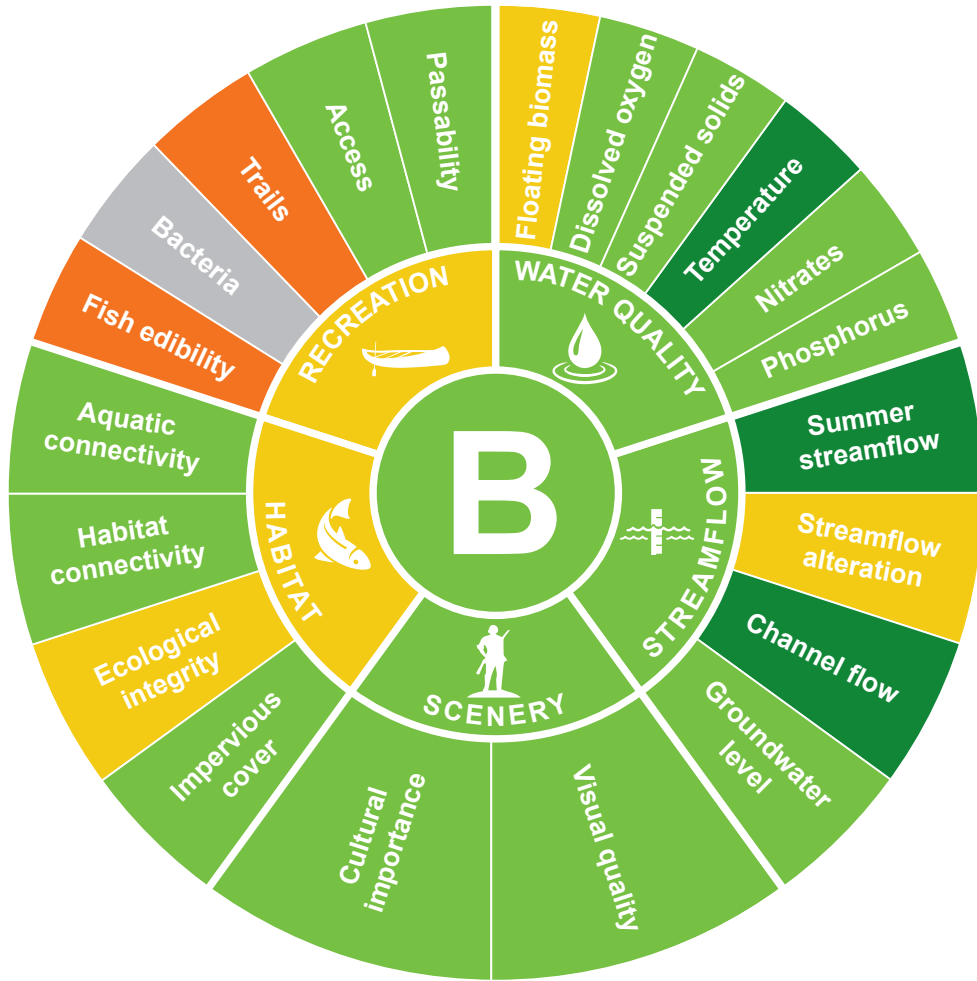
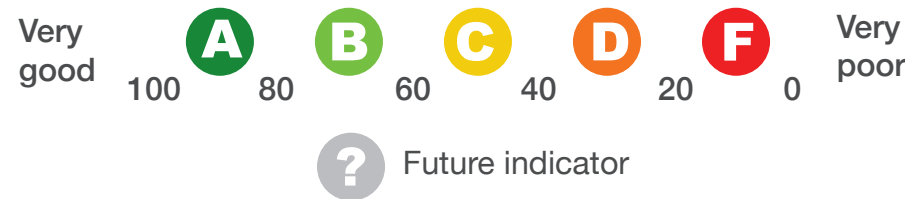


Overall grade and indicators of river health



Our health scale



Details and data at SuAsCo.ecoreportcard.org

Get involved! You can help protect the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers



Become a citizen scientist or advocate
Join us in collecting data used by decision makers to improve the rivers' health. Or be a voice of the rivers and share your priorities with the decision-makers in your community or at the state level. Sign up for Action Alerts at office@oars3rivers.org.



Discover your rivers
We protect what we love. The views and sounds from the river transport one to a different world, away from the noise and rush of our daily lives. Get out and go recharge your soul! Find river maps at oars3rivers.org/river/recreation.



Roll up your sleeves
To keep our rivers open for recreation, healthy for wildlife, and with beautiful scenery, we manage invasive water chestnut and do annual river cleanups. Learn how to become a river steward. OARS needs many other talents too. Volunteer at office@oars3rivers.org.

Learn more about OARS at oars3rivers.org

About OARS

OARS is the non-profit watershed organization for the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord watershed which lies just 20 miles west of Boston. Founded in 1986, OARS' mission is to protect and restore the health of the three rivers and their tributaries for public recreation, water supply, and wildlife habitat. OARS' vision is a river system that provides a healthy aquatic habitat and is clean enough for swimming and fishing, whose flow approximates natural cycles, and whose impoundments are free of contaminants.

