AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS
1946-2021
CREATING AWARENESS | TAKING ACTION

Annual Report 2021

75th Anniversary Edition (1946-2021)

1946-1950

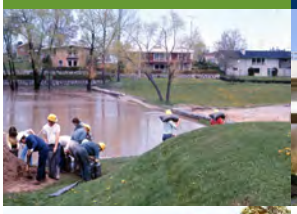
1951-1955

1956-1960

1961-1965

1966-1970

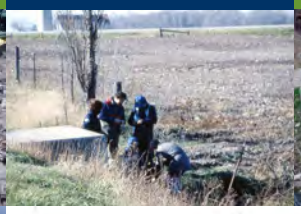
1971-1975



1976-1980

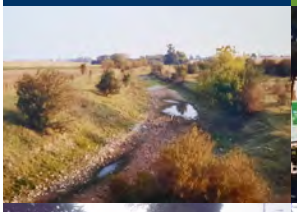
1981-1985

1986-1990



1991-1995

1996-2000

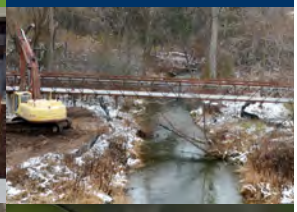


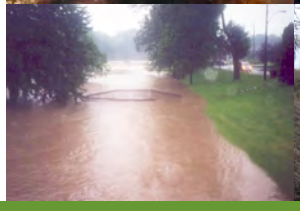
2001-2005

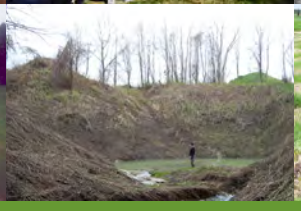
2006-2010

2011-2015

2016-2020







2021-2096

... and we look forward to the next 75 years
of protecting life and property,
water, soil, and habitat for the next generations!

Front Cover Photo Collage

Here are the photos in the photo collage on the cover of the 75th-anniversary (1946-2021) edition of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Annual Report:

1946-1950:

- School children and community plant trees in Hay Swamp area. 1,210 trees per acre were planted.
- Ontario's Department of Planning and Development prepares *Ausable Valley Conservation Report* 1949.

1951-1955:

- Ausable River Cut in 1955.
- Boats are launched into the water at Port Franks Conservation Area in 1954.

1956-1960:

- Dedication of John A. Morrison Dam in Exeter, 1958.
- A 1960 stop at Thedford Conservation Area by Robert Gibson, Howick Township; Freeman Hodgins, Ausable River Conservation Authority (ARCA) Chair; Harold Cosens, Wallace Township, Chair of Middle Maitland Conservation Authority; Donald Aitchison, Harriston; and Andrew Dixon, Ausable public relations Chair. (*Gorrie Vidette and Wroxeter News.*)

1961-1965:

- From *The Exeter Times-Advocate*, 1964: South Huron District High School students attend Conservation School at Camp Sylvan along with Parkhill students. With students are teacher Bruce Perry; Fred Dobbs; C. P. Corbett; and Lorne Hay.
- Work takes place at Exeter Dam in 1965.

1966-1970:

- Ted Jones, of ARCA; with John Kinahan, engineer with M. M. Dillon Engineering Co., and ARCA employee Wes MacGregor, at dam in Parkhill.
- Sylvan Conservation Education at Camp Sylvan, 1968.

1971-1975:

- Sandbags at Exeter Dam during flooding in 1974.
- Clinton Conservation Area in 1974.

1976-1980:

- Water quality sampling at a Varna bridge in 1979.
- A clearing at Hay Swamp is shown in 1979.

1981-1985:

- A 1980s partnership with Huron Soil and Water Conservation District provided farmers chance to borrow a no-till drill on 10-acre trial basis. Many local farmers were early adopters of conservation tillage.
- Snow survey (1982) helps determine the potential for flooding as snow depth, density, and water equivalent are measured.

1986-1990

- A water quality tracer study takes place in 1988.
- Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre opening, at Rock Glen Conservation Area, 1986.

1991-1995:

- Storm outlet erosion control in Clinton in 1991.
- Doug Hocking provides technical and grant support with Clean Up Rural Beaches (CURB) in 1993.

1996-2000:

- Drought, in 1999, in Ausable Headwaters.
- Flooding in Exeter in 2000.

2001-2005:

- Official opening of MacNaughton-Morrison Trail 2004.
- Tuckersmith sinkhole (2003) is an example of surface water and groundwater connection and why best management practices are needed in sensitive areas.

2006-2010:

- Low water in Parkhill Creek, 2007.
- Trees planted in Ausable Bayfield watersheds.

2011-2015:

- Celebration of 40 years since Bayfield River and smaller streams draining into Lake Huron added to our watershed area. At event to commemorate the anniversary Huron-Bruce MP Ben Lobb and other dignitaries help with ceremonial cake cutting.
- Students learn through discovery with pond studies.

