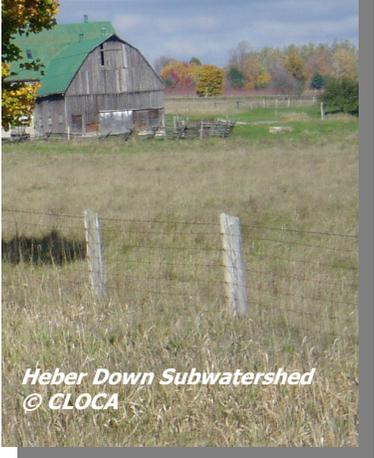
4.3 Settlement in Heber Down Subwatershed

A small community know as Bagotville was situated approximately one half mile west of the current Cullen Gardens/Cullen Central Park site. The community included a gristmill, and the Patly Mills and persisted until the 1920's. The millpond was once located on land which is now part of the Cullen Gardens/Cullen Central Park property (Winter, 1999).

The hamlet of Macedonian Village is located within this subwatershed (Figure 3). This hamlet has about 70 – 80 residential homes and a municipal park. There are a couple of older homes, but the majority of homes appear to be built between the 1960's and 1980's, and there are a few homes that have been built in the last 5-10 years.



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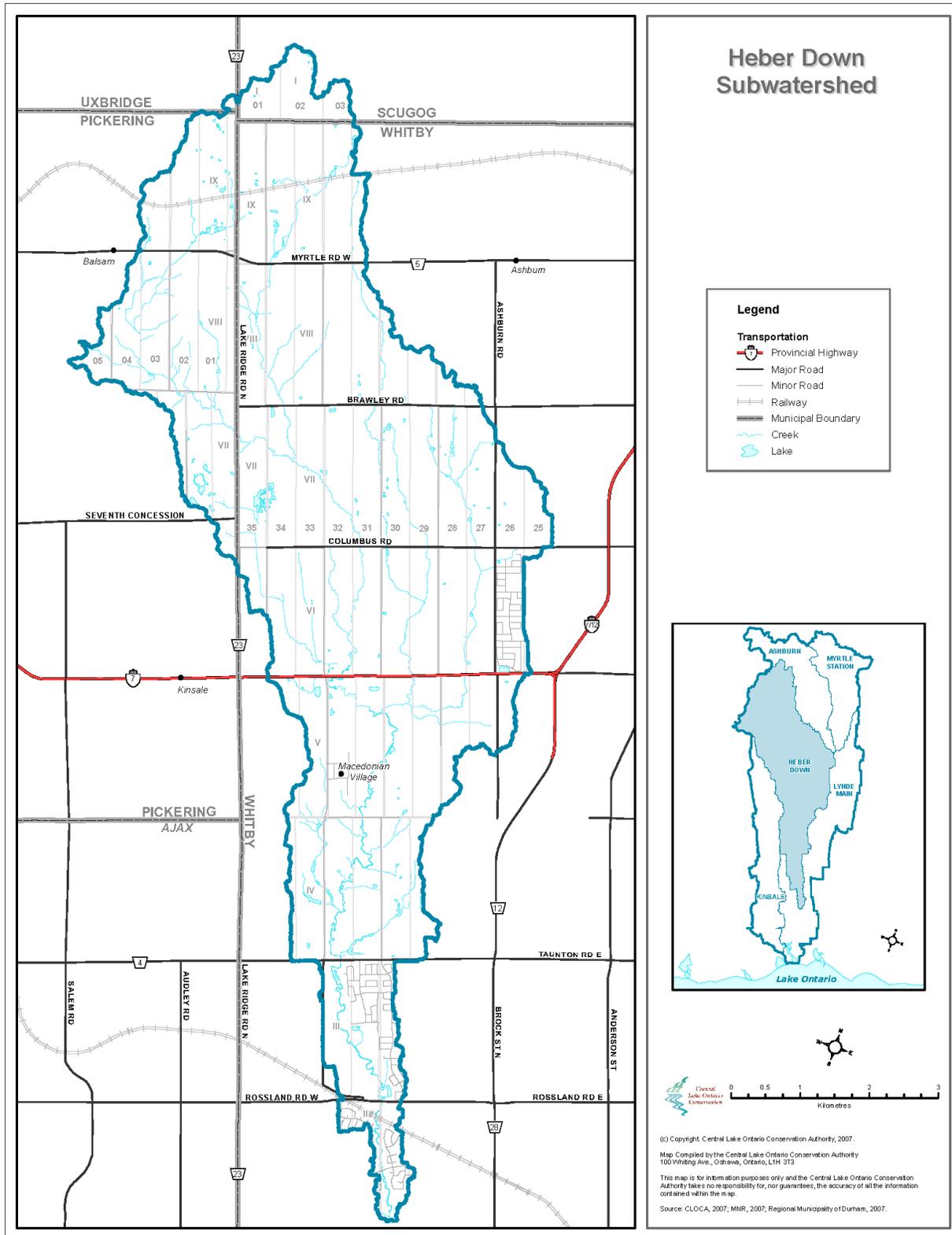


