



AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT



ABCA.ON.CA

BUILDING BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIENCE SINCE 1946

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABCA ANNUAL REPORT 2007

	Corporate Services, Pages 2–8	
Page 2	Message from the Chair	
Page 3	Board of Directors Message	
Page 4	General Manager's Report	
Page 5	ABCA Staff Report	
Page 6–7	Conservation Education	
Page 8	Communications – Climate Change	
	Water Management, Pages 9–17	
Pages 9–11	Monitoring Water Levels and Steam Flows	
Page 12	Water and Erosion Control	
Pages 13–14	Water Management	
Page 14	Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping Report	
Pages 15	Water and Planning	
Page 15	Sinkhole Investigation Study	
Page 16	Regulations (Ontario Regulation 147/06: Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourse Regulation)	
Page 17	Groundwater Monitoring and Studies	
	Drinking Water Source Protection, Page 18	
Page 18	Source Protection Planning	
	Healthy Watersheds, Pages 19–23	
Page 19	Healthy Watersheds	
Page 20	Community Action, Wetlands	
Page 21	Ausable River Recovery Strategy, Species at Risk	
Pages 22–23	Monitoring	
	Conservation Land Management, Pages 24–26	
Pages 24–25	Conservation Land Management	
Page 25	Conservation Area Development	
Page 26	Forestry	
	Watershed Stewardship, Pages 27–31	
Page 27	Private Land Stewardship Program	
Page 28	Tree Planting Program Report	
Page 29	Conservationist of the Year	
Page 30	ABCA Partnerships	
Page 31	Source Protection Stewardship Program	
Pages 32–39	ABCA in the News, Pages 32–39	
Pages 40–41	Financial and Performance Summaries, Pages 40–41	
Pages 42–44	Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, Pages 42–44	



Conservation requires looking to future, acting at home

Message from the Chair,

Bill Weber

Watershed conservation has become a large and significant component of the environmental and economic health of the member municipalities of the Conservation Authority.

Watershed conservation, by design, requires long-term visioning and planning. Outcomes can take years before the full benefits are seen and appreciated. Building a better environmental conscience, our motto, is so appropriate. Our biggest successes, with the longest impacts, result from building the knowledge of landowners and our youth.

Conservation and helping the environment starts at home with our personal commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle. Our stewardship programs and our conservation education programs are positive and proactive towards achieving the highest priority in our Conservation Strategy: to “maintain and improve water quality and quantity throughout the watersheds.”

Success and efficiency are measured differently depending on the individual’s perspective. Economical, efficient delivery of programs and projects is certainly one of interest to all member municipalities. Leveraging funding from partners on a three to one basis provides cost-effective program delivery. Three partnership dollars, for every one dollar of municipal levy, makes for very efficient cost-effective delivery by the organization.

Municipalities have many pressures for local tax dollars, but we also value environmental assets. The benefits of a healthy environment to the local economy are significant and more partnership funding, combined with effective program implementation, can create more positive change on the landscape.

Many of our municipalities’ water supplies come from Lake Huron. Drinking Water Source Protection is a very important project with a focus

on areas closest to municipal surface water intakes and municipal groundwater drinking supplies. I see the information, knowledge and recommendations in the Source Protection Plans as vitally important to providing the ABCA with the information it needs to develop future programs and services for its member municipalities and landowners alike.

The Source Protection Committee for the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region has a good mix of talented individuals. Their efforts over the next five years will

surely provide additional barriers of protection to the drinking water that is so vital to the health of us all.

Municipal appointments to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority play an important role in the success of the ABCA’s watershed conservation program. I believe the practice of changing the Chairman of the Board every other year is a good one. Fresh ideas and different leadership styles contribute to a strong organization.

I would like to thank the past and present members of the Board of Directors for their hard work and commitment. I would also like to thank the municipalities which continue the vision of healthy watersheds, the partner organizations and landowners who implement positive changes in our watershed, and the dedicated staff members who are helping to protect life and property and improve our environmental health through programs which benefit land, water, recreation – and our future generations.



Bill Weber, 2007 Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors.

Vision Statement

Our vision is one of clean and usable watersheds where human needs and the needs of the natural environment are balanced to ensure quality of life and biological diversity today and in the future.

Community leaders provide support for conservation

Message from ABCA Board of Directors

Nine community leaders from across the Ausable, Bayfield and Parkhill watersheds bring their leadership skills to the table in support of conservation.

Nine municipally appointed representatives make up the Board of Directors for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. Their knowledge of the local environmental issues is key to the strong commitment of the 12 member municipalities to conservation work for over 60 years.

Four new members joined the Board of Directors in 2007:

- Bill Siemon, a member of municipal council and representing Huron East;
- Paul Hodgins, a member of municipal council and representing Lucan Biddulph;
- Dave Frayne, municipal councillor and representing South Huron and Perth South;
- George Irvin, municipal councillor and representing Bluewater.

These individuals have strong backgrounds in agriculture, business and community service.

To the four outgoing Board Members:

- Bob Bell (13 years);
- Teresa Ondrejicka (Nine years, including Chairman

2004-05);

• Harvey Ratz (two years), and;

• Bill Dowson (12 years); we extend our appreciation for their time and dedication to conservation.

Whether their time on the Board of Directors was a few years, or a decade, each one of them brought to the board an interest in making the watershed environment better for future generations.

They brought an interest in learning more about the environment and what can be done by individuals and municipalities to make a difference.

When municipal representatives come on the Board of Directors they are provided with an opportunity to learn about watershed management, species at risk, flood plain regulations, forest management, drinking water source protection and a series of other conservation-related activities. When municipal representatives leave the Board of Directors they become spokespersons for conservation in their community.

This is just one way ABCA 'Builds Better Environmental Conscience' throughout the watershed communities.

To all past and current board members, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority extends to you a sincere thank you.

2007 Board of Directors



Bill Siemon
Huron East



Adrian Debruyn
Adelaide Metcalfe &
Middlesex Centre



George Irvin
Bluewater



Jim Ginn
Central Huron



Dave Frayne
South Huron and
Perth South



**Lawrence
McLachlan**
North Middlesex



Bob Norris
West Perth



Paul Hodgins
Lucan Biddulph



Bill Weber
Lambton Shores
& Warwick

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide leadership and management, in cooperation with the community, to maintain and enhance the watershed resources now and in the future.

Let's create greener future, turn vision into action

By Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

We are blessed to have a watershed community where so many conservation-minded residents and landowners join with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and other partner agencies, departments and municipalities to achieve greater environmental health for all.

We look out our windows and see our forest cover and our watercourses and we thank those people who had the vision to plant those trees and protect those streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands.

We thank the municipalities who help us protect life and property in the watershed through conservation authority programs.

Recalling some of the dry conditions in parts of our watershed in 2007, we look forward to 2008 and ask for adequate rain in the new year for our farmers.

We thank all our donors and volunteers for their tireless efforts to improve our collective environmental health and think of the physical well-being this helps provide for you, your family and friends.

We continue to seek new ways to preserve water quality in our watershed as articulated in our new Watershed Report Card.

The ABCA Board of Directors adopted a Position Paper on Climate Change in 2007 and in 2008 we channel our efforts into building a stronger, more resilient watershed to better equip us for the future.

The Annual Report is an opportunity to reflect on the watershed community's successes in 2007: from stewardship workshops to tree and buffer planting to



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

involvement with water quality and municipal drinking water source protection initiatives.

I would also like to look forward to a healthy environment in the new year as we educate children and young people about conservation and work together with landowners to create a greener future.

We invite you to become involved as a patron or donor of the Conservation Dinner to help us create accessible trails, commemorative woods, and conservation education opportunities in the future – and we thank all of you who have supported these efforts in the past.

We thank you for your support in the past year of important initiatives such as the Old Ausable

Channel Long-Term Management Plan and are excited to see it move into an implementation phase.

I would also like to take the opportunity provided by this publication to invite you to enjoy the natural spaces that are available through your local conservation areas and accessible trails.

We have an opportunity to work together to build a greener, more resilient watershed and I look forward to working with you to help make this happen.



Don Pearson (at left), General Manager of Conservation Ontario, attended the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Annual Awards Dinner in 2007 and congratulated ABCA General Manager and Secretary Treasurer Tom Prout on 25 years of service.

Stability in ABCA staffing is good for organization

Staff Report by Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

Training and Development

Every year, through this report, I like to acknowledge the importance of staff to the success of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

Over the years, the ABCA has been fortunate to attract excellent, well-qualified individuals to replace those who move on to further their education or pursue new careers.

Stability in staffing is a good thing. It builds the knowledge and the capacity of the organization and increases its overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Stability does not mean stagnation. In fact, it is crucial to the growth of the organization

STAFF REPORT

that staff be aware of leading-edge technology, science, leadership and management techniques.

Equally important is their ability to know when to implement new ideas and when to continue with existing practices. The ABCA has staff with this level of ability. They work well together as a team, they combine their collective talents for the good of the environment and collectively they share in the rewards of a job well done.

2007 was a very good year for staff. I personally received more compliments about ABCA staff, from as far away as Winnipeg, than ever before. As well, the youth of our organization are providing an excellent foundation and will

provide stability and growth for many years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff we welcome:

- Denise Biega, Conservation Education Technician
- Chris Van Esbroeck, Drinking Water Source Protection Education Specialist (Stewardship)
- Dallas Campbell, Drinking Water Source Protection Outreach Specialist (Stewardship)

I would also like to wish the best to those staff members who contributed positively to the organization and have since gone on to other pursuits.

All the best to:

- Teresa Ainslie, Well Survey and GIS Support
- Aaron Clarke, Continuing his Education



The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority welcomed Dallas Campbell, Chris Van Esbroeck, and Denise Biega to ABCA and Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection in 2007.

ABCA staff members share, learn through national events

Several staff of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority have taken part in national and provincial events.

Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, spoke in Winnipeg in February on 'Engaging You - The Farm Community - in Source Protection: The Conservation Authority Role,' at the Ag-Water Forum II; Agricultural Perspectives on Source Water Protection, at The

Inn at the Forks.

He also spoke on behalf of conservation managers in Ontario when he gave remarks to Young Conservation Professionals at the A. D. Latornell Symposium in November.

In June 2007, Alec Scott, ABCA Water and Planning Manager, representing the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Committee, presented

the 'Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Implementation Guidelines for Conservation Authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources,' (April 2007) to Conservation Ontario Council for their endorsement.

Kari Killins graduated from the Young Conservation Professionals programme and attended the ceremony at the Latornell Symposium.

Conservation Education staff host new special events in 2007

by Julie Hicks, ABCA Conservation Education Specialist

Throughout 2007, education programs and special events have been at the forefront, providing and instilling 'better environmental conscience' to students and adults alike through positive and memorable outdoor experiences.

For the past seven years, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Spring, Fall and Winter Nature Programs have provided watershed youth with memorable environmental education experiences in an outdoor setting or classroom.

Throughout the year, many new ABCA programs were introduced and others re-vamped in order for teaching material and educational activities to stay current and exciting.

In 2007, nearly 1,400 students participated in either half-day or full-day curriculum-linked nature programs in the classroom, or at the Morrison Dam or Rock Glen Conservation Areas. Topics of Nature Day programs ranged from water quality, to soils, trees, insects, fossils, and species-at-risk, to name a few. The Spring Water Awareness Program (SWAP), held at watershed schools in February and March, was also very popular this year, with 1,842 students learning about river systems and the dangers around waterways during the seasonal transition from winter to spring.

Camp Sylvan Conservation Program

It was another great spring for the Camp Sylvan Conservation



Julie Hicks, ABCA Conservation Education Specialist, with participants at Water Quality Whiz education event in 2007.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Program; nine groups attended Camp, which holds the honour of being one of the longest running Conservation Education Program in Ontario. At camp, students from grades six through eight, take part in 1.5 or 2.5 days of ecology-based, outdoor experiential programs on a variety of topics such as Orienteering, What's in the Water, Wilderness Survival, Habitat Improvements and the famous Go Wild/Survival program.

Special Events

Special events continued to be at the forefront for the Education Department in 2007, with the introduction of new events to the Morrison Dam Conservation Area, including three Summer Nature Day Camps and an evening Canoe

Hike held in September. Another event, the 'Water Quality Whiz' Day was held in conjunction with one of many Old Ausable Channel Lecture Series workshops was designed to teach children about the importance of water quality and its affect on humans, watershed flora and faunal populations.

Continued on next page



The Owl Prowl Night Hike is one of the events which has helped educate our watershed residents about the natural spaces around us and the need to preserve them.



Denise Biega, ABCA Conservation Education Technician, was a key organizer of the evening canoe trip.

ABCA Special Event Attendance

March Break Day Camp ... 28
 South Huron Trail Run ... 220
 Bannockburn Fall Hike ... 300
 Night Hike & Owl Prowl ... 160
 Huron Perth Agriculture & Water Festival ... 593
 Summer Day Camps ... 41
 Canoe Hike ... 9

OTHER EVENTS

ATTENDED

- ♦ Inventors' & Science Fair
- ♦ Ontario Envirothon
- ♦ Rekindle the Spark Workshop

Volunteers, supporters make conservation education possible

Continued from previous page

Thank you, volunteers and supporters

Thank you to those who volunteered and gave support to the Education Department during the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's 61st year.

Without you many of our education programs and special events would not be possible.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

In 2008 . . .

In 2008, the Education Department looks forward to another successful year delivering conservation education programs and special events.

The focus will be on improving current programs, and creating programs with the intention of

attracting new schools, and ensuring positive relationships with long-standing local schools.

New special events will also be created and implemented, in hopes of increasing the environmental awareness and conscience of the people living within our watershed.

ABCA Conservation Education Programs are intended to promote, develop & encourage in people positive watershed stewardship & responsible actions towards the environment.



Clockwise from photo at left, Arkona Lions museum, Camp Sylvan, Rock Glen CA and watershed classrooms are among sites for conservation education.

Board adopts climate change position paper to help create resilient watersheds for future

By Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors looked to the future and the need to prepare when it approved a position paper on climate change in 2007.

The board approved the document, *Preparing for Change in Ausable Bayfield Watersheds*, on November 22, 2007. The plan includes ten action items to help build more resilient watersheds. Projected increases in extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and storms make a forward-thinking plan necessary.