Acknowledgements

This Report Card was developed by OARS in partnership with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and with the support of the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, The Sudbury Foundation, the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council, in-kind contributions from the National Park Service and US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the participation of many stakeholders and volunteers.

Cover photo by David Witherbee.

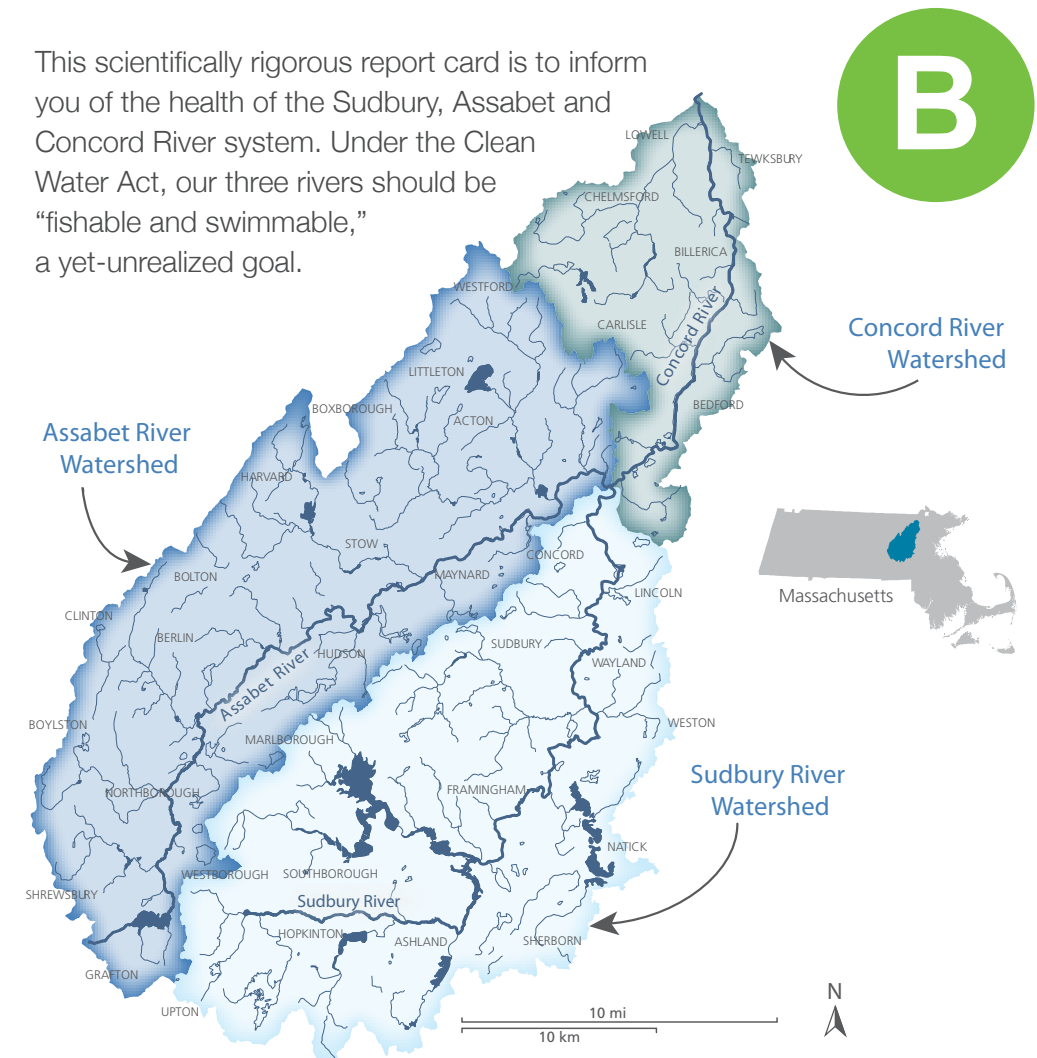


OARS

Report Card 2018

For the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers

This scientifically rigorous report card is to inform you of the health of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River system. Under the Clean Water Act, our three rivers should be "fishable and swimmable," a yet-unrealized goal.



Lower Assabet River received a grade of **B**, the highest grade in the river system. This is remarkable given severe water quality problems of the Assabet in the past and is the result of major investments in municipal wastewater treatment. This segment still has excessive aquatic biomass in the impoundments behind dams during the summer. The many old mill dams restrict fish passage and enjoyment by paddlers. There are many trails for walking and cycling along the river.

B

Upper Assabet River received a grade of **C+**.

The beginning of the Assabet in Westborough hosts the largest wastewater treatment plant in the watershed, resulting in higher nitrate levels and some excessive biomass growth. Old mill dams interrupt aquatic connections, and there are few walking or biking trails along the river.

C+

Upper Sudbury River received a grade of **C**.