Figure 3: Heber Down subwatershed.

4.4 Settlement in the Kinsale Subwatershed

This subwatershed currently spans three different municipal jurisdictions: Whitby, Pickering and Ajax. The majority of the headwaters of this subwatershed are located within Pickering (Figure 4).

Pickering Township was surveyed in 1791 by Augustus Jones, Deputy Provincial Land Surveyor. The site of the later village of Pickering on Duffin's Creek was part of the 4800-acre block in Pickering granted in 1793 to Major John Smith, an officer in the 5th Regiment during the Revolutionary War and later commanding officer at Detroit (1790-92) and Niagara (1792-95). On Major Smith's death, the land passed to his son, David W. Smith, Surveyor-General of Upper Canada (1792-1804). In 1797 Smith planned to erect a saw and grist-mill in the township. However, these mills were never built (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 2002).

Kinsale

The village of Kinsale is located at the intersection of Kinsale Road and Highway 7 in Pickering. It is reported that in the 1850's a post office and school were established in the village. The Lovell's Gazetteer of British North America identifies the village of Kinsale as having a population of 90 people in 1873. The 1878 atlas map shows all the buildings in the village situated on the west side of Kinsale Road, with a branch of the Lynde Creek flowing through the intersection (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 2002).

Almonds

At the intersection of what is now Lakeridge Road and Highway 2 (Dundas Street) there was a small settlement called Almonds. The community was named after James Almond who arrived in the area during the 1830's. For many years, Almonds was a distinct community boasting its own school and church (Winter, 1999). All that remains now on the site of this community is a small replica of the church and an historical information plaque.

Despite the fact that this village has vanished, the name persists as the small community located east of Lakeridge Road and north of Highway 401 is referred to as Almond Village. This hamlet has approximately 70 – 80 residential homes that were predominantly established during the 1950's, 60's and 70's.



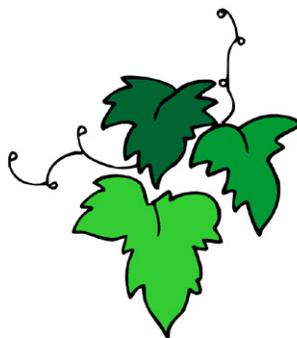
'Almonds...was named after James Almond who arrived in the area during the 1830s'

4.5 Settlement in the Ashburn Subwatershed

Originally known as Butler's Corners after the area's first settler, the community of Ashburn first emerged circa 1831 (Figure 5). The name Ashburn was eventually chosen in 1850 as a result of the community's link to the potash industry. Asheries were built to produce potash from the trees that were cleared during the settlement of Whitby Township. The first residents of Ashburn were primarily Scottish immigrants and some of these families are still in the community today. In addition, some key buildings from the community's early days, such as the general store (circa 1850) and the Wilson Hotel (circa 1869) still stand (Winter, 1999).