"Climate change, and what is happening in our world, is on everyone's mind," said Bill Weber, Chair of the Board of Directors for 2007. "We need to do our part and be proactive locally."

The new document emphasizes conservation education and education to landowners and staff in order to create more awareness about climate change and variability and to increase mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Conservation Authorities have a demonstrated ability to work with landowners and other partners to protect wetlands, conserve water, encourage sustainable practices and increase forest cover. That capacity is required now in order to help adapt the watershed for projected weather extremes. The plan concludes by saying "together, and with a vision for the future, we can play a positive role in adapting to climate change and the impacts it brings." The full climate change position paper document is available online at abca.on.ca

The main recommendations are:

Ten Action Items

1. 'Building a Better Environmental Conscience' – Integrate, to a greater extent, into the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Conservation Education programming the important role afforestation and other positive environmental actions can play in building watershed resiliency to mitigate against future extremes in weather and climate.

2. Communicate to farmers and other landowners,



Tim Cumming is Communications Specialist with the ABCA.

ABCA COMMUNICATIONS

especially through stewardship and communications means, the important role they can play in building more watershed resiliency for the future and educate them on some of the projected future impacts.

3. Reduce our environmental footprint through self-assessment of internal practices – investigating ways to reduce energy consumption in ABCA buildings and vehicles and reducing the waste that enters and leaves the building.

4. Continue to support staff training on issues of climate change and effective stakeholder engagement in building watershed resiliency.

5. Consult with different levels of governments, agencies and organizations to help define the positive role the ABCA can play in their climate change and watershed resiliency initiatives.

6. Hold, within the next two years, a staff training day to learn more about climate change and consider its impacts in the context of established job descriptions.

7. Hold, within the next two years, a public event educating landowners about their role in adaptation and mitigation.

8. Produce, within the next two years, a factsheet for landowners letting them know about the projects they can initiate or the changes they can make in order to prepare for climate change.

9. Continue watershed monitoring programs such as Watershed Report Cards, Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program, surface water monitoring and temperature and precipitation – in order to be able to track changes which may occur within our watershed area.

10. Incorporate climate change and climate variability projected impacts, where possible, as considerations in future watershed planning documents.

New stream gauge shelter put in place in 2007

By Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist

The ABCA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Canada, maintains and operates a data collection network within its watershed area to provide watershed municipalities and residents with advance warning of life threatening flood events on the watershed.

This monitoring network also provides information on low water conditions, groundwater and surface water interactions and the relationship of stream flow to aquatic health.

The data collection network allows staff to monitor watershed conditions including water levels and precipitation on the major channels of the Ausable River, Bayfield River and Parkhill Creek watersheds. In addition, the ABCA also has the ability to monitor ground water levels in some of the significant groundwater aquifers in the watershed.

Computerized monitoring systems in the field can transfer information by telephone line directly to the office in Exeter. Maintenance of the streamflow monitoring stations is shared by Conservation Authority staff and Environment Canada staff. Based on an agreement with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE), the ABCA is responsible for maintenance of groundwater monitoring stations (see Groundwater Studies).

With the exception of the spring freshet and ice breakup in early March, the year 2007 was a very quiet one for flood forecasting and warning. Leading up to the spring melt, nearly 75 millimetres of water-equivalent remained in the snowpack which, combined with rainfall and warm temperatures could have led to a significant runoff event.

Fortunately, the spring freshet was a snowmelt event, driven by warm temperatures. The absence of rainfall allowed runoff to occur at a controlled rate, minimizing flooding potential. Ice conditions and break-up were monitored throughout the freshet and presented minimal flooding problems in the perennial at-risk areas of Port Franks and Grand Bend. No ice jam related flooding occurred.

No other events were recorded throughout the remainder of the year, much of which remained extremely dry with Low Water Advisories in place across the watershed (see *Low Water Response*).

MONITORING WATER LEVELS AND STREAM FLOWS

Parkhill Stream Gauge Relocation

During the later part of the year a significant effort to relocate the Stream Gauge upstream of the Parkhill Reservoir was undertaken.

This gauge is important to flood forecasters in assessing streamflows entering into the reservoir and the potential requirements for flood control operations of the Parkhill Dam. Future plans to realign McGuffin Hills Drive and replace the existing bridge over Parkhill Creek (Mud Creek) required a relocation of the stream gauge to a point slightly downstream of the current station.



To prepare the site for inclusion into the stream gauge network, a control pool



was established within the creek to provide adequate depth for gauging levels. This pool was formed by extending and reinforcing the existing downstream riffle upstream by 10 metres and increasing the depth of the control pool by 30 centimetres.

The main structure and stream gauge shelter are now in place, and it is expected that the relocated stream gauge will be operation in the spring of 2008. Funding for this project came from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Stream Gauge Rehabilitation Program.



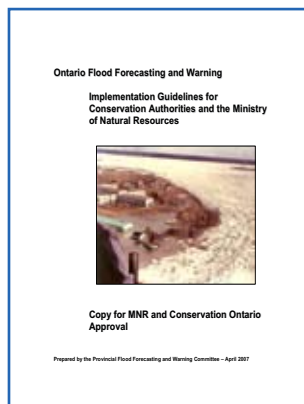
Above, Ausable River at Mount Carmel Drive during the spring melt in 2007.

Flood forecasting, warning guidelines presented to Council of Conservation Ontario for approval

In June 2007, Alec Scott, Water and Planning Manager of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, representing the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Committee, presented the 'Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Implementation Guidelines for Conservation Authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources' (April 2007) to Conservation Ontario Council for their endorsement.

The guidelines document was approved by the PFFW Committee.

This document clarifies roles and responsibilities which the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) delegated to Conservation Authorities in 1984, as well as establishing standards or guidelines for the delivery of an effective Flood Forecasting and Warning Program in Ontario, both from MNR and Conservation Authority perspectives.



MNR still maintains the overall provincial responsibilities as the lead Ministry in relation to flooding emergencies.

It is anticipated that the ABCA will begin to evaluate its Flood Forecasting and Warning Program in relation to the guidelines in 2008.

As part of its responsibility to promote planning for flood emergencies among its watershed municipalities,

the ABCA hosted a Flood Emergency Response Workshop in the spring of 2007. The workshop was well-attended by municipal, county and provincial agencies.

In addition to general discussion about emergency planning, the workshop included presentations by ABCA staff on roles and responsibilities in flood emergencies, current watershed conditions, the ABCA Flood Forecasting System and the results of a Flood Warning Communications Test exercise.

Water Response Team encourages conservation of resource

By Alec Scott, P. Eng., ABCA Water and Planning Manager

Low Water Response

During 2007, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority continued to be involved in the Ontario Low Water Response (OLWR) Plan which was created after extreme dry conditions were experienced in parts of the Province in 1999.

The OLWR Plan is used as a guiding document for how municipal and provincial agencies should react during periods of water shortages and defines levels of response to low water conditions:

Level I, where a 10 per cent voluntary reduction in water use is requested; Level II where a 20 per cent voluntary reduction in water use is requested; and Level III, where mandatory water use restrictions may be put in place.

Low water conditions cause concerns relating to lack of water for proper crop production, industrial and recreational uses and for domestic supply. A lack of water supplies also raises concerns for ecosystems, wetlands and fisheries.

The ABCA Low Water Response Team (WRT) was formed in September, 2001 and is made up of municipal and provincial agency representatives as well as representatives from the ABCA, Ontario Stone and Sand and Gravel Association, Golf Course Owners Association, Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, Thedford-Grand Bend Vegetable Growers, Huron County Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

Due to an extremely wet fall in 2006 and a close to normal spring runoff, the ABCA watersheds started the year with no Low Water Advisories. However, by July, higher than normal temperatures and spotty precipitation moved the Upper and Lower Ausable and Parkhill Creek Watersheds into a Level 1 Low Water condition. In August, these watersheds as well as the Bayfield River watershed moved into a Level 2 Low Water condition. Some indicators were representative of a Level 3 Low Water condition, and the WRT requested more information from industry sectors on the impacts



Levels of Response

♦ Level I

- Voluntary Reduction
10%

♦ Level II

- Voluntary Reduction
20%

♦ Level III

- Mandatory Water
Use Restrictions

MONITORING WATER LEVELS AND STREAM FLOWS

of the dry conditions.

Due to the fact that a number of other Southern Ontario watersheds were also experiencing conditions where Low Water Indicators were at a Level 3, the Ontario Ministry of Natural

Resources and Conservation Ontario initiated two (2) pilot projects to look at issues relating to the formal declaration of a Level 3 Low Water Advisory where mandatory water use restrictions would take effect.

Specifically, the pilot projects would look at what documentation is required to show that the social-economic impacts of a potential Level 3 Low Water condition warrant mandatory restrictions of water uses. Additionally, the pilot projects would clarify roles and

responsibilities of agencies in declaring and enforcing a Level 3 Low Water Advisory.

By December, monthly precipitation amounts had improved, resulting in a return to a Level 1 Low Water Advisory for all watersheds. This Level 1 condition would continue through the winter months.

The Ausable Bayfield Water Response Team held two meetings (May 15, 2007 and September 7, 2007) as well as six (6) e-conferences during the year.

As part of the Low Water Response program, a network of volunteer rain gauge readers was established within the watershed in 2005 with the majority of the volunteer readers using a web-based data entry system. The approximately 25 volunteers provide valuable information on the extent and amount of precipitation received in the watershed. This supplements the existing automated rain gauge network operated by the ABCA to support its water quantity programs.

In August, a volunteer rain gauge reader appreciation night was hosted by the ABCA.

There were a number of presentations by ABCA staff and some good discussion about the program and possible improvements.



Water and erosion control structures were inspected by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff in 2007.

ABCA staff maintain water, erosion control structures

By Alec Scott, P. Eng., ABCA Water and Planning Manager

Structures, Operation and Maintenance

As part of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority mandate and agreements with watershed municipalities, the ABCA inspected and performed maintenance on water and erosion control structures owned or constructed by the ABCA. These include Parkhill Dam, Morrison Dam, a number of flood control channels, and erosion control structures in various parts of the watershed.

Most of the inspections and actual maintenance work are carried out by Conservation Authority staff unless it is determined that it would be more efficient

to contract the work out to local companies.

As a result of the inspections, minor repairs were completed on a number of structures by Conservation Authority staff. Work included vegetation control around structures, repairs to gabion structures and general minor repairs to prevent larger maintenance problems in the future.

During 2003, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced The Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Funding program (WECI) to fund major maintenance work on Conservation Authority Flood and Erosion Control Projects. Under this program the ABCA can apply for 50 per cent grant funding for major maintenance projects.



The Armstrong West erosion control project was a significant undertaking and was completed in 2007.

Final work on Armstrong West erosion control completed

Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program (WECI) projects completed in 2007 included:

Armstrong West Erosion Control Project

The installation of seven (7) Bendway weirs to halt rapid erosion in the Armstrong West subdivision in Port Franks was substantially completed during late 2006. The project was considered to be major maintenance of the original 1949 Ausable River Cut project. The project was completed in 2007 with final restoration, installation of navigation buoys, and registration of maintenance easement agreements on appropriate properties.

Totten Sims Hubicki Associates were the consulting engineers on the project, and the construction was completed by B. F. Environmental Consultants Limited. The total estimated cost of the project is \$905,000.

WATER AND EROSION CONTROL

Port Franks Ice Management Project

This project involves maintenance dredging of the 1949 Ausable River Cut project to reduce ice jamming potential in the Port Franks area.

In 2007, a revised work plan was created for the soundings of the channel, environmental investigations and creation of a hydraulic model for the channel.

In 2008, this information will be used to make applications for the approvals required before any maintenance dredging can take place.

Gabion-basket retaining wall replaced at Parkhill Dam

Parkhill Dam

Major Maintenance

In 2007, two maintenance repairs relating to Parkhill Dam were completed using Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI)

funding.

A failing gabion basket retaining wall near the Parkhill Dam Inlet structure was replaced, and rock chutes that control erosion on the banks of the Cameron Gillies Diversion Channel were then repaired.

ABCA one of six Conservation Authorities in new geographic mapping portal, live in 2007

by Tracey Boitson, ABCA GIS/CAD Specialist

Geographic Information Systems, or GIS, supports programs and projects at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

GIS, as the name implies, has information that is linked to a spatial or geographic location. It is for the storage, display and analysis of geographic data. At the ABCA, GIS staff can be involved in creating databases, linking databases to a spatial layer, data manipulation (aggregation, changing file formats, etc), map creation, or more complex analysis involving queries, map algebra, or modeling.

Six Conservation Authorities were involved in the new online web mapping project, which got up and running in March of 2007. This project gave the public access to the ABCA data via a Web Mapping Portal (www.camaps.ca).

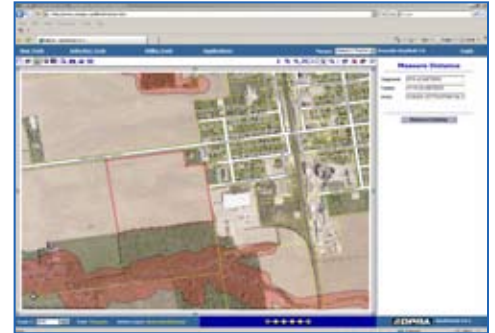
Data being displayed includes the 2006 colour photography for the watershed, ABCA-owned properties and the limits of the new Regulation 147/06. Tools are available that allow users the ability to identify and query data as well as take measurements, gather coordinates and print basic maps.

This is Phase 1 of a pilot project with five other Conservation Authorities and Conservation Ontario (CO). Statistics have been gathered and have shown the ABCA site has received more visits and "hits" than four of the other Conservation Authorities and that the site is well-used. Continued funding from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is allowing Phase 2 of the project to be developed which will allow for the addition of some Drinking Water Source Protection data for display and access by partner agencies via a login.

The current ABCA internal GIS access (GeoPortal) is available to staff within the ABCA administrative offices. Additional layers and information now include: access to all historical air photos; 2007 high resolution shoreline

GIS MAPPING REPORT

photography, ABCA-owned property information; watershed report card data on watershed layer; and additional Source Protection



layers with new symbology. Staff continue to use the GeoPortal daily and are able to get information about historical and current planning, regulation and stewardship files by selecting a location on the map.