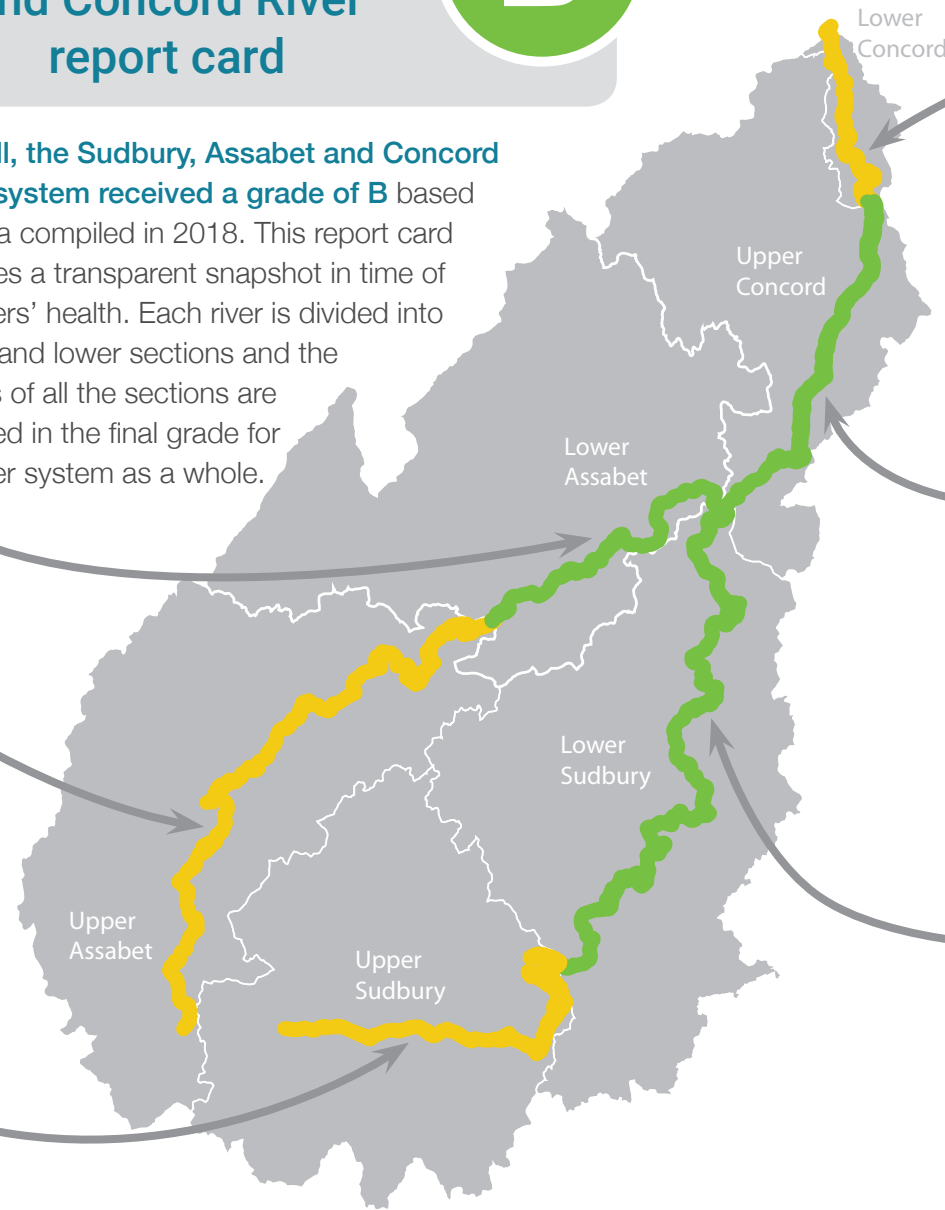
Fish contaminated with mercury downstream of the Superfund site in Ashland brought the score down. Due to a lack of data there are no Water Quality and Scenic grades. There are no wastewater treatment plants discharging to the river. There are several old mill dams and water supply dams that fish and paddlers must attempt to navigate.

C

The Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River report card

B

Overall, the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River system received a grade of B based on data compiled in 2018. This report card provides a transparent snapshot in time of the rivers' health. Each river is divided into upper and lower sections and the grades of all the sections are reflected in the final grade for the river system as a whole.



Lower Concord River received a grade of **C+** reflecting its urbanized nature, resulting in poorer habitat and loss of ecological integrity in the watershed. The water quality is relatively good for aquatic life, like fish. This river segment has relatively little recreational access and few trails.

C+

Upper Concord River received a grade of **B**. This segment is very scenic. It includes Minute Man National Historical Park and large protected riverine areas in the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, but has relatively few trails. Fish consumption is very restricted due to mercury contamination from the Sudbury River upstream, and it suffers loss of habitat and ecological integrity due to urbanization.

B

Lower Sudbury River received a grade of **B**. The water quality is reasonably good but there is a prohibition on all fish consumption due to high levels of fish contamination by mercury from a Superfund site in Ashland. This is the longest Wild & Scenic River segment; Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and conservation land protect that scenic quality.

B

River Values

River health is defined by five values identified by stakeholders at three workshops in 2018: Water Quality, Streamflow, Scenery, Habitat, and Recreation. Indicators for each value are graded using scientifically-defined thresholds (see the methods report online) with even intervals.



Water Quality



Streamflow



Scenery



Habitat



Recreation