

Lower Ausable Watershed Report Card 2023

A watershed is an area of land that drains rain and snow into creeks, streams and rivers. The watershed in which you live provides your link to the natural world. Watersheds connect our actions and accumulate to degrade or improve conditions.

GRADING

A Excellent

B Good

C Fair

D Poor

F Very Poor



FOREST CONDITIONS

GRADE

C



SURFACE WATER QUALITY

GRADE

C



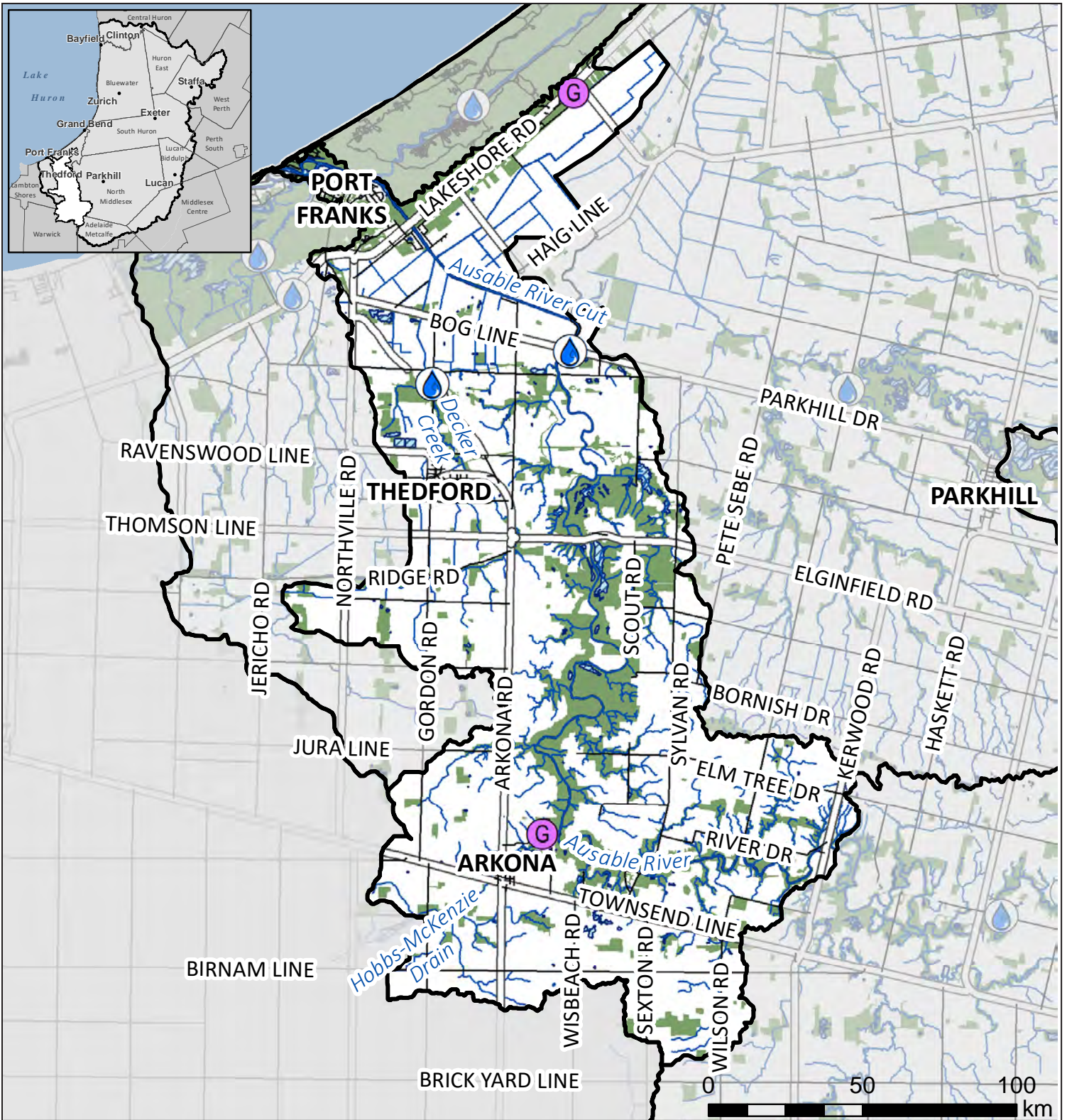
Thumbs Up!

To improve surface water quality, many **landowners** completed projects such as wetland restorations and water and sediment control basins. These projects hold back water and allow sediment to settle out before it reaches creeks and rivers, which helps to improve habitat for species at risk like the endangered Snuffbox mussel (shown above).

No project is too small, and with the support of **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**, we are improving habitat and water quality in the Ausable River.

Report cards give residents information to protect and enhance their watershed.

LOWER AUSABLE WATERSHED



	Natural feature	Surface water monitoring station	Wellhead protection area
	Water body	Groundwater monitoring station	Watershed boundary

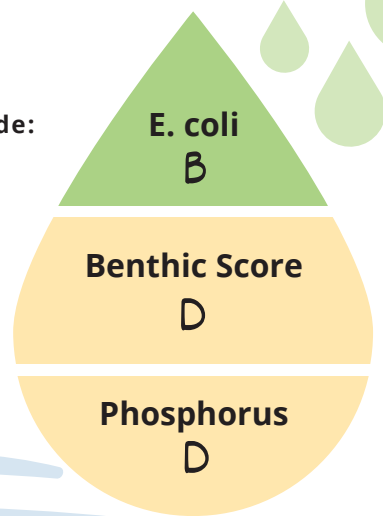
Municipalities: Warwick, Adelaide Metcalfe, North Middlesex, Lambton Shores Area: 172 sq. km

This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The ABCA takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained in the map. Copyright King's Printer, 2023.