Other activities/projects completed, supported, and ongoing in 2007 include:

- The completion of an information technology (IT) strategy that included a full inventory of all computer, backup, and network components as well as a funding strategy to ensure working systems for the future.

- Ongoing mapping support for special projects including the Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan, the North Gullies Subwatershed Plan, wetlands projects, and the Volunteer Rain Gauge Network.

- Continued updates of Generic Regulation Mapping and creation of a system to track and report changes to limits.

- Continued consultation and collaboration with other Conservation Authorities and Conservation Ontario to push forward the work of CAs, promote cost savings, and provide consistent information to municipalities and partners.

High-resolution imagery will help update shoreline erosion rates

As an extension of the 2006 South Western Ontario Orthophotography Project (SWOOP), high resolution colour imagery for the Lake Huron shoreline within the ABCA

jurisdiction was captured in the spring of 2007. In 2008, components of this product will be used to update estimated shoreline erosion rates along the shoreline.

ABCA has provided valuable information to many sources

By Geoffrey Cade, ABCA Supervisor of Water and Planning

As part of the land use planning process, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority is a lead agency providing natural hazard comments to landowners and municipalities.

The Conservation Authority assesses how a development proposal conforms with the provincial Natural Hazard policies, with the Conservation Authorities Act and with Conservation Authority policies.

As development takes place it is important that it be located safely away from such hazardous areas as floodplains or unstable slopes. Through such input the Authority helps prevent future risks to life and property, and protects the interests of our member municipalities and their residents.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority is also a key agency providing Natural Heritage advice to landowners and municipalities. As part of the planning process, it is vitally important that development take into account the need to protect natural areas and those areas which provide a source for clean ground and surface water.

In 2007, the ABCA provided formal comment to its member municipalities on 86 different planning applications.



Geoffrey Cade

WATER AND PLANNING

The Conservation Authority also responded to numerous requests for information from members of the public, from lawyers and from real estate agents. In 2007 the Authority provided written response to 98 inquiries from lawyers. These inquiries are very important in providing prospective purchasers of property, or people wishing to do work in high risk areas, a prior understanding of the natural hazard risks involved.

In 2007 the Authority updated its Policies & Procedures Manual for the administration of Ontario Regulation 147/06 (the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses) and for municipal plan input and review.

The new manual consolidated and updated existing policies in order to reflect the revisions to the Conservation Authorities Act and more specifically, the adoption in 2006 of Ontario Regulation 147/06. The new policy provides important direction to staff when considering a proposal to develop or build.

Continued improvements to the Conservation Authority's GIS Geoportal system have helped to make it an indispensable tool for Planning and Regulations staff. The Geoportal enables staff to quickly, efficiently and accurately respond to inquiries.

ABCA continues to work with partners on sinkhole study

A Sinkhole Implementation Strategy has been developed by the County of Huron, the Municipality of Huron East, and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority with input from various other interested groups.

The goal of this strategy is to both protect and enhance the quality of the water draining into sinkholes as we know that sinkholes provide a direct connection between surface and groundwater. This strategy is in its very early stages, however options under consideration include spills contingency planning, promoting uptake of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) and amending Official Plans and Zoning By-Law Policies where

SINKHOLE INVESTIGATION STUDY

practical.

It is expected that ABCA will continue working with their partners on this strategy through 2008.

Sinkholes are circular or elliptical closed depressions in the surface, usually formed by the dissolution of underlying soluble bedrock. These large depressions found in parts of this watershed allow surface water to enter the groundwater without some of the natural filtration that would normally occur. That is why it is so important to manage practices appropriately near these rapid pathways to our groundwater sources.

ABCA has been busy reviewing development proposals

By Andrew Bicknell, P. Eng., ABCA Regulations Coordinator

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (Ontario Regulation 147/06) is the legal mechanism under Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act which empowers the ABCA to regulate development within environmentally sensitive areas and hazard lands and activity within watercourses.

Lands which fall under the category of Natural Hazard include flood-susceptible areas, and relatively steep, unstable slopes (such as those along the Lake Huron shoreline) and wetlands. Development in these areas is regulated through the permitting process.

Conservation Authority Staff continue to work closely with the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Fish Habitat Management Group. The ABCA is often the first agency contacted when in-water work is proposed. The Conservation Authority reviews work proposals to ensure that watercourse alterations are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the DFO. The Fisheries Act prohibits the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat without prior authorization. Where there is a potential presence of SAR (Species at Risk), the Authority will refer the file to the DFO for review in regard to impact of the work proposal on SAR and their habitat.

In Spring of 2006, a new Generic Regulation (Ontario Regulation 147/06) came into effect and replaced the Conservation Authority's former Fill, Construction and Alteration to Waterways Regulation. With the new regulation, the area of Lake Huron shoreline falling under the Conservation Authority's jurisdiction has increased. It is apparent that the increase in regulated shoreline has contributed toward the increase in permit numbers in 2007. This trend will likely continue in 2008.

The year 2007 was a busy one in regard to the Conservation Authority's review of new development proposals. The Conservation Authority often provides an advisory service to member municipalities as the lead agency commenting in regard to Natural Hazard and Natural Heritage. The Conservation Authority is often responsible for the review of a stormwater

REGULATIONS

Statistics for 2007

- + 39 Minor Works Permits
- + 83 Applications for Permission
- + 60 Fish Habitat Reviews (including 41 municipal drain reviews)



IMAGE SOURCE:
Joseph R. Tomelleri

management plan associated with a new development proposal. In the absence of stormwater management, a newly developed property can be detrimental to the environment and surrounding lands, leaving the new development and existing surrounding properties at increased flood risk, for example. The guiding document which staff have used in the past in the review of new development plans has been the Authority's *Stormwater Management Policies and Technical Guidelines*, which were adopted in 1994. In 2007, the Authority commenced the development of an updated policy document.

The need for updated policy has been driven in part as a result of increased development pressure experienced within the watershed, and in consideration of the age of the existing guiding policy. A component of the process includes a review of what is happening province-wide in terms of developing trends in the area of stormwater management. The Conservation Authority has been soliciting input from watershed stakeholders, member municipalities, the Engineering community and other Conservation Authorities in regard to development of the policy update. It is anticipated the new policy could be available as early as Fall, 2008.

Considering the trend toward increased permit numbers, it is necessary to strive for improved program delivery and efficiency. The Conservation Authority's recent acquisition of a total station survey instrument will help to facilitate improved data acquisition in the field. There is often a need for Conservation Authority staff to carry out a detailed site survey. Topographical or elevation data may be required across a stream valley in order to facilitate the engineered estimation of a flood limit. At times there is a need to acquire elevation data to enable floodproofing of new building construction or in order to establish a safe setback distance for new construction from the top of a slope. These activities will be made easier in 2008 with the new survey instrument.



Andrew Bicknell, P. Eng., is the ABCA's Regulations Coordinator.

ABCA assists with monitoring our groundwater

By Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist

Many steps have been taken to protect the quality of drinking water, and particularly the groundwater resources in Ontario, since the Walkerton water tragedy in 2000.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority has partnered in a number of groundwater studies and initiatives since that time, including the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN).

In a partnership between Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE), a network of groundwater monitoring wells is now in operation across the province.

The PGMN initiative has led to the development of more than 400 monitoring wells since 2001.

The ABCA currently has 14 active wells throughout the watershed, five (5) bedrock wells and nine (9) wells drilled into the overburden. Hourly groundwater level data has been logged for over five years in some of the earliest wells. Telemetry at each well enables access to current water level information through a web-based component of the network.

Although we have noticed a slow rise in water levels in many regional aquifers since the inception of the program in 2002, it will still be several years before we can better understand long-term trends in groundwater level data.

In some cases, groundwater levels at the beginning of the year were the highest recorded in five (5) years of record; however, a drier than usual spring and summer increased the demand for water usage, and any gains in groundwater availability made in 2006 were lost.

Water Quality Sampling is another critical component of the PGMN. The ABCA has groundwater quality data available for each well from 2003 to 2007. To match the core requirements



Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist.



PGMN rain gauge installed in 2007.

GROUNDWATER MONITORING

province-wide, water quality is analyzed for nutrients, metals, general chemistry, and in addition, bacteria.

In December of 2006, the ABCA adopted the *Protocol for Actions*, whereby notices of exceedences of groundwater quality parameters will be sent, in writing, to the respective municipality and landowners.

Since that time, several exceedence notices have been issued, most of which were for Iron, Sodium (aesthetic drinking water objective) and Fluoride, which occurs naturally in elevated levels throughout much of Southwestern Ontario.

In 2004, the ABCA organized a working group of twelve Conservation Authorities. The Southwest PGMN Working Group (SWPGMN Working Group) provides both support and a forum for CA staff responsible for administering the Groundwater Network.

The ABCA has chaired and hosted the SWPGMN Working Group meetings since that time. Similar

working groups now exist in Northern, Central and Eastern Ontario. The working groups have played a major role in the advancement of the network.

Notable highlights of the program in 2007 included the introduction of tipping bucket rain gauges at four (4) selected sites. These gauges will provide precipitation data to the PGMN, but will also support Flood Forecasting and Warning and the Ontario Low Water Response Program. Further, with the current partnership agreements between the participating partners and the MOE set to expire, a draft partnership agreement was distributed to partners for comment, with a final version expected in 2008. This agreement shows long-term funding commitments from the MOE and their commitment to the success of the program.

Minister of Environment names Chair for ABMV region, Ontario's first Source Protection Committee is formed

By Cathie Brown, Project Manager

The year 2007 was a time of many significant milestones in the protection of municipal drinking water sources in the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley watersheds.

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region was created under regulations accompanying the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Ontario's first Source Protection Committee was formed in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.

The Ontario Minister of the Environment named Laurence (Larry) Brown, former administrator of the Municipality of South Huron, as Chair. Brown, a long-time Parkhill-area resident, is a registered professional engineer and a member of the Association of Municipal Administrators of Ontario.

There are 15 voting members on the new Source Protection Committee, representing one third municipal representation, one third economic-sector representation and one third other sectors (including public-at-large, property owner and environmental representation).

The members were chosen by the Source Protection Authorities after review of nominations through a publicly-advertised process.

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

Protection Committee (SPC) was the first of 19 committees being formed in the province to prepare plans to protect municipal drinking water sources.

The Source Protection Project was excited to see the creation of this new committee of concerned and capable citizens, working effectively together for clean water today and in the future.

Staff of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region were very busy in 2007 facilitating the work of the SPC and also doing the necessary preparation for local, multi-stakeholder working groups to be established in 2008.

We look forward to a productive year in 2008 and the creation of Terms of Reference work plans to guide the Assessment Report and Source Protection Plans.

More information is available on the DWSP project website: sourcewaterinfo.on.ca



Cathie Brown,
Project Manager.



The Source Protection project welcomed Mary Lynn MacDonald as consulting Group Facilitator for working groups in 2007.



Source Protection Committee

MUNICIPAL

Marilyn Miltenburg (North)
Ian Brebner (South)
Meredith Schneider (East)
Don Jones (West)

Jim Nelemans (Central)

ECONOMIC SECTOR

Keith Black (Agriculture)
Mike Strang (Agriculture)
Rowena Wallace (Agriculture)
Gib Dow (Commerce)
Al Hamilton (Industry)

OTHER SECTORS

Matt Pearson (Environment)
Bill Rowat (Environment)
Mike McElhone (Property Owners)
Gerry Rupke (Public-at-Large)
Karen Galbraith (Public-at-Large).
LIAISON MEMBERS (Non-voting)
Jim Ginn (Source Protection Authority)
Bob Bresette (Kettle and Stony Point First Nation)
Bob Worsell (Health)

Liaison Members to be Named:
Ontario Ministry of Environment
Walpole Island First Nation



A video crew shot footage of the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley watersheds for a television public service announcement promoting beneficial management practices by landowners.

Community action enhances watershed, monitoring

ABCA Healthy Watersheds Reports by Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Coordinator; Kari Killins, Aquatic Biologist; Hope Brock, Healthy Watersheds Technician; and Angela Baitz, Aquatic Resources Technician

Community Action

People have become increasingly aware of environmental issues and want to know what they can do to improve the environment.

Two key components of the Healthy Watersheds program at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority are to work with community groups and other natural resource agencies to collect information about and work together to improve local waterways.

Healthy Watersheds staff have been working with communities near Grand Bend, Zurich, Bayfield and Ailsa Craig on specific projects to improve local watercourses (*see following stories*).

In 2007, Healthy Watersheds staff have also had the opportunity to contribute this knowledge to a broader planning exercise.

Over the past 20 years, efforts to improve the Great Lakes have initiated Lakewide Management Plans for Lakes Ontario, Erie, Michigan and Superior.



Mari Veliz



Kari Killins

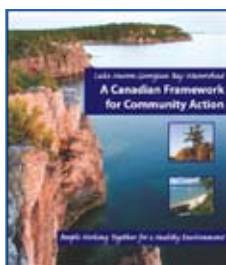


Hope Brock



Angela Baitz

HEALTHY WATERSHEDS REPORT



In Lake Huron, stakeholders, including the ABCA, have developed an approach that will inspire the community (residents, municipalities, business and industry) to become involved with protecting and enhancing Lake Huron. For more information about protecting and enhancing Lake Huron, please see:

lakehuroncommunityaction.ca

Landowners undertake 19 projects to protect water

by Hope Brock, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Technician

Zurich Drain Water Quality Enhancement Project

The Zurich Drain Water Quality Enhancement Project continues to take place in this 25 km² watershed. Since its commencement in the Spring of 2006, 39 out of a total of 60 landowners have been visited by local Citizen Ambassadors. Of these 39 landowners, 16 have had a stewardship visit to their property by ABCA staff.

The stewardship visit provides an opportunity for landowners to discuss voluntary projects that could be implemented on their land to improve water quality. As a result of these visits, 19 projects have been initiated or completed. Many of these landowners were able to take advantage of existing funding programs such as Environment Canada's EcoAction initiative. This federal funding program provides financial support to community groups for projects that have measurable, positive impacts on the environment. Landowners within the Zurich Drain watershed have submitted project proposals to EcoAction for two eavestrough

LAKESHORE COMMUNITY ACTION

projects, a tree planting project, a water well upgrade project and a wash water filtration project.