2016-2020:

- In 2018, Jones Bridge, a pedestrian bridge, was installed. The bridge is dedicated by Donna Jones, in loving memory of Ted Jones. The bridge gives trail users a safer alternative to walking along Morrison Line. It was built thanks to community donations.
- More than 350 people, from Canada and the United States, attended Drainage Innovation Field Day at Huronview Demonstration Farm near Clinton, Ontario, Canada on Saturday, June 15, 2019. Among those attending the drainage demo day were dignitaries from Province of Ontario, Canadian federal Parliament, and counties and municipalities. Shown in photo are Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for Ontario with GIS Technician Elizabeth Balfour, of Ausable Bayfield Conservation.

2021-2096:

- A student in an Ausable Bayfield Conservation conservation education program sums up their love of nature. One of the most effective ways to protect our watershed resources for the future is to educate the next generation of stewards.

The different logos, over the years, of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, are shown above.
Below is the special wordmark developed and shared for our 75th anniversary year in 2021.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)

Annual Report 2021

Working with you to protect life, property, water, soil, and habitat for all living things.

What's Inside

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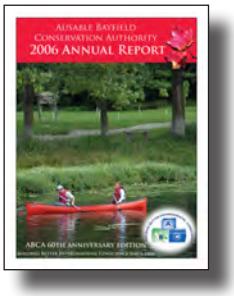


Above are historical records that mark 25 years; 40 years; 60 years; and 75 years of local conservation.

Front Cover Photos:

A collage of historical photos is on the front cover of this year's 75th-anniversary-edition annual report.
For more details on the front-cover photos, visit the **abca.ca** Annual Reports page.

Mission
Protect, improve, conserve, and restore the watershed in partnership with the community

Vision
Healthy watersheds where our needs and the needs of the natural environment are in balance

Celebrating conservation in our 12 municipalities

By Doug Cook, Chair, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Board of Directors

Doug Cook

The year 2021 was a year to celebrate conservation successes, over the past 75 years (1946-2021), made possible by a partnership of the Province of Ontario; municipalities; the local community; and many others.

Staff of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) made our 75th Anniversary a wonderful opportunity to prepare and share a series of feature articles on stewardship and conservation projects in ABCA's 12 member municipalities. I would like to thank the authors of these articles profiling work in our local municipalities. Thanks go to Kate, Mari, Tommy, Abbie, Denise, Shevaun, Meghan, and Ian for your excellent work on these articles.

It was not possible to have large public events for the anniversary year but the anniversary committee was able to create engaging videos, slide shows, conservation trivia, photos and articles, and more.

Chair's Message

The anniversary-year activities were in addition to all our regular programs and services to protect life and property and watershed resources. We continued to adapt our service delivery in 2021 as the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic continued. We were able to deliver our programs and services in new ways on site with pandemic safety protocols and also remotely through the use of technology.

The 75th anniversary was more than a celebration. The commemorative year was a chance to say thank you to all our community partners who help to protect and enhance their watershed. There are many people to thank for 75 Years of Conservation. The vision and work of our watershed municipalities over the past 75 years has made our communities more resilient. We look forward to forging an even stronger partnership as we look to the year 2022 and to the years ahead.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Board of Directors – 2021

Doug Cook, Chair
Lambton Shores; Warwick

Dave Jewitt, Vice Chair
Central Huron

George Irvin
Bluewater

Mike Tam
West Perth

Bob Harvey
Adelaide Metcalfe; Middlesex Centre

Alex Westman
Lucan Biddulph

Marissa Vaughan
South Huron; Perth South

Ray Chartrand
Huron East

Adrian Cornelissen
North Middlesex

Brian Horner
General Manager
Sec.-Treasurer

Abigail Gutteridge
Corp. Services Coordinator

Tina Crown
Financial Services Coordinator

Sharon Pavkeje
Corporate Services Assistant

Tim Cumming
Communications Specialist

Kate Monk
Projects Coordinator

Corporate Services staff assist the Board, committees, departments, member municipalities and the public.

Tracey McPherson
GIS/IT Coordinator

Aaron Clarke
DWSP GIS Specialist

Elizabeth Balfour
GIS Technician

Denise Iszczuk
Conservation Educator

Nina Sampson
Conservation Educator

Building municipal partnerships for a strong watershed future

By Brian Horner, General Manager and Secretary-Treasurer

It was a year of celebration in 2021. We had a chance to say 'Thank you' to our watershed residents and our 12 member municipalities for 75 Years of Conservation (1946-2021).

I would like to thank Abbie Gutteridge, Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) 75th Anniversary Planning Committee and her other committee members – Kate; Denise; Meghan; Shevaun; Ian; and Tim. A great commemoration!

The 2021 celebration has ended. We now turn our thoughts to the next 75 years.

We need to continue our work to protect life and property and the watershed resources upon which we all rely. We can only do that by building strong partnerships with our communities, municipalities, and residents.

The successes of the past show us what is possible. We can transform properties and create habitat for vibrant ecosystems by planting trees and enhancing wetlands.

