

Take action!



What can your community do?

- Support green infrastructure like rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement.
- Protect and enhance natural heritage features (woodlots, meadows, and streamside vegetation).
- Support local initiatives to monitor water quality and quantity.



What can agencies do?

- Encourage grant programs such as county clean water projects.
- Work with local community groups to **Save**, **Seed**, and **Steward**.
- Protect wetlands and investigate the purchase of key wetlands that preserve coldwater flow.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of environmental programs.
- Green their operations.

What can you do?

Save

- Protect and enhance natural areas on your property.
- Reforest less agriculturally productive land and extend forest along fencerows.

Seed

- Plant native plants, trees, and shrubs.
- Note wet areas on your property. Call for a restoration site visit.

Steward

- Inspect and pump out your septic system every three to five years.
- Use best management practices illustrated below on your urban and rural properties.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Rural ACTIONS

- Buffers
- Two-stage ditches

- Grassed waterways
- Berms

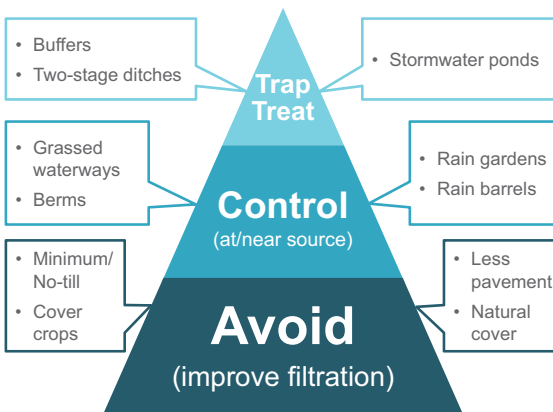
- Minimum/No-till
- Cover crops

Urban ACTIONS

- Stormwater ponds

- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels

- Less pavement
- Natural cover



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The Watershed Report Card is found at abca.ca/reportcards.php

Ausable Bayfield WATERSHED Report Card 2018



Ausable Bayfield Conservation has prepared this report card as a summary of the state of your forests and water resources. For the complete document visit abca.ca.



Watershed Report Card 2018 – Summary Brochure

Where are we located?



What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land drained by a creek or stream into a river which then drains into a body of water such as a lake or pond. Everything in a watershed is connected. Our actions upstream affect conditions downstream.

Why measure?

Measuring helps us better understand our watershed. We can target our work where it is needed and track progress.

We measured:



Forest Conditions



Wetland Cover



Surface Water Quality



Groundwater Quality

GRADING

- A** Excellent
- B** Good
- C** Fair
- D** Poor
- F** Very Poor

What is a watershed report card?

Ontario's conservation authorities report on watershed conditions every five years. Watershed report cards use Conservation Ontario guidelines and standards developed by conservation authorities and their partners.



FOREST CONDITIONS

The percentages of forest cover, forest interior, and streamside cover were measured with Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

What did we find out?

- Grades range from A to D, with mostly D grades.
- Forests grow slowly, but environmental benefits begin as soon as trees are planted.
- It is important to value and protect our existing forests as the high agricultural productivity of, and demand for, much of the land means that forest cover may remain limited.



SURFACE WATER QUALITY

Concentrations of phosphorus and *Escherichia coli* (bacteria) were measured at water quality stations. Benthic invertebrates (small aquatic animals living in the sediment) were also collected. (The type and number of these animals are measures of water quality).

What did we find out?

- Grades range from A to D, with mostly C grades.
- Ausable Headwaters, Bayfield Headwaters, Black Creek and Main Bayfield have had measurable improvement in *E. coli* concentrations since the 2007 Watershed Report Card.



GROUNDWATER QUALITY

Concentrations of nitrate and chloride were measured at 14 monitoring wells of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

What did we find out?

- Nitrate and chloride concentrations are better than the standard and guideline in most wells (A grade).
- Nitrate and chloride at some monitoring wells approached or exceeded the drinking water standard for nitrate and/or guideline for chloride, resulting in less than an A grade.
- Your well water quality may vary from that of monitoring wells. In some cases, well locations were chosen to monitor known local water quality issues.