The above projects will help to protect water quality, habitat, and reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. If approved, EcoAction will fund 50 per cent of the cost of the projects. Remaining costs will be offset by applications to the Huron Clean Water Project, as well as partner donations from the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association (BSRA).

A recent evaluation of the project was undertaken with local landowners, and with resources provided, we hope to follow a similar process in other subwatersheds. Together we are making progress and helping to improve water quality within the Zurich Drain.

If you live in the Zurich area and are interested in improving water quality, please call Hope Brock at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority at 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.

Public initiates Central Huron Lakeshore Watersheds Plan

by Hope Brock, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Technician

The Ausable Bayfield Watershed Report Card 2007 highlighted the prime habitat features of the Lakeshore Watersheds of Central Huron (the area north of Bayfield, and to south of Goderich), and reiterated the sensitive nature of these watersheds that was recognized in the Watershed Management Plan (1995).

As such, this area was chosen to be one of three pilot projects for the *Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Watershed Framework for Community Action*, which is led by Environment Canada.

This project will see the development of a long-term watershed plan which will help to provide the framework from which management decisions can be made, and ensures the unique features of these watersheds remain protected for years to come.

A key component of this planning process is stakeholder involvement, and as a result a public

LAKESHORE COMMUNITY ACTION

information session was held in Bayfield on December 1, 2007.

With more than 50 people attending, we received some good feedback as to what people of this area want to see protected and what may need enhancement. Next steps in this process include characterizing the watersheds and meeting with an advisory committee, which will be made up of volunteer stakeholders.

It is anticipated that the community that lives north of Bayfield will have considerable opportunity to identify issues, concerns and solutions in 2008.

Please contact Hope Brock for more information about community efforts for Lake Huron Shoreline Watersheds at the ABCA at 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.

Community partners help protect vital wetlands all the way from Ailsa Craig to Arkona in Ausable Bayfield watersheds

by Angela Baitz, ABCA Aquatic Resources Technician

Development in Southern Ontario has meant many changes to the natural environment. Currently, only two per cent of the Ausable River landscape has wetlands.

Wetlands are areas that are seasonally or permanently wet with poor draining soils and hydric plants.

A key wetland function is water storage important for maintaining soil moisture during times of drought to enhance crop production and reducing downstream flooding. As well, wetlands improve water quality by filtering pollutants.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority is undertaking a wetland enhancement project with cooperation from the community. Representatives from the community such as interested landowners, Ausable Anglers, local municipal councillors and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) have become involved to assist with the wetland enhancement project.

The wetland committee meets periodically to guide

WETLANDS

the wetland enhancement process.

The process is comprised of a mapping exercise and a public outreach component. All landowners in the Ausable watershed between Ailsa Craig and Arkona received a letter to ask if they had wet areas that needed to be enhanced.

In response to this letter various projects are planned for 2008 including planting trees in small unproductive areas of land, creating ponds where water lies naturally in the landscape, planting stream-side vegetation, enhancing pond vegetation and enhancing oxbows to hold water longer.

Watch for an exciting Ontario Trillium Foundation announcement related to Ausable Wetlands in April 2008.

Contact Angela Baitz at the ABCA if you are interested in enhancing wetland areas on your property. Phone 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.

OAC management plan moves into implementation

by Kari Killins, ABCA Aquatic Biologist

Old Ausable Channel

Long-Term Management Plan

The Old Ausable Channel (OAC) is one of the most unique ecological features in southwestern Ontario. The OAC is the isolated portion of the Ausable River that we see in Pinery Provincial Park today.

This historic channel was cut off from the present Ausable River at the end of the 19th century as a result of human intervention. No longer part of a flowing river, the channel is characterized by clear water and dense aquatic vegetation. Due to its lack of flow, the old river channel will in time convert to a more pond-like ecosystem that may eventually become less aquatic and more terrestrial. The OAC has been identified as a significant ecosystem in the Ausable River Recovery Strategy, as it is home to three species at risk fishes, and the oak savanna forest on its shores is internationally significant.

In 2006, local Grand Bend residents and agencies embarked on a planning process to develop a long-term management plan for the OAC. A stakeholder steering committee was formed consisting of representatives from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, the Pinery Provincial Park, the Municipality of Lambton Shores, the Universities of Western Ontario and Waterloo, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and volunteers from the five main Grand Bend residential communities including; Southcott Pines, Pinedale, Beach O' Pines, Wee Lake and Huron Woods as well as representatives from the village of Port Franks.

This planning process carried over into 2007, with the community based stakeholder committee continuing to provide direction and guidance into the design of the management plan. The management plan was completed in early 2008 thanks to the assistance and dedication of this team.

At a March 2007 public meeting it was evident the residents would like more education and information provided on topics related to the OAC watershed and the natural environment. In response to that – a

AUSABLE RIVER RECOVERY STRATEGY

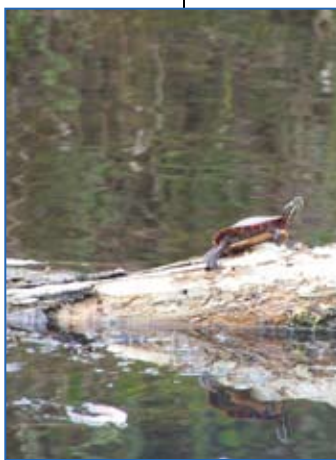
community lecture and workshop series was created and delivered. Speakers provided expertise on such topics as: reptiles of the OAC, birds of the OAC, water quality, native vegetation of the OAC and good stewardship practices for your property.

The long-term (10 to 20 years) management plan for the OAC was needed to best benefit the river's ecosystem and the surrounding community. The management plan provides a unified vision for management of this unique watershed across different stakeholder groups; identifies long-term directions and actions; identifies education, public information and recreation opportunities; provides guidelines for adjacent land use activities and promotes protection and conservation of significant species and habitat.

The plan development has allowed the local residents and agencies to work together to conserve and enhance a really special area in Ontario. The management plan has recommended agency management actions and individual resident actions to protect the integrity of this area. Broader co-management opportunities include enhancing the recreational and educational opportunities in the area. Many individual actions landowners can do on their own properties to benefit the OAC watershed were also identified as part of the plan, such as using native plants in your landscaping and keeping your septic in good repair.

The OAC management plan project continues into 2008, but enters a new action implementation phase now that the planning process has been completed.

The project has been generously funded in 2006, 2007 and 2008 by the Grand Bend Community Foundation, the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority with additional support from the local community and the Pinery Provincial Park.



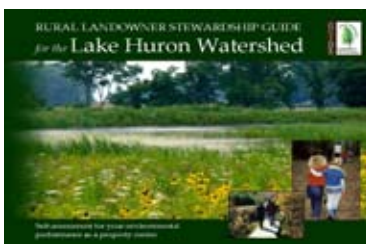
Rural landowners can make difference through new guide

by Hope Brock, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Technician

Take Individual Action

You may be more interested than ever in protecting the health of your local environment but you might also wonder "What can I do to help?"

Rural, non-farm residents now have an answer in a new publication and environmental property self-assessment program created to assist their efforts. *The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide for the Lake Huron Watershed*, created by a number of partners including the ABCA, was released in 2007 as an environmental self-assessment program for rural non-farm residents (i.e., people who own rural



properties but are not farmers).

The new initiative follows on the heels of the highly successful *Stewardship Guide for the Lake Huron Coastline*. Environmental self-assessments are now available for farmers, cottagers and the rural non-farm landowner with the release of

this inland counterpart. Ninety-two people attended six workshops in 2007.

Contact Hope Brock at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority for information about upcoming environmental action workshops. Phone 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.



Consulting hydrogeologist Brian Luinstra speaks to staff at the site of the surface water intake at Port Blake.

Water quality data collected in Source Protection Region

by Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Coordinator

Monitoring

The creation of the *Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Report Card 2007* has provided local communities with summarized forest and water quality conditions on a watershed basis.

Grading the watersheds helps highlight areas we need to protect and areas that we need to improve. Monitoring is ongoing at 20 stations within the ABCA jurisdiction.

In 2006 and 2007, water monitoring data collected over the previous 40 years was collected into a shared database created by the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA).

The data, including water quality data collected at the municipal intakes at Goderich and Port Blake, were analysed and summarized by Healthy Watersheds ABCA staff and staff at the MVCA as a part of the Watershed Characterization required for Drinking Water Source Protection.

Nutrient enrichment appears to be the greatest water quality impairment in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.

MONITORING

Nutrient enrichment is evident in rivers, the nearshore of Lake Huron and vulnerable overburdened aquifers. This enrichment reflects the rural and agricultural nature of the study areas. Indicators typical of urban water quality issues (chloride and copper) have low concentrations. Typical rural sources of nutrients include agricultural land use and urban or private wastewater treatment plants.

Lake Huron provides drinking water to the largest number of people of the three water systems (lake, river or groundwater). Generally, the raw water at the two intakes provides relatively good water to the drinking water facilities. However, from this initial investigation it seems that these intakes, especially Goderich, are under the influence of river contamination.

A better understanding of the plume dynamics and other nearshore factors are necessary to determine the magnitude of pulses of contaminants that could reach the intakes.

Presence or absence of species reflects watershed health

by Kari Killins, Aquatic Biologist

Monitoring for Species at Risk

The Ausable River, located on the northern fringe of the Carolinian Zone in southwestern Ontario, supports diverse and unique aquatic fauna.

The Ausable River is a nationally-significant watershed for the preservation of aquatic biodiversity within Canada. At least 26 species of freshwater mussels, 83 species of fishes, and 21 species of reptiles have been found here, making it one of the richest watersheds of its size in Canada.

Many are rare and 16 aquatic species have been designated by COSEWIC (Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada), including six mussels, seven fishes and three reptiles.

The Ausable River Recovery Team (ARRT) is made up of representatives from universities and provincial and federal agencies. The team came together in 2002 and have worked collectively to complete a lot of background work on the Ausable River Recovery Strategy (ARRS). This strategy is currently under review by the federal government, but is set to become one of the first Species At Risk Act compliant recovery strategies in Canada.

The ABCA partnered with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in Summer 2007 to conduct targeted surveys for threatened and endangered fishes of the Ausable River.

Among the species at risk (SAR) known from this watershed there are four (4) fishes listed as threatened (THR.) or endangered (END.) by COSEWIC which include the eastern sand darter, black redhorse, lake chubsucker and pugnose shiner.

This work was important to defining SAR fish species abundance and range. An aquatic habitat assessment of the riverine portions of the Ausable River completed in 2005 identified suitable habitats for the black redhorse and eastern sand darter. This data helped to define the study site locations within the Ausable River watershed for these two fishes.

A small, previously un-surveyed oxbow lake (L-Lake), located just south of Port Franks, with similar habitat to the Old Ausable Channel, was surveyed for

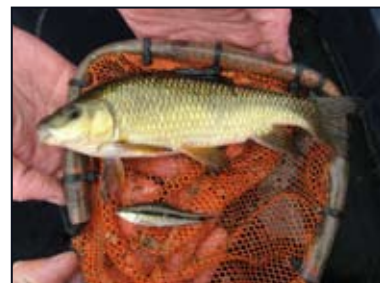
AUSABLE RIVER RECOVERY STRATEGY

distribution and abundance of pugnose shiner and lake chubsucker.

Black redhorse fish were found at three sites within the Ausable River, which included two sites within the Upper Ausable subwatershed and one site within the Little Ausable subwatershed. Eastern sand darters were not found in any of the targeted study sites. Lake chubsucker was found throughout L-Lake in a range of different age classes.

The pugnose shiner was not found at all in the target study locations at L-Lake. A previously unknown population of grass pickerel (a SAR listed as special concern by COSEWIC) was discovered as part of the L-Lake study.

Ongoing monitoring of SAR fishes abundance and distribution is critical for tracking responses of the fish community to our recovery efforts. The presence or absence of these species can tell us about watershed health. In the winter of 2007, the Ausable River Recovery Team received \$55,000 to provide landowners with grants to reduce nutrient and sediment loading. Nutrient and sediment loading are the greatest threats to aquatic species at risk. The funds were provided in part by the government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and were matched with private landowner contributions.



The lake chubsucker is a species at risk found in the Ausable River and in need of protection.



Seine netting is shown above as part of monitoring efforts.

Families leave local legacies with generous land donations

by Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship & Conservation Lands Supervisor

Conservation Land Management

In 2007, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority added three environmentally-significant properties to its land holdings, largely through donations from local residents.

A donation from the family of Reit and Fred Willert of Grand Bend, a bequest from the late Georgina Ross and the ABCA land acquisition reserve were used to purchase a 25-acre portion of the Hay Swamp Complex Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

Named the Willert-Ross Tract, the forested property at Part Lot 9, Concession 7, Hay East Ward of Bluewater, has ABCA land on three sides and was purchased from Bob and Carol Johnson.

Tony and Karen Puzaro donated a six-acre section of their Port Franks area property in Lambton Shores to the ABCA. The land abuts L-Lake Management Area and is the southern-most portion of the lake. It is part of the Port Franks Wetlands and Forested Dunes Life Science ANSI.

The Daynard family (Heather, Terry and Joan) donated the 12-acre wooded portion of the Daynard family farm. The property at Part Lot 15, Concession 8, Hibbert Ward of West Perth is part of the Staffa Kame Complex Earth Science ANSI. In all cases, the previous owners were excellent stewards and no work is required to restore ecological functions. The natural features of these properties will now be protected for future generations.

Although not owned by the ABCA, Joany's Woods in North Middlesex is now also protected. The Thames Talbot Land Trust purchased the 367-acre property in the Ausable River Valley from the estate of Thomas Doherty. The ABCA stewarded the property for several years for Mr. Doherty and will be a partner with a committee of local volunteers to continue to preserve this significant property at the north end of the Ausable Gorge.

The ABCA owns 319 acres of agricultural land



Kate Monk is Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor.

CONSERVATION LAND MANAGEMENT

acquired through the Parkhill Dam project in the 1960s. The land is rented through a tender process and in 2007, 50 per cent of the land was tendered for a five-year period (2007-2012). The rental income is used to offset the costs of property ownership. In 2007, the ABCA began a four-year project to improve drainage on the farms in cooperation with the tenants. Ten thousand dollars from the property management reserve were combined with \$14,000 from the tenants of three parcels. This will reduce compaction and erosion and allow the farmers to practice conservation

tillage.