General Manager's Report

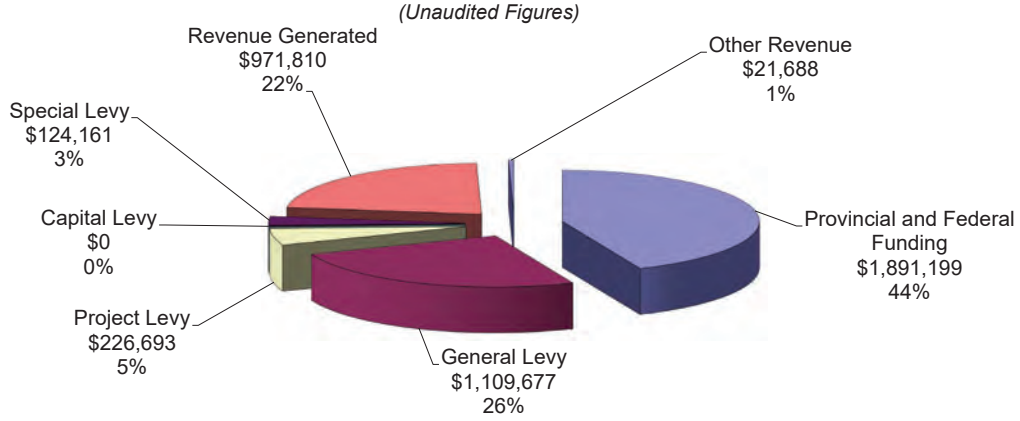
We can protect life and property by ensuring development is located and designed in ways that help us grow sustainably and safely. We can monitor the state of our watershed so we know where things are improving and where they're deteriorating and where we need to invest time and resources to protect areas and where to remediate. We can provide municipalities with the information they need to help keep their residents safe.

We can't do any of this alone. We have to work together. First, we must grow the partnerships that make success possible. Then, we can do what it takes to grow a more resilient watershed. Building the foundation for the next 75 years of conservation won't be easy but our residents and our community depend on us to lay that foundation. Look at what we've accomplished when we have worked together. Working together, we can build a healthier watershed future.

2021 Financial Summary

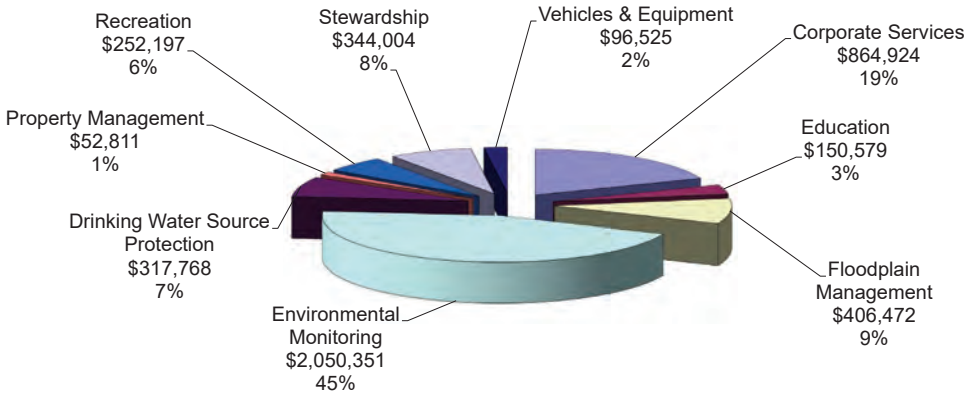
2021 Sources of Revenue – Total Revenue $4,341,879

(Unaudited Figures)



2021 Expenses – Total Expenses $4,535,630

(Unaudited Figures)



ABCA leverages levy dollars for greater benefit

By Brian Horner, CPA, General Manager and Secretary-Treasurer

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) continues to be one of the leading conservation authorities in Ontario when it comes to leveraging local levy dollars, with additional third-party funding, to achieve great benefits.

Thanks to the approval of grant and funding applications submitted by staff during the year 2021, the local levy dollars represented approximately 33 per cent of total revenue compared to other conservation authorities across the Province that had similar levies representing approximately 50 per cent of their total revenue. That means that levy dollars went farther and we had to rely on levy dollars less.

Financial Summary

Similar to the past few years our conservation authority has continued to leverage every local dollar generated with approximately $2 in additional funding. This compares to the provincial average that is roughly dollar-for-dollar amongst other conservation authorities.

The unaudited financial results show ABCA again coming in around budget as the $193,000 loss includes $182,000 of amortization. Staff have continued to do a terrific job in bringing projects in at, or better than, budgeted costs.

We again would like to thank our member municipalities for their continued involvement and commitment to their local watershed.

The Enterprise mapping system above.

GIS, IT staff helped ABCA adapt during pandemic

By Tracey McPherson, GISP, GIS/IT Coordinator

In 2021, Information Technology (IT) staff, at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), continued to support staff when they needed to work from home due to the global pandemic.

As restrictions were lifted and staff returned to the office we worked to ensure they were well-equipped for the changes in the way we now conduct many of our business activities such as video conferencing meetings through applications like Zoom and Teams.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology (IT)

Many Geographic Information Systems (GIS) activities in 2021 focused around our new internal mapping software replacing our internal GeoPortal Application (2006). The ABCA ArcGIS Enterprise system gives users a modern and more robust and flexible system to access ABCA GIS data and other open-GIS layers from municipal, provincial and federal agencies.

IT actions taken in 2021:

- Upgraded Virtual Private Network (VPN) system to allow for more secure two-factor authentication.
- Replaced three work stations and other older/failed network components and equipped staff with tools for more productive meetings.

IT results:

- More secure remote access compliant with cyber insurance coverage.
- Business continuity maintained for staff returning to the office.
- Modern equipment allows staff to work more efficiently and maintains the whole system.