 **SURFACE WATER**

Grade:

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F



The complete report card, including an explanation of calculations and historic data, can be found at abca.ca/watershedreportcard.

E. coli was 59 cfu/100 mL. *E. coli* are bacteria that may indicate contaminated water. An A is 30 cfu/100 mL or less. The recreational guideline is 200 cfu/100 mL or less.

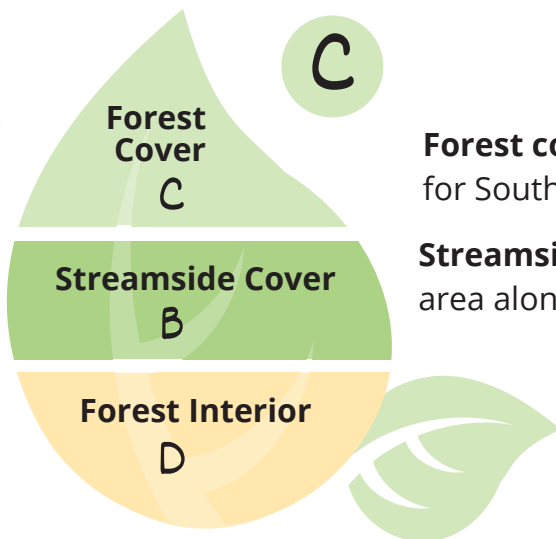
Benthic Score was 6.04. Benthic invertebrates are small animals that live in stream sediments. This score summarizes their numbers and types in a sample to rate stream health from healthy (1) to poor (10).

Total phosphorus was 0.121 mg/L. High phosphorus concentrations can lead to excess algae and low oxygen in streams. An A is 0.020 mg/L or less.

 **FOREST CONDITIONS**

Grade:

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F



Forest cover was 20.5%. The Environment Canada guideline for Southern Ontario is 30%. An A is 35% or greater.

Streamside cover was 46.9%. This is the percentage of 30-m area along streams that is forested. An A is 57.5% or greater.

Forest interior was 4.0%. This is the percentage of forest at least 100 m from the forest edge. Interior forest is required as breeding habitat for some bird species. An A is 11.5% or greater.

 **GROUNDWATER**

Chloride: Less than A
Nitrate: A

Groundwater from wells is the municipal drinking water source in Brucefield, Clinton, Seaforth, Varna, and Zurich. Your drinking water quality may be different from monitoring wells.

 **OVERWINTER VEGETATION on Agricultural Land**

13 - 25% of farmland had wheat, forages, or hay as winter groundcover. At least 30% overwinter cover is expected if in a corn-soy-wheat rotation. Overwinter cover helps prevent soil erosion. Agriculture covers 66% of the land in this watershed.

 **WETLANDS** F

1.7% of the area in this watershed is wetland. Wetlands improve water quality, reduce flood risk, and provide habitat. An A grade is 11.5% or greater.

How can you help?

You can:

- Protect soil by planting windbreaks and cover crops and maintaining crop residue cover.

Your community can:

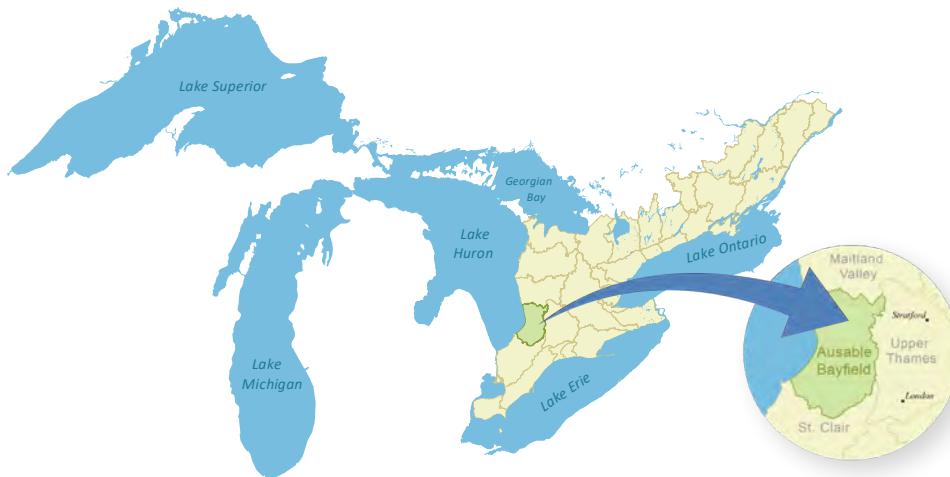
- Recognize and connect important existing natural areas.

Local agencies can:

- Maintain bio-monitoring programs.

TOP ACTION:

In order to improve water quality, hold back water at field edges to allow sediment to settle out.



Links to the Great Lakes

No matter where you live in the watershed, you are linked to the Great Lakes.

We rely on the lake as a source of drinking water, economic activity, and recreation.

Your personal actions, whether you live in a town or in the country, can make a difference for Lake Huron.

Visit lakehuroncommunityaction.ca

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