The Ausable Bird Observatory operated a banding station at Thedford Conservation Area on the Ausable River Cut. The Port Franks Forested Dunes Complex Important Bird Area is a vital migration route for many birds along the southeastern shoreline of Lake Huron. Combined with a second banding station on the Old Ausable Channel in Pinery Provincial Park, 2,939 birds were banded in the spring season and 4,082 birds were banded in the autumn.



A ceremony was held on Saturday, May 26, 2007 to recognize the donation made by Reit and Fred Willert and family towards a forest and wetland preservation local legacy in Hay Swamp. Dave McClure, a director with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF); and Bill Linfield, Chair of the ABCF; and Linda Linfield; are shown with a sign commemorating the Willert-Ross Tract, sign held by Reit and Fred Willert. Beside them are Mark Willert; Linda Willert; Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA); Leanne Willert; Gary Willert; and Carrie Willert.

Funding partners enable conservation area improvements

by Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship & Conservation Lands Supervisor

Conservation area facilities were improved with financial contributions from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority member municipalities, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and other funding partners.

- A new maintenance building was constructed at Rock Glen Conservation Area near Arkona to replace the original garage.

- Education displays from the Discovery House museum in Sarnia were installed at the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre at Rock Glen Conservation Area.

- A boardwalk at Morrison Dam Conservation Area was replaced. The new structure is safe for the South Huron Trail Mobile which allows people with mobility difficulties to enjoy the trail.

- Culverts at a section of the MacNaughton Trail which often washed out were replaced with a low-flow mat. This project was funded with proceeds of the second annual Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament.

CONSERVATION AREA DEVELOPMENT



Scenic Rock Glen Conservation Area is the site of the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre.

- The Clinton Lions Club and the ABCA funded a new accessible privy at Clinton Conservation Area.



The tulip tree at the ABCA Doherty Tract in the Ausable George is believed to be one of the largest tulip trees in Canada.



Rock Glen Conservation Area Supervisor Dale Cable at the new maintenance building.



Morrison Dam Conservation Area (at left) and Clinton Conservation Area (above) offer scenic nature destinations.

Management Plan guides forestry operations on ABCA lands

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

ABCA Forest Management Plan

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Forest Management Plan was updated in 2007.

The plan is a guiding document for forest management planning and forestry operations on Conservation Authority-owned lands. A total of 3,327 hectares/ha (8,221 acres) of forest owned and managed by ABCA are subject to this managed forest plan.

The Managed Forest Plan document outlines forest management objectives and strategies for the 20-year term beginning on January 1, 2008 and includes a detailed 10-year operating plan for the period from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2017. The update replaces the original plan initiated on January 1, 1998. Ten-year updates are required in order to remain eligible for the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program.

Updates to forest compartment mapping using the 2006 aerial photography and recent stand inventory information for specific properties were used to develop the detailed 10-year operating plan. The operating plan will guide forestry activities for the coming decade including ongoing stand inventory and analysis, tending, commercial harvest and ecosystem restoration/management.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency placed all of Middlesex County under quarantine in the Fall of 2007 due to the confirmed presence of Emerald Ash Borer in the City of London.

Middlesex County joins Lambton County, which was quarantined in 2006, as two watershed counties now affected by the Emerald Ash Borer-related restrictions. Under the quarantine, firewood of any species can not be removed from quarantined counties. The quarantine also severely restricts the movement of ash logs, wood, rough lumber, and nursery stock.

The restrictions are to prevent the artificial transport of



*Ian Jean is
Forestry and
Land Stewardship
Specialist.*

FORESTRY

Emerald Ash Borer to places that are believed to be free of the invasive insect pest. Emerald Ash Borer is native to eastern Asia and is a highly destructive insect pest of ash trees where it is found in North America. The pest has killed millions of ash trees in affected areas and does not appear to have any natural population controls in Eastern North America.

While the quarantine will have a detrimental effect on the local forest industry, it is aimed to prevent a more widespread infestation that could have a devastating impact across the province.

Slowing the spread of the insect may provide time for native bacteria, viruses and predatory insects to adapt to this new insect invader and bring its population down to levels where it is not fatal to healthy ash trees. This will also buy time for researchers to assess biological and other control options.



WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS RECEIVING GRANTS THROUGH PROGRAMS DELIVERED BY ABCA

Municipality	Number of projects	Grants
Bluewater	20	\$24,737
Central Huron	7	\$8,939
Huron East	24	\$27,678
South Huron	10	\$12,511
Lucan Biddulph	6	\$9,746
Middlesex Centre	5	\$10,756
North Middlesex	16	\$32,157
Lambton Shores	1	\$7,570
Warwick	0	\$0
South Perth	0	\$0
West Perth	1	\$2,756
Total	90	\$136,842

Note: Totals do not include funding from Environmental Farm Plan Program.

Landowners improve water quality with government support

by Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship & Conservation Lands Supervisor

Federal, provincial and county governments and foundations financially helped citizens complete water quality improvement projects in 2007. In its third year, the Canada–Ontario Environmental Farm Plan Program and associated grant programs encouraged many farmers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs).

In many cases, these grants were combined with other funding. Given the difficult economic conditions in the swine and beef industries, high grants rates were the only way farmers could complete environmental projects.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority provided on-site technical assistance and accessed funding for 90 projects to protect and improve groundwater or surface water.

The ABCA thanks the following for contributing funding to stewardship projects in our watersheds:

- Clean Water Project
- Huron and Middlesex Counties;
- Canada–Ontario Agreement

PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

– Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Clinton District;

• Ausable River Recovery Strategy Implementation

– Environment Canada Habitat Stewardship Program;

• Afforestation & Biodiversity Project

– Ontario Power Generation;

• Trees Ontario Foundation.

Programs funded a variety of BMPs depending on specific program goals: clean water diversion, septic system upgrades, wellhead protection and decommissioning, watercourse livestock access restriction, erosion control measures, fragile land retirement, buffers and afforestation.

There were no municipally-funded programs in the Perth and Lambton county portions of the ABCA watershed in 2007.

Demand for ABCA tree planting grew in 2007

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

2007 Tree Planting Program

Available cost-share programs and heightened environmental awareness created interest and an increased demand for tree planting in 2007.

For the spring program, 61,200 trees were planted by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff at 50 sites on private and municipally-owned land. Most of these were new projects with some infilling of Ontario Power Generation Afforestation Program sites contributing to the overall total. The planting season began April 10th with some snow still on the ground and ended on May 28th.

Landowners were also busy planting trees throughout the watershed. A total of 170 landowners participated in the spring tree pick-up program, planting 24,900 trees.

In the fall the ABCA offers balled and burlap 2' evergreen stock (cedar, spruce and pine), mainly for windbreak planting. Although much smaller in scale than the spring planting program, the fall remains a good time to plant trees, especially larger stock that is not prone to frost heave.

ABCA staff planted six windbreak projects totalling 1,343 trees. Dry weather enabled the planting to be completed over a period of eight days. Landowners purchased and picked up an additional 708 trees for planting at sites throughout the watershed in the fall of 2007.

Despite the extremely dry weather, fall surveys showed good survival of planting sites that had been adequately prepared prior to planting and where competing vegetation was controlled throughout the summer months.

Forest Management on ABCA Lands

In 2007, forest inventory and silvicultural prescriptions were completed for Stephen Wildlife

TREE PLANTING PROGRAM REPORT

Management Area, hardwood stands at Roy Ratz Tract, lowland forest and swamp at Parkhill Conservation Area downstream of the dam and for conifer plantations at Coleman Tract and Hay Swamp Tract #5. Inventory work was completed by Conservation Authority staff in conjunction with Donald Craig, RPF for St. Clair Region Conservation Authority.

The prescription for Stephen Wildlife Management Area recommended an improvement cut using the single tree selection system. A total of 619 trees were marked for harvest on the back 60 acres of mature upland and lowland forest. Included in the total were 438 white and green ash which were targeted for removal because of the threat of Emerald Ash Borer.

Miller Wood Products, of Exeter, had the winning timber bid.

The harvest began in August and was completed by the middle of October. Extremely dry weather made for excellent ground conditions for the harvest operation, carried out by Steve Williams of Bayfield.



The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority purchases native, non-invasive tree species for planting projects. Talks to community groups also share information on how landowners can purchase native species for their projects.

Stewardson Dairy honoured as Conservationists of Year

The Conservationist of the Year Award winner, named in 2007, is a modern dairy farm in the former Bosanquet Township in the Municipality of Lambton Shores.

Stewardson Dairy, of RR 3 Thedford, received the award at the annual dinner hosted by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors on March 15.

ABCA Board Chair Bill Weber said the Stewardsons are agricultural and conservation leaders who have practiced water and soil conservation, windbreak tree planting and preservation of water quality on their farm.

"The Stewardsons are implementing the kinds of beneficial management practices which benefit local watersheds," he said.

The Stewardson farm operation constructed a new dairy barn with enough storage to allow them to apply manure at environmentally-optimal times, decommissioned an earthen lagoon to ensure it could not contaminate surrounding field tiles and have protected water quality by not applying nutrients near streams.

The owners of this family farm also practiced water conservation by constructing a milkhouse washwater recycling system in the new barn. This saves and recycles 400 gallons of liquid per day and reduces the amount of liquid applied to the fields by 150,000 gallons per year.

They have completed an Environmental Farm Plan and are now completing their third Nutrient Management Plan. Their soil conservation efforts include the use of no-till equipment, maintaining a healthy percentage of their fields in alfalfa and planting windbreaks.

The ABCA presented the Stewardson family with a Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Edition print, called *Resting Time – Brant Geese*, with a conservation stamp by Pierre Leduc, and will fund the planting of a tree at a Commemorative woods site of their choice.

The ABCA presents the Conservationist



Bill Weber, Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors, presents a framed print to Brenda and Jeff Stewardson, owners and operators of Stewardson Dairy, of RR 3 Thedford, in Lambton Shores, and their son Dan, 12, on Thursday, March 15 at the annual awards dinner. Not shown in the photo are their daughter Nicole, 17, and son, Dylan, 15.

of the Year award annually to those who have completed watershed conservation activities such as improving local water quality, conservation farming, reforestation, environmental education, providing wildlife and fish habitat and promoting environmental ethics and awareness.

Conservationists of the Year are people and groups who take awareness and turn it into action. They demonstrate strong conservation ethics by initiating projects to protect unique environmental features in their community, promote stewardship of our resources and volunteer in support of conservation-related projects.

The award began in 1984. Past winners include the Middlesex Environmental Community Opportunity (ECO) Crew Program of the Boys' and Girls' Club of London; Paul and Vic Hodgins, Shadyside Farms, of Lucan Biddulph; Ray Letheren, Friends of the Bayfield River; Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Lambton Shores; Andy deBoer; Stephanie Donaldson; Everet and Joan Van Sligtenhorst; John MacPherson; Straw Family; David McClure; and the late George Cantrick, among others.

Watershed success only possible with partner support

Protecting life and property and building resilient watersheds and environmental conscience can only happen with many partners.

There is always a risk in listing the partners who make the work of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority possible. It is almost a certainty we will miss some important groups that support our work – if that is the case, please let us know so we can include you in next year's report. This list will be posted to our website at abca.on.ca and updated. Despite the pitfalls of such recognition, we will attempt to do our best not only in order to recognize the organizations, businesses and individuals who make such worthwhile work happen but to demonstrate how our work is only possible with the support of our many partners.

Federal Government

- Government of Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
- Environment Canada, EcoAction
- Habitat Stewardship Program
- Greencover Canada (GC), a program of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative
- Other ministries

Provincial Government

- Greencover Canada (GC), a program of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)
- Pinery Provincial Park
- Other ministries, programs

County Governments

- Huron
- Lambton
- Middlesex

PARTNERS' PAGE

- Perth
- Other counties (including Bruce and Wellington through Source Protection Planning), and planners

Municipal Governments

ABCA Member Municipalities:

- Adelaide Metcalfe
- Bluewater
- Central Huron
- Huron East
- Lambton Shores
- Lucan Biddulph
- Middlesex Centre
- North Middlesex
- Perth South
- South Huron
- Warwick
- West Perth
- Other municipalities

Foundations

- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation
- Grand Bend Community Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Trees Ontario Foundation
- Other foundations
- Thames Talbot Land Trust

Service Organizations

- Arkona Lions Club
- Clinton Lions Club
- Exeter Lions Club
- Probus Club
- Rotary Club of Grand Bend
- Sylvan
- Many other service organizations

Volunteer Committees

- Ausable River Recovery Team
- Conservation Dinner Committee
- Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament
- The Old Ausable River Channel Long-Term Management Plan Steering Committee
- South Huron Trail Run Committee
- SWPGMN Working Group
- Water Response Team

Volunteer Community Groups

- Bayfield Ratepayers' Association

- Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association
- Friends of the Bayfield River
- Friends of Old Ausable Channel
- Friends of Pinery Provincial Park
- Friends of the South Huron Trail
- Lake Smith Conservationists
- Lambton Wildlife Inc.
- The Nairn Creek Project
- North Gullies community group
- Ausable Anglers
- Pineridge Snowmobile Club
- Ausable River Riders
- Huron Fish & Game Club
- Sarnia Lambton Environmental Alliance
- Huron Fringe Field Naturalists
- McIlwraith Field Naturalists
- Stratford Field Naturalists
- Huron Tourism Association
- Many other community groups

Agricultural Organizations

- AGCare
- Commodity Groups
- General Farm Organizations
- Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition
- Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
- Many others

Stewardship Councils and Networks

- Huron Stewardship Council
- Middlesex Stewardship Cte.
- Perth Stewardship Network
- Lambton Stewardship Network
- Many others

Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations

- Ausable Bird Observatory
- Carolinian Canada
- Ducks Unlimited
- Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation
- Conservation Ontario
- Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Ontario Nature
- Ontario Rural Council

Education

- Watershed Schools
- University of Guelph

- University of Waterloo
- Many other educational institutions

Businesses

- Donors
- Engineers and Lawyers
- Consultants
- Commemorative Woods funeral homes
- Private nurseries
- Printers, web and graphic designers and other suppliers
- Ontario Power Generation
- Many other businesses too numerous to mention here

Media

- Broadcast media
- Farm media
- Print media

Individuals

- It's not possible to list all the individuals who partner with the ABCA – they range from staff of other organizations to teachers to students to volunteers, to peer reviewers to landowners, donors and other volunteers. Although you may not see your name in lights' here please know your contributions are indispensable.