GIS actions taken in 2021:

- Published (made available) 140+ data layers to ArcGIS Enterprise.
- Created five applications in ArcGIS Enterprise targeted to specific business areas or departments.
- Completed mapping, data, and analysis for staff, consultants, and partners.

GIS results:

- Data for decision-making and design.
- Support for internal and partner projects and programs.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's conservation educators adapted in order to deliver outdoor conservation education programs fostering an ethos to protect water, soil, and habitat.

Conservation educators grow stewardship ethic through outdoor, classroom, virtual programs

By Denise Iszczuk and Nina Sampson, Conservation Educators

Throughout 2021, conservation educators, at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), continued to provide valuable services to the watershed community in new, exciting ways both in-person and virtually.

ABCA conservation educators worked closely with local schools and school boards to meet new health and safety requirements to be able to educate in schoolyards and/or get students out to nearby natural spaces.

Conservation educators want to inspire all watershed teachers and students to learn about the world around them in their schoolyard or another natural space.

Conservation Education

In order to help increase student access to outdoor learning spaces, ABCA conservation educators took a fresh look at using community spaces and developing programs for those spaces.

Through working on new programs and using new spaces, conservation educators saw a steady increase in the number of programs delivered. In fact, the number of students participating in programming from September to November was similar to pre-pandemic numbers.

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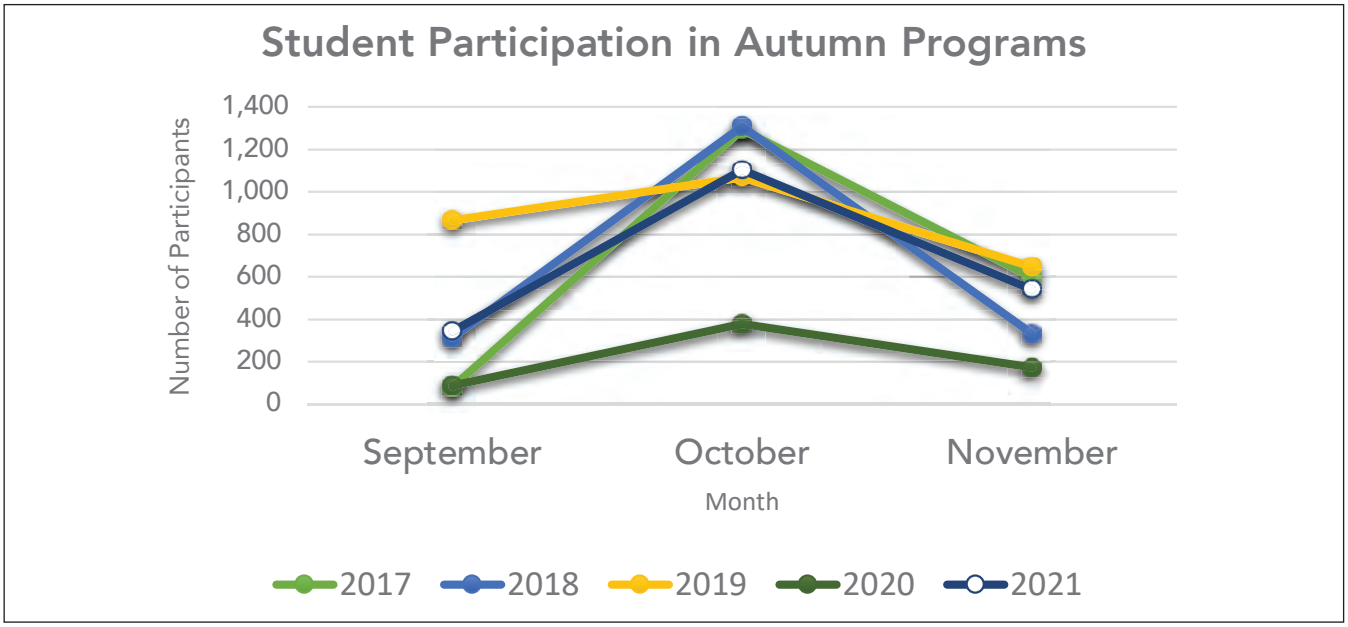
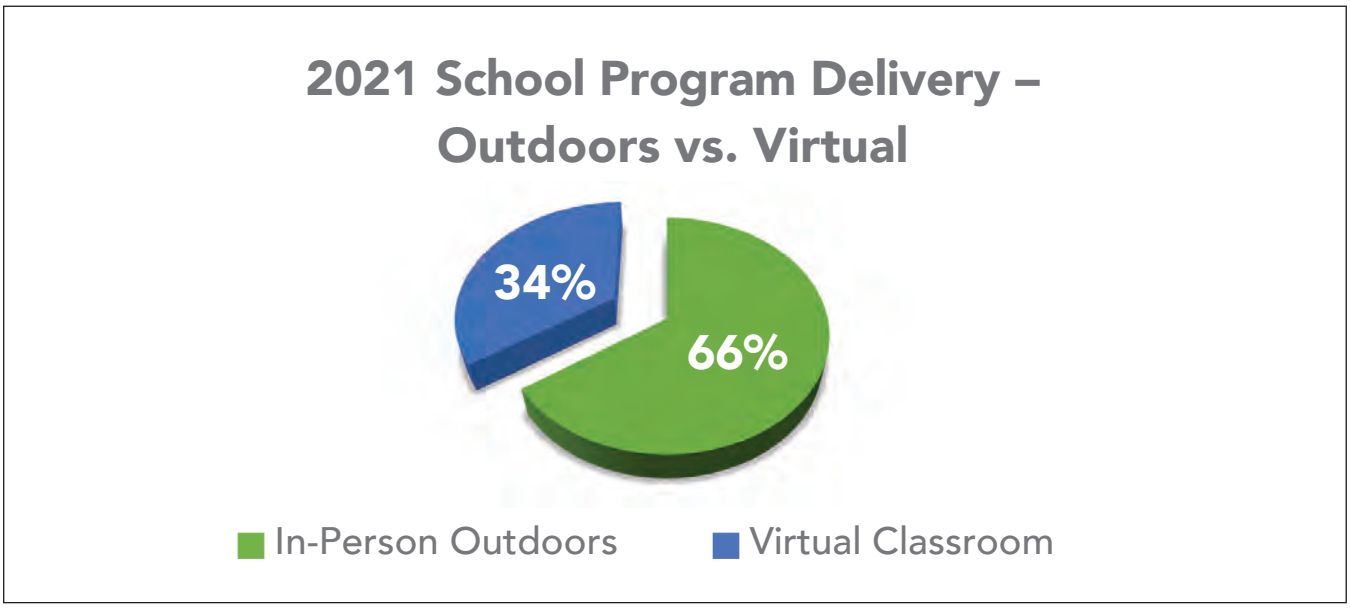