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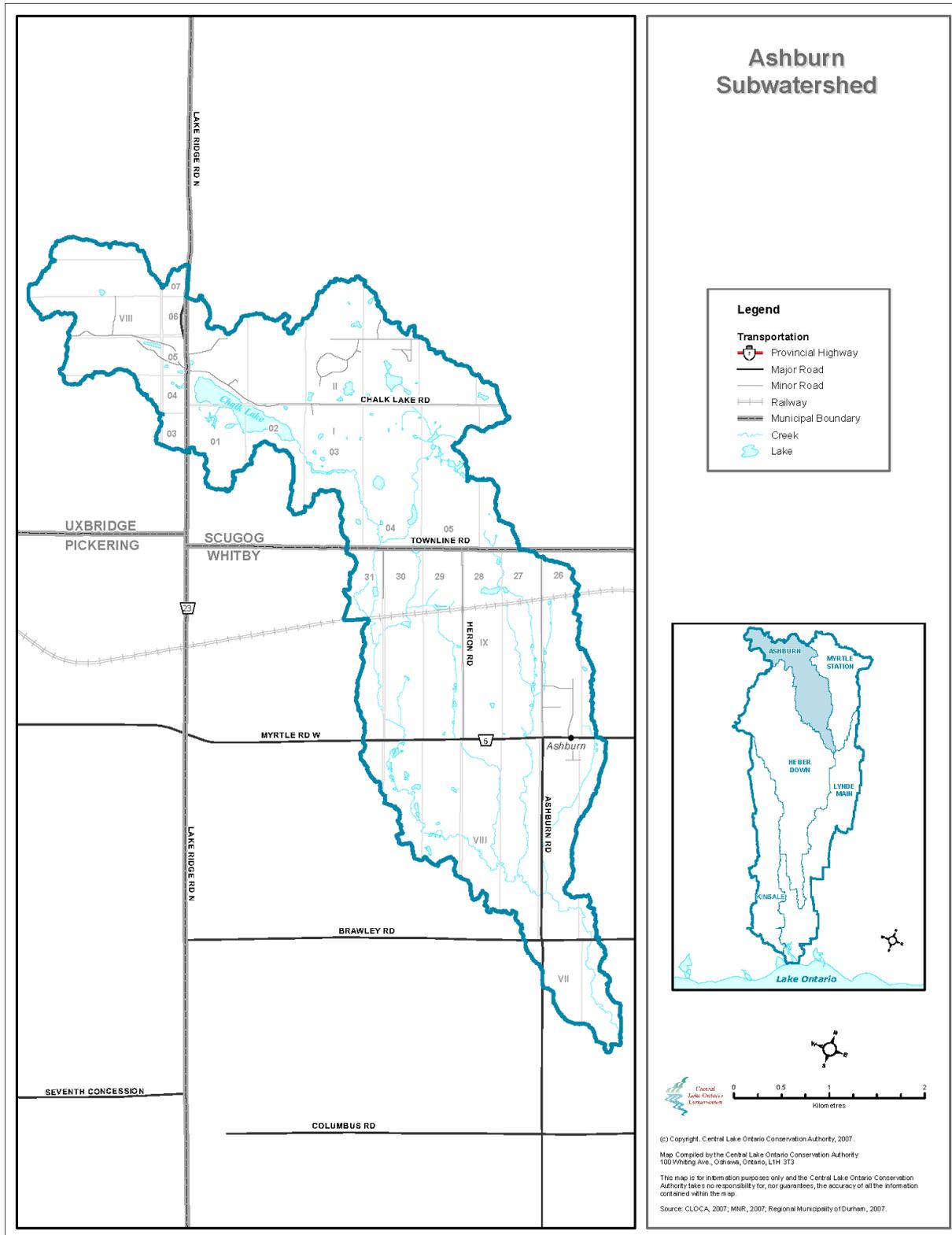


Figure 5: Ashburn subwatershed.

4.6 Settlement in the Myrtle Station Subwatershed

Two small hamlets in the northern portion of the watershed along Highway 12 are literally within walking distance of each other (Figure 6). These are the hamlets of Myrtle and Myrtle Station. Only the western portions of these hamlets are located within the Lynde Creek watershed, with the remainder being located within the Oshawa Creek watershed.

Myrtle was officially established in the 1840's, but settlers had been in the area since the 1830's. For example, the Hubbell family had arrived in the Myrtle area by the 1830's and this family established the small cemetery northwest of the settlement. By 1835, the Briggs brothers had arrived in the area and members of this family remained on the original farmland until 1987 (Winter, 1999). Prior to 1860, Myrtle was known as Well's Corners after Gardner Wells who settled in Myrtle in 1836 with his two brothers. Wells founded a Methodist Episcopal Church and served as a pastor from 1846 to 1878. After being known as Well's Corners for some time the settlement was called Lenwood. The origins of this name and the reason for the eventual choice of Myrtle, are unknown (Winter, 1999).

Myrtle Station owes its existence to the construction of the Ontario and Quebec Railway in 1883/84. This railway crossed Highway 12 one half mile north of the already established hamlet of Myrtle, thus creating a new community. Myrtle Station had a grain elevator, along with its railway station, store, hotel and residences. Myrtle Station reached its peak in the 1890's and entered a period of decline in the early twentieth century (Winter, 1999).