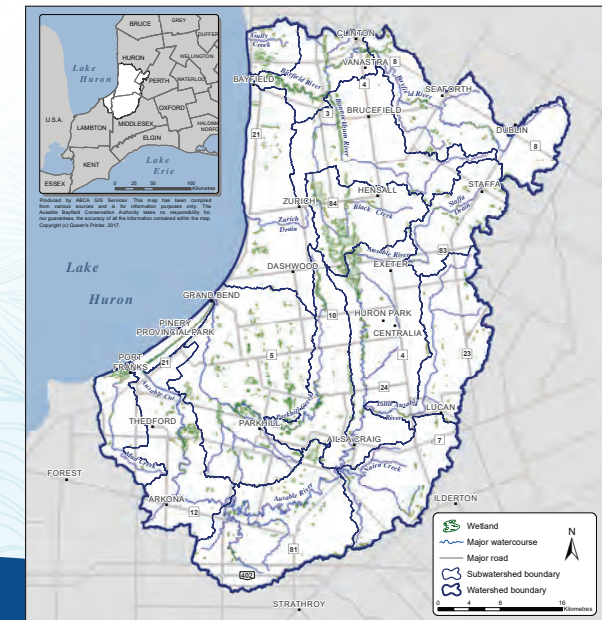
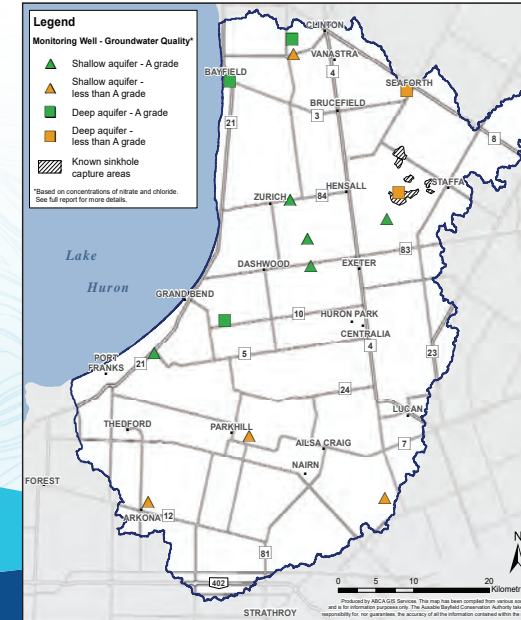
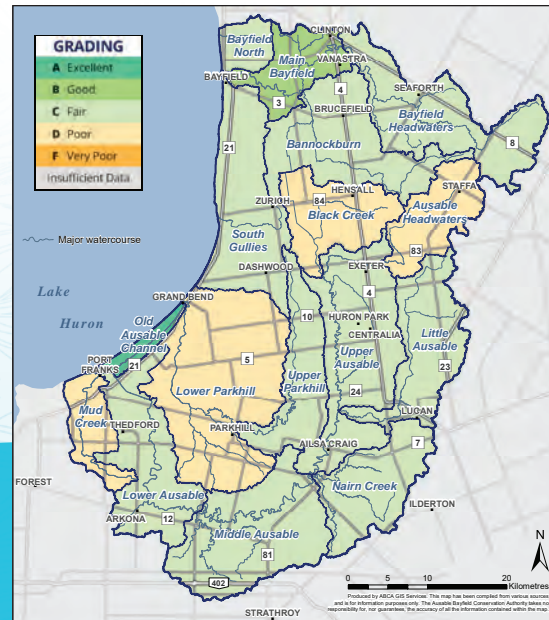
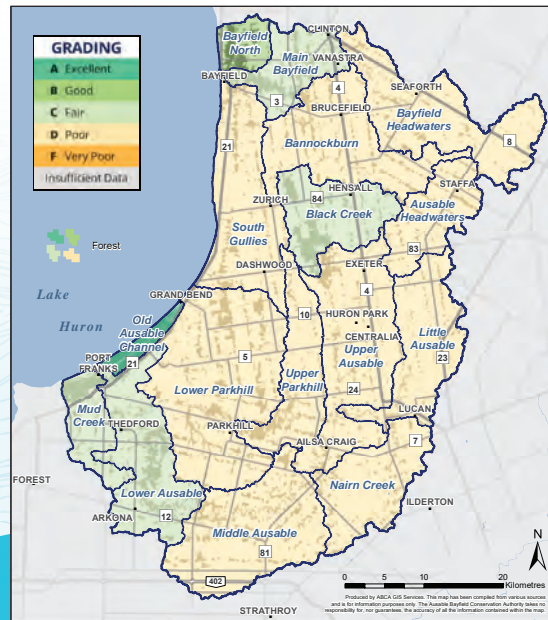


WETLAND COVER

Wetland cover was mapped with GIS but was not graded. At this time the wetland layer is being updated.

What did we find out?

- More water retention areas are needed in strategic locations such as field edges.
- Wet areas can be enhanced to better function as water storage features.
- Water storage on the landscape can help reduce soil erosion and retain soil moisture during times of drought.
- The Hay Swamp wetland complex is the largest wetland within the Ausable Bayfield Conservation watershed.



Learn more about groundwater at sourcewaterinfo.on.ca