Nature areas provide outdoor learning classrooms

Continued from previous page

In 2021, conservation educators at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) were not able to deliver programs in school classrooms. Conservation educators were able to meet certain classes at nearby natural areas.

Students and teachers appreciated this option for getting off the schoolyard and for exploring new spaces. Seaforth Lions Park was a popular meeting spot for students from St. James Catholic School. With high demands on their schoolyard due to space limitations, a nearby natural area was a preferred option. The facilities at this park include a pavilion, large shade trees and open spaces which are very well suited to a number of programs offered by ABCA.

The programs delivered throughout 2021 covered such topics as Species at Risk, Wetlands, Soils, Water, Ecosystem Exploration, Climate Change, and Outdoor Play. Through a unique partnership with Pinery Provincial Park, ABCA offered two programs: 'Species at Risk' and 'All Rivers Lead to the Lake.' This was an opportunity for watershed schools to have two programs delivered virtually to their classroom on a similar topic but from different perspectives.

Denise Iszczuk is one of the conservation educators at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. The COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2021 and, to deliver programs in a safe way, conservation educators adapted programs. There were challenges but also opportunities to teach students, in outdoor settings, about protecting watershed resources.

Clinton Conservation Area is easily walkable for five schools in Clinton so conservation educators developed a new Global Positioning System (GPS) program at this conservation area. This program proved to be a popular choice for physical education classes from the nearby secondary schools.

Taking some time in 2021 to rethink and redesign educational programs, as well as looking for new outdoor learning spaces was worth it and, for 2022, sets up well the ABCA Conservation Education Department.

Our staff work with proponents to review proposed development works in regulated areas such as the shoreline.

Water levels are lower but slopes may remain unstable

By Geoffrey Cade, Manager of Water and Planning

The year 2021 proved to be another challenging one for the Water and Planning Department of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). As the reader will note in the following reports, the department remained very busy again throughout the year.

Thankfully, Lake Huron water levels continued to decline through the latter half of the year.

Lower water levels provided welcome relief to anxious landowners – especially to those who had not experienced the previous cycle of high water levels.

As mentioned in last year's *Annual Report*, south of the Port Blake water intake, in the dynamic beach areas, movement of sand meant that decks, stairs, old fences, and protection structures, which had long been buried by sand, had emerged.

Landowners will now start to notice that the dynamic beach cycle will now trend toward sand accumulating in these areas. This is the beach preparing itself for the next period of high water and why it is so important not to disturb the cycle.

In the bluff areas of the ABCA's watershed the decline of water levels has meant that the erosion of the lake bank, along its toe, will also start to decline.

Municipal Plan Input/Planning Report

By the numbers – Planning 2021

Minor Variances	28
Severances	40
Official Plan Amendments	3
Zoning Bylaw Amendments	30
Lawyer Inquiries	72

Property owners should be aware that, despite this decline, the slope can remain in an unstable condition for a number of years.

Landowners should continue to monitor their slopes for signs of movement. Signs of bluff movement can be difficult to detect which is why ABCA has published a fact sheet, on our **abca.ca** website, to help landowners to recognize them.

We encourage you to check out this valuable information. You may find the fact sheet on this web page:

https://www.abca.ca/about/lake-huron

Once again, I would like to thank all the development proponents who contact us early on when they are proposing development works for permit consideration. This has many benefits not only for our staff but also for the proponents and their projects.