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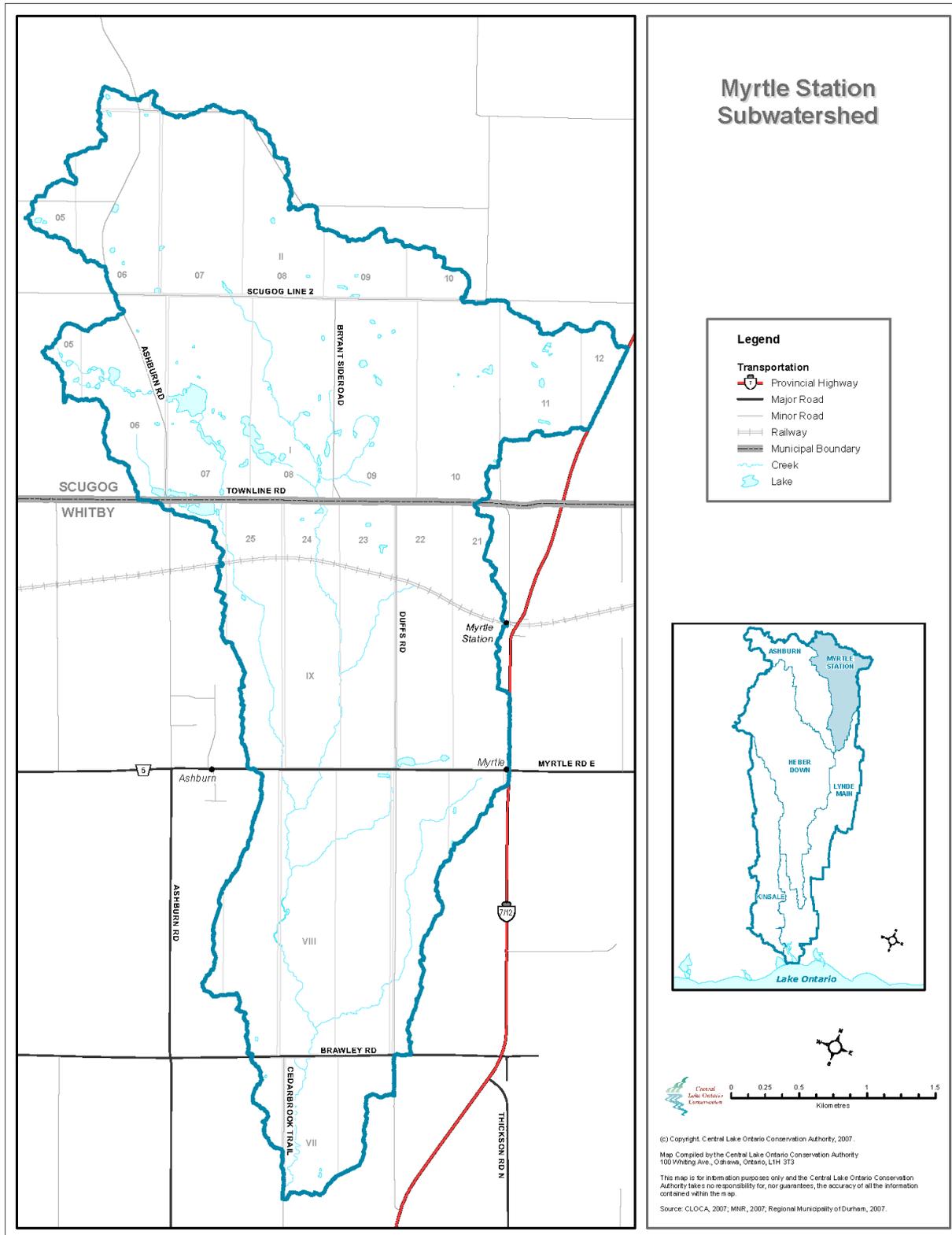


Figure 6: Myrtle Station subwatershed.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Lynde Creek played a dominant role in the settlement of the watershed. At first it provided a wealth of resources in the abundance of fish and mammals that it supported, these resources being important to both the Natives and the European settlers as a food source. The Lynde also provided energy to power agricultural and timber mills, playing a role in the economic development and settlement of the area. The conversion of forest to agricultural lands is reported to have had an impact, reducing water flow. Flooding within the Lynde has been a destructive force in the past, damaging bridges, mills and small structures.



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WHAT WE DO ON THE LAND IS MIRRORED IN THE WATER