Volunteers

- Landowners
- Donors
- Patrons
- South Huron Trail Mobile drivers
- Committee and working group members
- Others

To those whom we have inadvertently missed we apologize – and extend our thanks. Let us know at info@abca.on.ca if you have been omitted and we will to correct our error in next year's annual report and on our web-based list). Partnership is sometimes one of those 'buzzwords' that gets bandied about until much of its meaning is lost. However, when the ABCA talks about partnerships it is because we truly cannot accomplish our important conservation goals without your partnership with us. Thank you.

... and to all our other partners who are not on this list but whose support is appreciated ...

New program helps landowners take positive early actions

By Tim Cumming, ABMV Source Protection Region Communications Specialist

A new, voluntary program to protect drinking water was launched in 2007 in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is establishing the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund, a program to help landowners take action to reduce threats to local municipal drinking water sources, in 2008 as part of its commitment to safe drinking water and in conjunction with the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

The new Source Protection (Stewardship) Program (SPS) is a local transitional program which will pave the way for the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund in the coming years. It is a companion program to the Source Protection Planning initiative currently underway in the area.

The Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities implemented the program within the two watersheds. Dallas Campbell was hired as Outreach Specialist and Chris Van Esbroeck was hired as Education Specialist. They have worked with landowners living closest to municipal drinking water supplies. They have provided information about Drinking Water Source Protection and to assist them with undertaking early-action beneficial management practice (BMP) projects that will help to protect their community's groundwater or surface water supplies.

SPS efforts will focus on farm, small and medium businesses, and property owners in two key geographical areas; those located within a 100 metre radius of a municipal wellhead.

Chris encourages property owners to ask themselves a series of questions:

Do you have chemicals such as paints, gasoline or pesticides on your property?

Are they properly stored?

Do you dispose of these chemicals at your local hazardous waste facility?

Do you wash your car at home where chemical runoff can make its way into drinking water sources? Or, do you wash your car at a designated car wash station?

Do you use environmentally friendly pesticides on your lawn? Do you clean up after your pets?

"These are some of the ways you can make a



Bill Rowat, a member of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee, finds out about early-actions stewardship funding available for landowners who live close to municipal wells or intakes from education specialist Chris Van Esbroeck and outreach specialist Dallas Campbell.

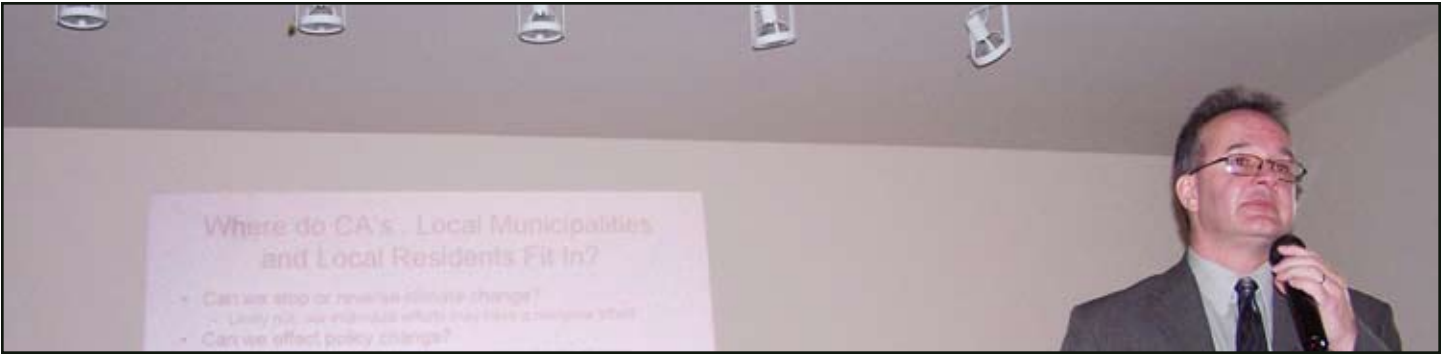
DRINKING WATER STEWARDSHIP FUND – EDUCATION AND OUTREACH, EARLY ACTIONS (THE SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM)



significant impact on protecting drinking water quality," according to Van Esbroeck.

Other projects may require more significant efforts. In these cases there may be grants available to assist landowners to implement beneficial management practices. Funding is available for well decommissioning and upgrading, septic system inspections and upgrades, and runoff and erosion projects. The grant rates for these projects vary. In some cases funding for projects and can be topped up by other programs such as the Huron Clean Water Project and the cost-share programs associated with the Environmental Farm Plan.

Another funding opportunity is available to small and medium sized businesses for Pollution Prevention Reviews. These fully-funded assessments will give business owners a better understanding of how they can improve the way they handle, store or dispose of materials that may pose a risk to drinking water sources.



Dwight Boyd, Senior Water Resources Engineer with the Grand River Conservation Authority, took the time to visit the Ausable Bayfield watershed to speak on perhaps the pressing issue of our times: Climate Change.

Building watershed resiliency key, speaker tells ABCA

Building on existing Conservation Authority programs one of best ways to adapt to change

Climate change would have profound effects even if all harmful practices were stopped today, according to a speaker at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority annual awards dinner on March 15, 2007. That's why it's vital to prepare for change by using existing programs to make watersheds more resilient, said keynote speaker Dwight Boyd, Senior Water Resources Engineer with the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Climate change impacts may be disheartening but Boyd offered positive ways local people and organizations can better prepare the local landscape for projected change.

"We can respond to climate change," Boyd told a crowd of 60 people at Ironwood Golf Club, across from Morrison Dam Conservation Area, near Exeter. "Working together and focusing our collective efforts, with local landowners, agencies, partners and volunteers, we can make watersheds and the local landscape more resilient."

Our local actions may provide minimal immediate impact to slow down climate change, Boyd said, and most policy changes to limit climate change have to come at the international, national and provincial levels. However, local landowners, municipalities and Conservation Authorities can help mitigate against some of the expected consequences of climate change. "Tried-and-true conservation practices give us something we can rally around, something on which we can build programs," he said.

Climate change impacts may include warmer climate

CLIMATE CHANGE

and overnight temperatures, more extreme events, severe rainfall events, ice storms, rapid melts, more frequent and prolonged droughts, shifts of storms into spring and fall seasons and possibly more snow in some areas (in close proximity to the Great Lakes) or less in others.

Potential consequences of climate change include increased flooding, bank erosion and soil erosion, lower water tables, less baseflow, reduced fisheries, wetland and marsh habitat, degraded water quality, poorer air quality and changed vegetation and agricultural crops.

Landowners can use existing government and Conservation Authority programs to create riparian buffer strips and use minimum tillage practices, Boyd said. By using existing programs they can create a green filter, make watercourses more resilient to erosion, promote self-healing after a weather event, improve soil structure and help reduce soil erosion, particularly from severe weather events. This helps keep soil on the landscape and out of watercourses, he said.

Other strategies to adapt to climate change include wetlands enhancement and restoration, reforestation, implementing good risk management policies, floodplain management, subwatershed planning and storm water management.

Boyd is a member of the Ontario Climate Change Advisory Committee. He pointed out the irony that he is an engineer but that many of the successful means to adapt to climate change will come from non-engineered solutions such as buffer strips.

Public of Old Ausable Channel area move project forward

Moving from planning to implementation phase

Landowners can protect rare aquatic species, prevent the spread of non-native plant species and enhance water quality in the Old Ausable Channel (OAC) by modifying landscaping practices on their property, 50 interested residents of the Grand Bend area were told at a public meeting on Saturday, March 24, 2007.

Five speakers at the Grand Bend Royal Canadian Legion hall shared ways property owners can reduce or eliminate pesticides, plant native grasses and plants, have septic systems inspected and otherwise protect the unique ecosystem of the Old Ausable River Channel.

The speakers included Kari Killins, Aquatic Biologist with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA); Mari Veliz, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Coordinator; Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist; Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan Steering Committee Co-Chair Tom Purdy and Ray Letheren, of Friends of the Bayfield River.

Local property owners have identified water quality and education as the two top priorities for plans to protect the channel, Killins said.

Killins updated the crowd on the progress of the OAC Long-Term Management Plan including the development of a technical research literature review and compilation of existing data and research, a clean-up day, workshops and education outreach materials, and creation of a steering committee that has met five times and is continuing to meet.

Gaps in knowledge about water quality along the channel were identified as part of the planning process and water quality monitoring has been introduced at two sites to fill in some of the information gaps, she said.

Jean said residents have an important role in preventing the spread of invasive non-native

OLD AUSABLE RIVER CHANNEL

plants and the transportation of insect pests through the relocation of firewood.

"One important thing we can do is not moving firewood around," he said.

Residents are encouraged to keep buffers in their yard, have septic systems inspected, plant native species around woodlots and find alternatives to lawn chemicals.

Jean said landowners should work with suppliers who can ensure nursery plants originate from the seeds of native species. Gardeners who want to introduce plants with bright colours should consider wild geraniums and wild violets and not non-native species that could crowd out existing plants and threaten ecosystem diversity.

It takes "hard work and perseverance" to eradicate invasive species, said Jean, and "it's much easier to prevent their introduction in the first place than to remove them after they're established."

Letheren said dozens of pesticides can be detected in groundwater sources and residents can reduce potentially harmful chemicals by replacing conventional lawns with alternative grasses or native plants. "It will make your channel a better place for fish species and for people," he said.

Volunteer Tom Purdy gave the crowd a challenge, saying "if we do our jobs right our grandchildren will be able to (enjoy the wildlife we enjoy today)."

The meeting was followed by a Lake Huron Coastline Stewardship Guide workshop.

Volunteer Barb Ferris was thanked for her volunteer efforts developing and maintaining the visually-attractive and content-rich Old Ausable Channel website.

For more information on efforts to protect the Old Ausable Channel visit oldausablechannel.ca or abca.on.ca or phone 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.

ABCA employee graduates as Young Conservation Professional

Edited remarks by Tom Prout, representing Conservation Managers at Latornell Symposium

Hope for the Future

General Manager and Secretary Treasurer of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Tom Prout was selected to present remarks of congratulations, on behalf of environmental managers, to graduates of the 2007 Young Conservation Professionals (YCP) program on Friday, Nov. 16 in Alliston at the 14th Annual A. D. Latornell Conservation Symposium. ABCA Aquatic Biologist Kari Killins was a graduate of the 2007 YCP program. The following are excerpts from the remarks made by Tom:

I am very pleased to be here and to be a part of today's recognition of young professionals in the field of conservation. These individuals have a passion for making a difference in our environment.

As a young person starting a career I had the pleasure and privilege of knowing Art Latornell. Art was a mentor for me, not the only mentor but a very important one. Over the years I got to know Art well, I developed a deep appreciation for his interest in not just helping young people, but letting young people develop their knowledge and professional careers. To the organizers and supporters of the Young Conservation Professionals (YCP) program, and to the past, present and future participants – the Young Conservation Professionals – I want you to know that Art would be pleased.

I would like everyone here to take a look at the A.D. Latornell logo which you can find around the room – if you are not familiar with the symbolism on the left side of the tree trunk are our Young Conservationists, symbolized by youth, and on the right is a mentor. We know who the YCP are and I challenge the managers in the room to take up the role of the mentor.

To the managers in the room, I want you to think about the young staff in your organization who want a challenge and who want to stretch their comfort zone. These individuals would make perfect candidates for the YCP Program. You can let these individuals develop their career interests and open doors for them by sponsoring them as a YCP. At the same time you will also be helping your organization grow and maintain a high level of quality staff.

As managers you need to develop a workplace



Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff member Kari Killins (front, second from left) was one of the graduates of the Young Conservation Professionals program, honoured at the A. D. Latornell Symposium. Conservationist Justin Trudeau (back, far left) spoke at the event.

environment in which employees trust their supervisors and feel that they contribute to worthwhile goals of the organization. Your work place needs to accommodate mistakes, as mistakes are made by all of us, and mistakes help us learn.



Tom Prout, ABCA General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, represented environmental managers in 2007 when he congratulated graduates of the Young Conservation Professionals program at the A. D. Latornell Symposium.

I have the honour of representing the managers in the room and extending to the 2007 YCP graduates our collective congratulations. Congratulations for a job well done, for taking the initiative to be a YCP, for your interest in making our world a better place to live and for your role as leaders in conservation.

Congratulations on being a great example of teamwork. You have combined your talents for a common goal and today you share the rewards of a job well done.

ABCA IN THE NEWS



The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, jointly with partners, organized a tree planting workshop called *Planting Trees in a Climate of Change* in 2007. Winter snowstorms forced two cancellations, and speakers and nursery donors were forced to stay the night, but eventually the event was held and about 70 people attended. The workshop was a chance for landowners to learn about how they can maximize their chances of success when planting and the ways tree planting can help prepare properties for resiliency in face of the projected impacts of climate change. Clockwise from bottom left, speakers included Lois Sinclair (OSCIA); Steve Bowers (Huron Stewardship Council); Ron Thayer and Ken Maronets (Perth Stewardship Network).

ABCA shows landowners how they can adapt to change

'Tree Planting in a Climate of Change'

Two different winter storms forced the cancellation of the 'Tree Planting in a Climate of Change' workshop in Exeter but the 'third time was the charm' as sunny skies shone on Monday, March 26, 2007 and 70 people attended the event at the Masonic Hall in Exeter.

"I was very encouraged by the enthusiasm of the participants and thank them for coming out," said Ian Jean, Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

Speakers at the event included Jean; Brian Swaile, Trees Ontario Foundation; Ron Thayer, Forestry Consultant; Steve Bowers, Coordinator of the Huron Stewardship Council; Ken Maronets, Coordinator of the Perth Stewardship Network; and Lois Sinclair, Huron County representative with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA).

The speakers shared information and answered questions about planting buffer strips along watercourses, planting to increase the size of forests and planting windbreaks along field edges. Landowners learned about funding programs to help

TREE PLANTING WORKSHOP

cover the cost of their planting project and about the importance of site preparation to maximize the chances for success. They also learned proper care and handling of stock and selection of native species most suited to their individual site.