High water on Lake Huron receded in 2021 but planning for the future should remain top of mind

By Daniel King, MEPP P.Eng., Regulations Coordinator

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's *Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses* (*Ontario Regulation 147/06*) is the enabling regulation that oversees development within hazardous lands in our watershed. This includes the shoreline of Lake Huron.

As a result of higher-than-average water levels over the past few years the lakeshore has been front and centre in the minds of shoreline residents and in media coverage.

Residents along the shoreline, along with Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff, saw these water levels recede closer to the long-term mean in 2021 after nearly exceeding records in 2020. Inland areas that are in the vicinity of naturally occurring hazards are also regulated under the same legislation. These areas include river and stream valleys, areas susceptible to riverine flooding, and wetlands.

In all these areas, Provincial and ABCA policies recommend increasing the setback, of any new construction or development, away from natural areas. When this is not possible, Planning and Regulations staff provided advice to landowners, developers, real estate professionals and prospective property purchasers. With a quick inquiry by phone or email, our staff can help outline what ABCA Policy permits or recommends to support the use and enjoyment of their property without aggravating natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. Because these hazards are natural features, they can change between different properties.

ABCA staff rely on site-specific mapping of these hazards throughout the regulated area. Mitigation measures vary based on the type of hazard. Measures could include alterations to building design, engineering and environmental studies, or considering different locations for development.

***Ontario Regulation 147/06* – Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses**

2021:

- 219 applications for permission
- 123 minor works permits
- 15 drain reports reviewed
- 33 drain maintenance reviews

(*Standard compliance requirements*)

Photo of Lake Huron shoreline in winter.

Public health measures were introduced, lifted and then reintroduced during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Despite these public health requirements, ABCA Planning and Regulations staff were able to continue to serve the public throughout 2020 and 2021. In transitioning between remote and in-office work we have leaned on digital tools and continue to facilitate meetings through telephone and through web-based video conferencing where we can share online mapping. Site meetings held outdoors, as well as inspections and enforcement as part of permit applications, have continued. We appreciate the cooperation and patience of the public who have engaged with our new processes. Contacting staff early on planning works, where ABCA regulatory input is required, continues to be a recommendation to prevent delays and unnecessary costs.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Flood Forecasting and Warning program requires data on precipitation, snow density, temperature, weather, ice and river conditions, and more.

Monitoring of water quantity provides us with early indications of potential flooding or low-water conditions

By Davin Heinbuck, Water Resources Coordinator

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), in cooperation with Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and Environment and Climate Change Canada, maintains and operates a data collection network within its watershed area. This network helps to provide watershed municipalities and residents with advance warning of life-threatening flood events in the watershed.

The data collection network allows staff to monitor conditions throughout the watershed, including water levels and precipitation. Computerized monitoring systems in the field transmit information by telephone or satellite directly to the ABCA office east of Exeter. The ABCA network consists of the following:

- Fourteen automated monitoring stations, 12 of which are for water level.

Water Level and Streamflow Monitoring

- Most stations monitor precipitation, temperatures & other meteorological sensors.
- One dedicated climate monitoring station (in cooperation with Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks)
- Approximately 20 volunteer rain gauge readers provide information through a web-based data entry system

The ongoing monitoring programs continue to provide information for Ontario Low Water Response, Flood Forecasting and Warning, and other conservation authority programs. Monitoring of precipitation and water quantity within the watershed ensures we have early indications of potential flooding (or low-water conditions) so Flood Messages or Low Water Advisories can be provided to our watershed municipalities in a timely manner.

ABCA issues watershed-wide Flood Warning during September 21-22 flood which resulted in road closures

By Davin Heinbuck, Water Resources Coordinator

The winter of 2020-2021 was a relatively calm winter. There was below-seasonal snowfall and warmer than normal temperatures. The only appreciable snowpack came in late January through February. The snowpack disappeared in early March without incidence. The snowmelt contributed minor spring flows relative to historical freshets. As ice thickness on rivers was low there was very little risk of ice jams in any of the major watercourses.

The most significant event of 2021 occurred September 21-22. A large and slow-moving low-pressure system drew in moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, bringing heavy rains to the Great Lakes region over a 24-hour period.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) issued a Watershed Conditions Statement (Flood Outlook) on September 21 and upgraded the message to an unprecedented watershed-wide Flood Warning on September 22. The heaviest rains occurred roughly 50 kilometres inland and parallel to the Lake Huron shoreline. The ABCA watershed experienced some of the highest rainfall amounts and some of the highest rainfall intensities from this weather system.

Precipitation totals averaged more than 90 millimetres (mm) with some stations recording as much as 130 mm.

The heavy and intense rains caused flash flooding of fields and washouts on rural roads. As a result, the County of Middlesex, and numerous municipalities, closed all of their roads late in the day on September 22. Additionally, riverine flooding resulted in numerous road closures for several days after the rain event.

Flood Forecasting and Warning

A flood event between September 21 and 22 resulted in road closures.

This event produced flows at the Parkhill Creek stream gauge (McGuffin Hills Drive) that reached record levels and required the operation of the Parkhill Dam over a six-day period. It is important to note that the Cameron-Gillies Diversion channel was effective at rerouting peak flows away from the Town of Parkhill.

With near-record high water levels in Lake Huron, strong and sustained onshore winds resulted in shoreline flooding several times through 2020. The areas most impacted by lake effect flooding were Grand Bend and Port Franks. In addition to flooding, high water and wave action has been responsible for considerable amounts of shoreline erosion along both dynamic beaches and bluffs. The erosion has resulted in significant losses to property and structures. One of the challenges with bluff failures is that there is often a delay between the events leading up to a failure, and the time of the failure.

For riverine flooding, ABCA issued eight Flood Outlook/Water Safety messages, and one Flood Warning. ABCA issued four Shoreline Conditions Statements for wind events over Lake Huron.

Shoreline conditions statements, for flooding and erosion, are a new addition to our flood forecasting and warning flood messages.

Staff present on high lake level impacts and criteria for high-wind shoreline messages at flood emergency planning meeting

By Davin Heinbuck, Water Resources Coordinator

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) hosted the 2021 annual Flood Emergency Planning meeting virtually on March 2, 2021.

We invited ABCA member municipalities and other stakeholders to attend and take part in the meeting. The 25 attendees included representatives from six watershed municipalities as well as staff and/or Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMCs) from all four counties and staff from one neighbouring conservation authority.

ABCA staff presented on flood emergency roles and responsibilities and provided a watershed conditions update and flood outlook.

Flood Emergency Planning

Key-note presentations by ABCA staff included the impacts of high lake levels on the Lake Huron shoreline. Their presentations also detailed how the ABCA is establishing threshold criteria for messaging high-wind events over the lake.

Staff also highlighted a couple of the more significant flood events of 2020.

The meeting continues to provide a forum for discussion and planning to ensure all agencies are better prepared to deal with flooding emergencies.

Water and Planning

Water and Planning staff play an important role in protection of life, property, and watershed resources. Working with the public, member municipalities, and other partners they are involved in community projects, flood forecasting and warning, and planning and regulations.

Geoffrey Cade
Water and Planning Manager

Daniel King
Regulations Coordinator; Prov. Offences Officer

Meghan Tydd-Hrynyk
Planning and Regulations Officer

Davin Heinbuck
Water Resources Coordinator

Tommy Kokas
Water Resources Engineer

Ross Wilson
Water and Soils Resource Coordinator

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority watershed had a wet summer but a dry spring.

Watershed experiences dry spring, wet summer

Water Response Team Issues only Low Water Advisory of 2021 in June

By Davin Heinbuck, Water Resources Coordinator

During 2021, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) continued to be involved actively in the Ontario Low Water Response (OLWR) Program which was created after extreme dry conditions were experienced in parts of the Province of Ontario in 1999.

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

During the year, ABCA staff communicated monthly with the WRT, and provided watershed condition reports and recommendations.

Dry conditions were reported during the spring months of 2021. This resulted in a Level 1 Low Water Advisory being issued, in June, for the entire ABCA watershed.

The Water Response Team lifted this advisory in July with the onset of wet weather in late June. This wet weather proved to be the dominant weather pattern through the remainder of 2021.

Ontario Low Water Response (OLWR)

Approximately 20 volunteer rain gauge readers continue to provide valuable information on the extent and amount of precipitation received in the watershed.

This low-water response program continues to provide the public and member municipalities with information on the condition of our watersheds in relation to possible drought problems.

Levels of Response

- **Level 1** – Voluntary Reduction 10%
- **Level 2** – Voluntary Reduction 20%
- **Level 3** – Mandatory Water Use Restrictions Considered

When there are higher stresses on water resources – including surface water such as creeks, rivers, and Lake Huron and groundwater in aquifers (below our feet) – the Water Response Team issues low water advisories of levels 1, 2, or 3.

For practical water conservation tips visit the water quantity page at **abca.ca**.

Fast-flowing, high water, downstream of Morrison Dam, after the September 2021 flood event.

Wet weather in late 2021 results in rise in water levels of shallow aquifers

By Davin Heinbuck, Water Resources Coordinator

The 2001 Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) initiative is a continued partnership between conservation authorities and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP). This partnership maintains a network of more than 400 groundwater monitoring wells across Ontario.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has 16 wells throughout the watershed. These are five bedrock wells and 11 overburden wells.

We have logged hourly groundwater level data for nearly 20 years at most well sites. Staff download groundwater data or use Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) satellite at selected sites where real-time data such as rainfall is required.

Groundwater level data shows annual cycles are fairly consistent. These data highlight the critical annual recharge periods of autumn and spring. Long-term groundwater levels have remained relatively stable over the monitoring period but the degree of groundwater level changes within a single year has shown more variability. These changes are driven by weather patterns such as drought periods or periods of higher than normal precipitation. For instance, the wet weather observed through the last half of 2021 resulted in steady rise in the water levels of the shallow aquifers. Based on the program's relatively short period of record, it remains a challenge to accurately determine historic and long-term trends.

Groundwater Resources and the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN)

Water quality sampling is another critical component of PGMN and the ABCA has groundwater-quality data available for each well from 2003 to 2021. To match the core requirements province-wide, we analyze water quality for nutrients, metals, and general chemistry. Exceedance notices are issued to the landowner and the respective municipality and local public health body when water quality parameter exceeds provincial guidelines. Numerous exceedance notices have been issued, to date, but most of them have been for Sodium and Fluoride, which occur naturally in elevated levels throughout much of Southwestern Ontario. With Ontario's recent alignment with Health Canada and the World Health Organization's standard for maximum allowable concentration of arsenic in drinking water set at 0.010mg/L, PGMN wells located in areas of naturally elevated arsenic have become subject to exceedances. The previous Ontario Drinking Water Standard was 0.025mg/L for arsenic.