The Huron Stewardship Council and the Perth Stewardship Network joined with the ABCA to host the workshop. Six private nurseries provided door prizes which were appreciated by those who attended.

The information session was funded in part through Greencover Canada (GC), a program of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative. The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association administers Greencover Canada on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

For more information on tree planting programs please phone Ian Jean at the ABCA at 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610 or e-mail ijean@abca.on.ca

Jim Ginn named new Chair of Water Response Team

Conserving water resource
Central Huron farmer and municipal councillor Jim Ginn was named Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Water Response Team (WRT) in 2007.

"This team has an important role to play making people aware of low-water conditions and the way individuals and organizations can preserve the water supply upon which we rely," said Ginn.

Conservation of water resources is a good idea at any time but local people, businesses and municipalities were asked to pay special attention to low-water advisories during the dry summer of 2007.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority added a dynamic new low-water advisory alert tool on its website in 2007 at abca.on.ca

Three levels of low-water advisories can be issued: Level 1; Level 2 and Level 3. Level 1 involves a request for a 10 per cent voluntary reduction in water use, Level 2 calls for an additional 10 per cent voluntary reduction in use (for a total of 20 per cent) and Level 3 may involve mandatory water use restrictions.

The Water Response Team was formed on a watershed basis to develop actions suited to local needs regarding current low-water conditions. The team uses a combination of water data, provincial and local legislation, communication techniques and local tools to advocate for water conservation.

Voting members on the local WRT include representatives from municipalities, aggregate producers, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, golf course owners, vegetable growers and food processors and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Non-voting members include representatives from Ontario Ministries of Environment; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and Natural Resources. Staff from the ABCA provide technical support for the program using information from the existing precipitation, water level and groundwater monitoring networks.

In cases of extreme drought, the WRT ensures that key local and provincial decision-makers



WRT Chair
 Jim Ginn.

LOW WATER RESPONSE

participate actively in the process to see that water allocation decisions are understood, supported and enforced.

The Ausable Bayfield Water Response Team was originally formed in 2001. The WRT formation was made possible by the Ontario Low Water Response Plan, which was created following extremely dry weather in 1999. The plan is intended to ensure provincial preparedness, to assist in coordination and to support local response in the event of a drought.

The Ausable Bayfield Water Response Team reviews watershed conditions on a monthly basis. It is possible that a low-water advisory could be in effect at a time when the ground is wet and rivers appear to be flowing above normal. However, the WRT still feels that Low Water indicators need to be looked at based on no shorter than monthly information.

"A good example of why this approach is needed can be seen with a heavy rainfall occurring in a very dry period," Scott said. "For a couple of days, the ground may be wet and stream flows elevated, but then everything dries up and we return to the original conditions. For reporting low water conditions, we don't want to be jumping in and out of advisories on a daily or weekly basis."

This approach is supported by the indicators that are used to determine watershed conditions – monthly precipitation, three-month precipitation and monthly flows.

For a factsheet with water conservation tips visit mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/p774.html; ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3780-e.pdf; ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3781-e.pdf; www.gov.on.ca/omafra.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff will continue to monitor rainfall and streamflow data and keep the public informed of any changes in watershed conditions.

Television crew visits Rock Glen Conservation Area

By Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist

Chinese-Canadian crew prepares news feature on falls, museum

A television crew from Fairchild Television visited Rock Glen Falls at Rock Glen Conservation Area near Arkona on May 4, 2007.

The Fairchild Media Group prepared a feature news item on the area, including the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre and its globally significant collection of fossils and indigenous artifacts.



The news team interviewed Arkona businessperson and secretary of the Arkona and Area Business Association, Judy McLellan, and Julie Hicks, Conservation Education Specialist with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

Inside the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre, McLellan answered questions about the collection of fossils and indigenous artifacts there that draws geologists from around the world. Interviewing her was Arlene Tang, script supervisor with Fairchild Television. Camera operator Obi Lo videotaped the interview with the help of assistant Amy Leung.

McLellan recalled the collection of fossils donated by Ted Baxter and applauded the work of the Arkona Lions Club. She also mentioned the accessible trails, and the important balance of conservation of the significant site with enjoyment of this worldwide attraction. Visitors come to the museum and Rock Glen Falls from the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and from many other locations around the Globe.

The Fairchild Television feature news item was prepared in Cantonese and Mandarin, and it was expected to be broadcast in Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver and perhaps even in Hong Kong.



Camera operator Obi Lo aims his lens up, way up, towards the top of majestic Rock Glen Falls at Rock Glen CA near Arkona.

Rural landowners protect water quality through projects

A Diverse Watershed

Farmers and rural landowners in Ausable River and Parkhill Creek watersheds are improving water quality and protecting wildlife habitat through voluntary projects on their properties.

Stewardship projects to improve water quality have been identified in the Ausable River Recovery Strategy for species at risk. We need to protect this highly diverse aquatic community that has historically supported more than 83 fish species, 24 species of freshwater mussels and more than 21 reptile species.

This variety of aquatic life makes the Ausable River one of the richest watersheds of its size in Canada. Several of the species found in the Ausable River have been listed as special concern, threatened or endangered at the provincial, national and/or global levels. Protecting and improving the river will help the long-term survival of aquatic species – especially those at risk – and help watershed residents use and enjoy the river.

Freshwater mussels are disappearing across North America. The fact we have them in the Ausable River Watershed reflects the positive stewardship actions taken by landowners. That's one of many reasons it's so important stewardship efforts continue and increase.

These programs to support your watershed stewardship efforts are coordinated by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority in partnership with the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and the Ausable River Canada–Ontario Agreement for Lake Huron.

Grants may cover up to 100 per cent of direct costs incurred by landowners. The following stewardship projects may be eligible for funding, sometimes up to 100 per cent:

- Fences, crossings and watering devices to eliminate cattle access to watercourses.
- Planting trees, shrubs and grasses in floodplains and valley lands.
- Planting trees, shrubs and grasses to establish buffer strips along watercourses.

A Record of Success

There have been 78 on-the-ground stewardship projects funded in Ausable River and Parkhill Creek watersheds since 2003, through the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, improving 5,450 hectares of land. This includes 44 tree planting projects, 14 livestock fencing projects and 20 manure or conservation tillage equipment modifications.

One of the many watershed stewards in this area is Bill Thirlwall, of the Denfield area. Bill and his wife Sylvia farm

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Middlesex Stewardship Committee member Bill Thirlwall has been planting trees for 25 years. He is one of many landowners doing protective projects.

together and own Bonnie Brook Farm. The land was settled by Bill's great grandfather and the family homestead was built in 1839.

"I plant trees every year," Bill said. In 2006, Bill retired and reforested 15 acres of sheep pasture situated in the floodplain and valleylands of Lenders Creek, part of the Nairn subwatershed of the Ausable River.

The ABCA planted more than 8,000 tree seedlings to naturalize the site. Half a kilometre of watercourse is now protected by a treed buffer on both sides, with buffer width ranging from 40 metres to 100 metres. This project, combined with earlier projects on adjoining properties, completed the buffering of both sides of Lenders Creek between McEwen Drive and Greystead Drive in Lobo Township.

The project received funding from the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, the Ausable River Canada–Ontario Agreement (COA) for Lake Huron; and Ontario Power Generation.

Bill, who is a member of the Middlesex Stewardship Committee, contributed considerable time and effort to prepare the site and continues to do work related to ongoing site maintenance. "Continuing to plant trees is really important, I think," Bill said. He has praise for the funding programs available to help landowners initiate new stewardship projects. "It's really been a help," he said. "They're a wonderful thing."

You can make a difference

The Ausable River Recovery Strategy has identified 20 different categories of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) you can consider to help protect and improve habitat for aquatic species at risk.

You can leave local legacy through many different ways

Have you thought of making a donation to a local environmental project that will benefit generations to come? "It can be a small donation, or a big donation, it's all important," said Judith Parker, Secretary of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation.

Canada's tax incentives for charitable donations are designed to make it easier for you to support your local environmental project. It may be helpful to find out the advantages of some forms of donations, according to local financial advisors.

As a result of the 2006 federal budget, there are increased tax benefits of donating securities and mutual funds to charity. When you're doing your tax and estate planning it's helpful to know how to maximize the positive benefits of your donation. For financial information related to donations contact your local financial advisor.

For information on how you can 'leave a local legacy' contact the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority at 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610 or e-mail info@abca.on.ca

Families create lasting local legacy through donations

Willert-Ross Tract established
Two area families left a local legacy in 2007 through generous donations to preserve a forested property in the ecologically-important Hay Swamp. A donation from the family of Reit and Fred Willert, of Grand Bend, and a bequest from the late Georgina Catherine Ross, made the preservation of the significant site possible. "Without their contributions we wouldn't have been able to protect this important local wetland," said Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

The 25-acre parcel of property (Lot 9, Concession 7 of the former Hay Township) was purchased on March 30, 2007 and will now be known as the Willert-Ross Tract. Members of the Willert family were present for a short ceremony on May 26, 2007 at the site, located on the Parr Line, west of Exeter, in the Municipality of Bluewater.

Donations from the Willert and Ross families combined to raise more than half of the cost of the site. The purchase of this significant natural area was also made possible by the property's previous owners, who agreed to retain the property until donated funds were available to purchase the site for future generations. Provincial grants for land acquisition have not been in place in recent years and that makes private donations crucial for the preservation of existing lands of environmental significance.

"The Hay Swamp complex is only half of its original size so it's important to conserve what remains," said Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor.

The Willert-Ross Tract is a completely forested property that has forested ABCA conservation lands on three sides and is accessible by foot. The property is an excellent example of a mid-aged Sugar Maple Deciduous Forest, she said.

"As part of the larger forested complex within Hay Swamp,

PRESERVING WETLANDS FOR FUTURE

this section is supporting a regionally-significant natural area and nearby provincially-significant wetlands." The important interior forest habitat supports bird species which require large tracts of forest.

The Willert-Ross Tract contains two important and distinct forest communities including an 11-acre Lowland Hardwood Forest and wetland, and a 14-acre Upland Hardwood Forest, on land that has never been ploughed.

Swamps are forested wetlands, the most common type of wetland in the Ausable Bayfield watershed. A swamp can help allow rain water to remain relatively clean as it travels to the aquifer.

"More than 40 per cent of the world's species are found in the freshwater wetlands that cover only one per cent of the Earth's surface," according to Mari Veliz, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Coordinator. "Wetlands in Canada provide food, water, breeding, nesting and resting areas for 600 species of wildlife, plants and organisms."

The habitat provided by local wetlands provides people with opportunities such as bird-watching. An increase in extreme weather conditions such as flooding and drought, forecasted with climate change, may emphasize the need for a system of functional wetlands across our countryside that can balance water storage and release.

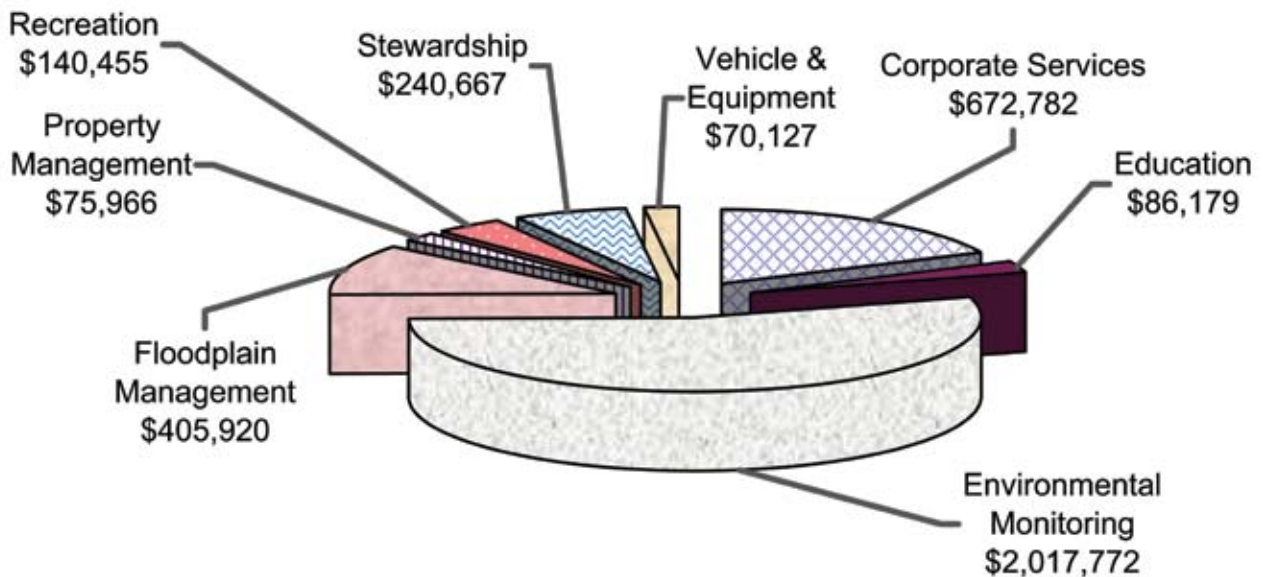
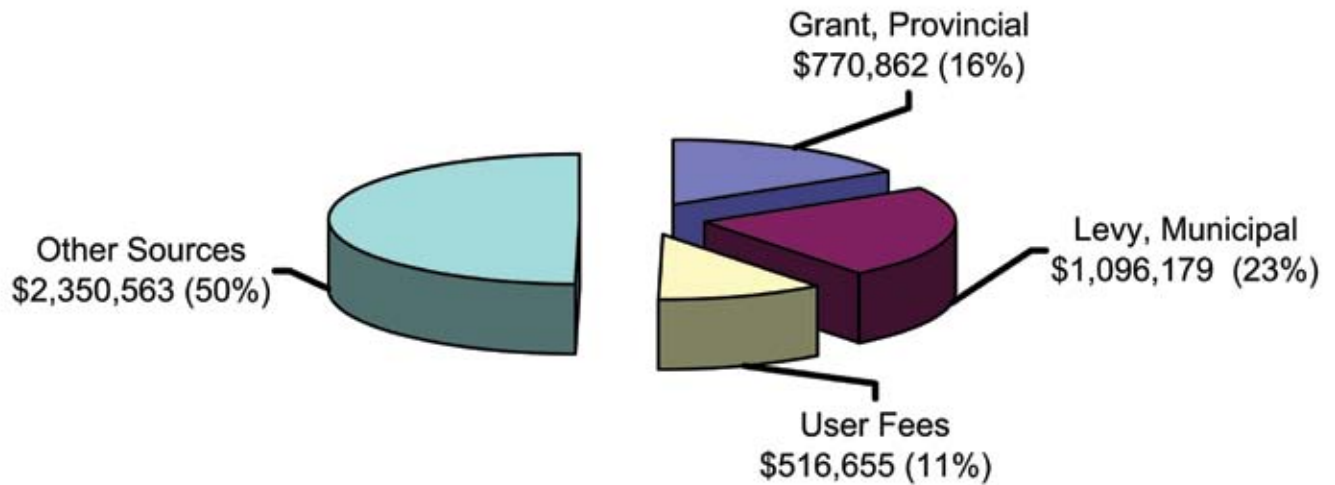
The important functions of a wetland include: habitat for plants and wildlife, water storage, improved water quality from the wetland's natural filtration functions, removal of some suspended sediment and pollutants, regulation of groundwater recharge, maintenance of soil moisture and potential reduction of downstream flooding, soil erosion and surface drain maintenance.

2007 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2007 Sources of Revenue

Total 2007 Revenue \$4,734,259

Unaudited Figures



2007 Expenses

Total 2007 Expenses \$3,709,868

Unaudited Figures

ABCA delivers multiple projects to improve environment

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, with the support of member municipalities and other partners, was able to complete multiple projects in 2007 to protect life, property and improve the natural environment.

This *Annual Report 2007* reflects some of the achievements of this progressive organization.

The ABCA has balanced fiscal responsibility with the successful delivery of programming to benefit the environmental health of watershed residents and the organizational realization of employment equity and competitive compensation for valued staff.

The graphs on this and the previous page illustrate the financial support of our member municipalities and government and other partners as well as the resources devoted to our delivery of conservation programming.

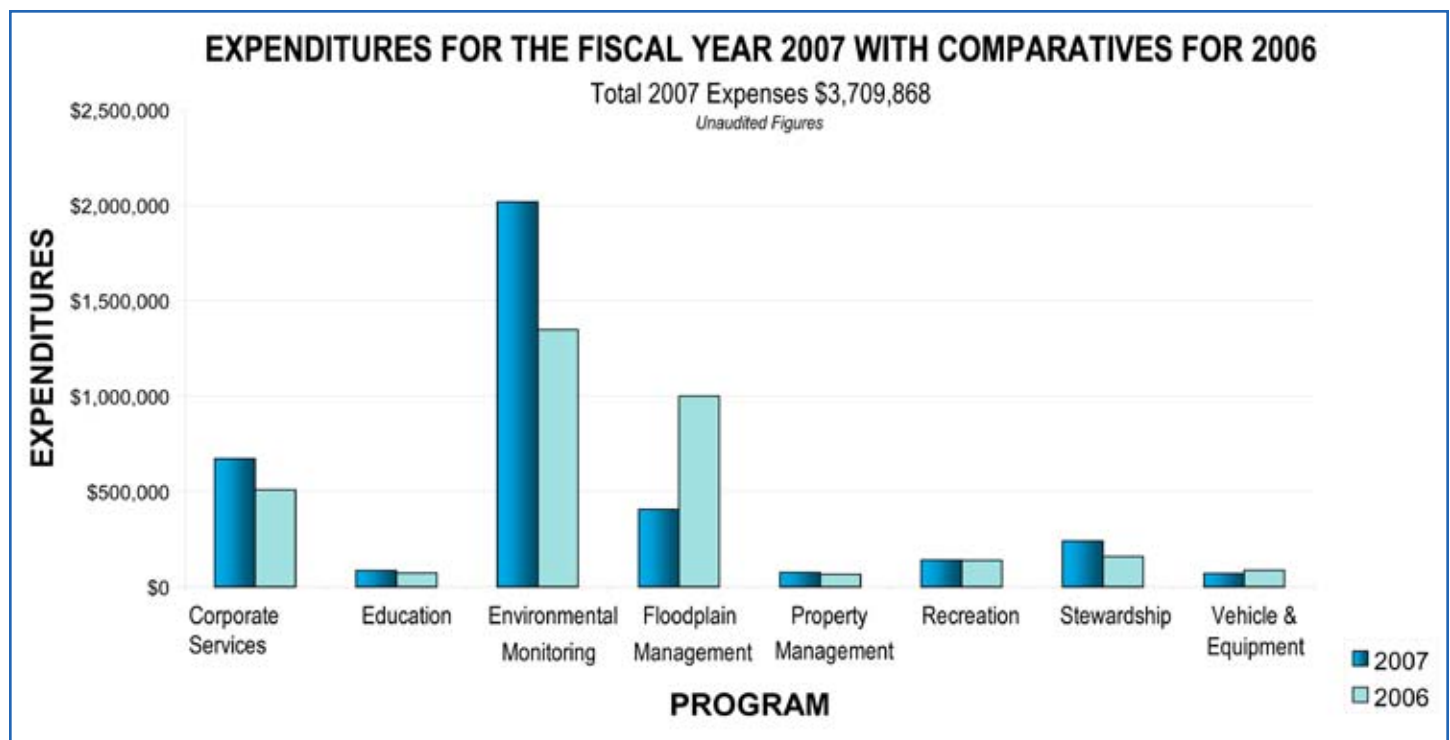
The ABCA has consistently implemented programs to the mutual benefit of partners while concentrating on the agency's core competencies in the areas of Land Use Planning, Regulation and

Mapping; Research and Monitoring; Watershed Stewardship and Conservation Education, among other areas. The Conservation Authority has continued its important planning functions and stewardship functions while also creating accessible trail and recreation opportunities for the environment and health benefits of all.

The Board of Directors has also had the vision to invest in conservation education, understanding the hope for the future lies with the generations to come.

The ABCA has also worked closely with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority as Source Protection Authorities under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*, facilitating the creation of an effective Source Protection Committee in this Source Protection Region.

We hope you find it helpful to read in detail the work of the ABCA in departmental areas such as: Corporate Services; Stewardship and Conservation Lands; Water and Planning and Healthy Watersheds; Conservation Education and Drinking Water Source Protection.



Conservation Dinner surpasses half-million mark

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Dinner is the work of volunteers, donors and patrons who support the creation of accessible trails, commemorative woods, fish stocking in the Morrison Reservoir and conservation education, among other worthwhile environmental programs.

The volunteer Conservation Dinner Committee includes representatives of the Exeter Lions Club, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and other community volunteers. The Conservation Dinner features live and silent auctions of art and other one-of-a-kind items as well as dream-package special and general raffles, a wonderful, sit-down dinner and a chance to mix and mingle.

The Conservation Dinner Committee was honoured in 2007 for having reached the half-million dollar mark in fundraising over the 18-year history of the event. The gala charitable fundraiser raised more than \$40,000 in a single year for the first time in 2006 and the 2007 Dinner also surpassed the same amazing landmark.

The 2007 event was a very special one indeed, for many reasons.

The Dinner Committee was honoured that *Jesse's Journey* founder John Davidson served as emcee. Davidson is the courageous London father who, at the age of 49, pushed his son Jesse across Ontario in 1995 to raise funds for research into treatment and a cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. In 1998, starting on Jesse's 18th birthday, John Davidson walked alone across Canada for the research cause. (Prior to the dinner the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff presented the emcee with a \$500 donation to Jesse's Journey and the Exeter Lions Club matched that donation with a \$500 contribution of their own.)

The 2007 dinner event also included some Hollywood pizzazz with donated items from Exeter native Tim Long, writer and producer with TV's *The Simpsons*.

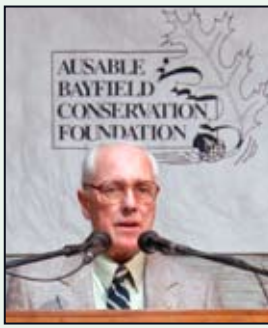
Another highlight of the 18th Annual Conservation Dinner was having Tim Clark return as Feature Artist. He had been the featured artist a decade before. There was a standing ovation for Clark, who was turning 90 the next day. The crowd sang 'Happy Birthday' to him and a birthday cake with a floral design, along with a single candle, were brought out to him.



The year 2007 was a special one for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Dinner with recognition for the committee's reaching of the half-million dollar fundraising mark (top), feature artist Tim Clark celebrating his 90th birthday, Jesse's Journey founder John Davidson emceeing and *Simpsons* producer/writer and Exeter native Tim Long donating.

For information on how to donate to the Conservation Dinner phone 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610, e-mail info@abca.on.ca or visit conservationdinner.com or abca.on.ca

AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



In Memoriam

It is with sadness that the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation learned of the passing of Bill Linfield on February 25, 2008.

Bill became a volunteer Director on the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation in 1995 and served as

Chairman in 1997 and 2007.

Bill was active on the Conservation Dinner committee for thirteen years and his loyalty and dedication will be missed. We will not forget Bill's passion for promoting conservation education and environmental stewardship or our friendships that grew during his time with the Foundation.

Donors help Foundation leave legacy for future generations

Prepared by Judith Parker, Secretary, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation for Bill Linfield, Chair

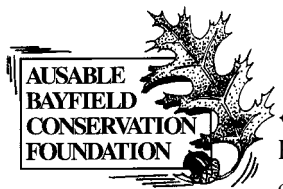
The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) is a board of nine volunteer directors who are committed to the conservation, preservation and protection of the unique natural landscapes of the Ausable River, Bayfield River and Parkhill Creek watersheds.

To sustain this commitment the ABCF relies on donors who share the belief that their donation will enrich the projects of the Foundation and benefit the children, grandchildren and future generations to come.

The Foundation carries out its mandate by providing financial support for eligible environmental projects submitted for consideration and by partnering with community groups who undertake local eligible projects within the watersheds and require charitable receipts for donations received. Our accomplishments throughout 2007 include:

Conservation Education Focus

- Subsidizing \$1 for each child attending an education program offered by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
- Initiating the new Environmental School Award offered to eight watershed high schools
- Sponsoring Species at Risk Bussing Program
- Supporting the Ausable Bird Observatory
- Supporting the Huron Perth Agriculture and Water Festival Committee for TD Friends of the Environment Foundation funding application



Protection of Wetlands and Natural Areas

Continuation of the Tree Grove Founders program so contributors can donate towards the purchase and planting of trees in the Conservation Foundation

Commemorative Woods expansion at Morrison Dam

• \$15,000

donation to the Save Joany's Woods Campaign

• Funding partner for the Old Ausable Channel Management Plan

• Submission of proposal to Grand Bend Community Foundation for implementation funding of Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan

• Application to Ontario Trillium Foundation for the Ausable River Wetlands Project

• Joint applicant with Friends of Pinery Provincial Park for funding from Endangered Species Recovery Fund

• Confirming support from Ontario Ministry of Environment to provide analytical laboratory services for the South Gullies Watershed Water Quality Improvement Project



Continued on next page

Thanks go to those who are leaving local legacies

Continued from previous page

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) has also supported accessible nature trails:

Accessible Nature Trails

- Sponsorship of the South Huron Trail Run, raising money for trail maintenance
- Funding commitment towards a new, accessible playground structure at Rock Glen Conservation Area
- Contribution to renovating the boardwalk at Morrison Dam Conservation Area

Leave a Local Legacy

The Leave a Local Legacy campaign continues to grow with six significant gifts in 2007. The ABCF was the recipient of a charitable gift of securities from Fred and Reit Willert. This donation, along with a bequest from the estate of Georgina Catherine Ross, enabled the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority to purchase a 25-acre parcel, now called the Willert-Ross Tract, in the Hay Swamp Wetlands Complex.

The family of the late Bert and Margaret Daynard (past Conservationist of the Year Award recipients) wanted to ensure their parents' stewardship projects on the home farm were protected. So they contributed monetary donations and a gift of securities to the ABCF, to protect, through ownership by the ABCA, the roughly 12-acre forested parcel. The Daynard Forest is located at Staffa – the headwaters of the Ausable and Bayfield Rivers.

The ABCF was the beneficiary of an almost six-acre parcel of wetland, woodlot and small lake donated by Anthony and Karen Puzara in the Port Franks area. The property is located adjacent to the L-Lake property owned by the ABCA.

We thank these and our other generous donors for their kind efforts to benefit generations to come.

ABCF Board of Directors for 2007

Bill Linfield, Varna – **Chair**
Norm MacPherson, Arkona – **Vice Chair**

Peter Darbishire, Exeter
Ted Jones, Exeter
Dave McClure, Grand Bend
Ernie Miatello, Ilderton
Bob Norris, Staffa
Cliff Ryan, Arkona
John Walsh, London
– **Past Chair**

Bev Brown – Treasurer
Judith Parker – Secretary
Sharon Pavkeje – Assistant
Tom Prout – Staff Advisor

Commemorative Woods Partnerships

In cooperation with J.M. McBeath Funeral Home, the sixth (6th) annual dedication service was held on June 10th at Klopp Commemorative Woods with 150 guests attending. Approximately 270 people attended the Morrison Dam Commemorative Woods Dedication Service on September 23rd in partnership with Haskett Funeral Homes. The M. Box & Son Funeral Home in Parkhill also plants trees as living memorials for each funeral held at their chapel.

Conservation Dinner

Our annual major fundraising project was the 18th Conservation Dinner raising another \$43,000 for the Exeter Lions Club and

the ABCF. The Conservation Dinner also reached a milestone in 2007 by surpassing the \$500,000 mark through the generosity of artists, donors, patrons and other individuals, businesses and volunteers.

Morrison Dam Fishing Derby

In cooperation with the Exeter Lions Club, the 23rd annual fishing derby was held the first Saturday of May. Rainbow trout are stocked in the Morrison Dam Reservoir prior to the derby for the enjoyment of young anglers or those young at heart.

Junior Conservationist

Carrie Prout (centre of photo at right) was the 2007 Junior Conservationist – a summer position with the ABCA – offered to a student who has volunteered with the ABCA and interested in pursuing a career in the environmental field. This position is funded by the ABCF.



AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ABCA.ON.CA

71108 MORRISON LINE, RR 3 EXETER, ON N0M 1S5
519-235-2610 • 1-888-286-2610