New railings were installed at Morrison Dam in 2021.

Safety railings installed at Morrison Dam

By Ross Wilson, MSc, PAg, CCA-ON, Water and Soils Resource Coordinator

The Canadian Dam Association produces Dam Safety Guidelines to ensure public safety around dams. One of the guidelines focuses on restriction of the public access to locations with fall hazards and/or water hazards.

Like most dams, Morrison Dam has these locations also. These locations had been protected by wood railings. Despite these wood railings having previously successfully prevented access to these hazards, the railings were sufficiently old that their design, materials and location required updating.

Structures, Operations, and Maintenance

Ontario's Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) program provided funding to replace these railings with a modern set. In November of 2021, these new, modern railings were installed in four locations on Morrison Dam, ensuring the public could remain safe while enjoying the recreational opportunities afforded by the dam.

Walker Drain Engineering Study completed in 2021

By Ross Wilson, MSc, PAg, CCA-ON, Water and Soils Resource Coordinator

The Walker Drain Erosion Control Works were constructed in 1975 on a 300-metre section of Walker Drain in the village of Grand Bend near the confluence with Parkhill Creek.

This section of the channel was deeply incised and required erosion control protection consisting of graded banks, gabion baskets/ mattresses, and grade control structures. These structures are approaching their life expectancy and have received several modest improvements over the last 20 years. Recent annual inspections by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff have noted that some further repairs may be necessary but an engineering investigative study was required to detail the exact physical extent and nature of the required repairs.

This study was completed in the autumn of 2021 with partial funding through Ontario's Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) funding program. The summary report noted that, despite the gabion wire deterioration in certain specific locations, the overall structure remained stable.

Water and Erosion Control

The Walker Drain study found it continues to serve its erosion control function. Our staff will continue to monitor for any possible degradation in the future.

The study found the drain continues to provide the erosion control services of the original design. Ongoing annual inspection by ABCA staff will continue to more closely monitor specific vulnerable areas to watch for further degradation of the structure's competence.

Source protection committee videos were a great success in 2021. Mary Ellen Foran (Agriculture) shows how you can access online mapping; Dave Frayne (Municipal) explains drinking water protection zone signs; Jennette Walker (Environment) uses a groundwater model to demonstrate how aquifers work and how contamination can occur.

Committee uses videos as education tools

By Donna Clarkson and Mary Lynn MacDonald, Program Co-Supervisors

Source protection committee members have found effective ways to reach out to the sectors they represent even with fewer opportunities for in-person gatherings.

The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee (SPC) prepared videos, featuring committee members, in 2021.

The committee has released seven videos. The response to this video series has been amazing. The videos have received more than 19,000 views. (Watch the videos at: **sourcewaterinfo.on.ca/news/videos**)

The videos have provided an effective way to promote drinking water source protection to the local community. News releases about the videos generated extensive print articles and broadcast coverage reaching audiences beyond the Internet. SPC members presented the videos at service clubs. Schools added them to their curriculum resources. Municipalities and training providers included them on their websites.

Proposed Amendments to Source Protection Plans

The Source Protection Committee is revising policies to improve implementation and reflect new regulations. New technical rules, from the Province of Ontario, include significant reductions in some thresholds related to determination of some drinking water threat activities.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION
Our Actions Matter
Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region

The new rules will require new policies for salt and snow in vulnerable areas around municipal wells.

Visit our **sourcewaterinfo.on.ca** website and sign up for our e-newsletter emails. They are great resources to provide you with pending information on how to take part in consultation on the amendments to be made to our locally developed, provincially approved source protection plans.

Donna Clarkson

Mary Lynn MacDonald

Fourth Progress Report

The annual report documented source protection plan implementation:

Policy Implementation	97%
Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendments incl. Source Protection	69%
Septic Inspections in Vulnerable Areas	99%
Risk Management Plans	99%
Drinking Water Protection Signs	88

Adelaide Metcalfe is in it for the long run

By Kate Monk, Projects Coordinator, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Conservation is not new to Adelaide Metcalfe. The Township of Adelaide was a founding member of the former Ausable River Conservation Authority, established in 1946 through a partnership between local municipalities and the Province of Ontario. The township has had a representative, a voice and a vote at the boardroom table ever since. As such, it is part of a 75-year effort to conserve water and soil and shows commitment from councils, staff and landowners.

Sixty-six square kilometres (16,308 acres) in Adelaide Metcalfe drain into Adelaide Creek. The headwaters near Highway 402 enter the Ausable River north of Keyser in North Middlesex. From there, the Ausable River flows through the Ausable Gorge, Ausable River Cut and eventually reaches Lake Huron at Port Franks. The municipality is also in Sydenham River watershed, part of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority watershed.

Landowners have worked with Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff to complete on-the-ground projects such as tree planting, wetland creation and erosion control. David Ball, of Ball Farms, is one of those landowners. He has done conservation projects on his farms for 30 years. He was a Conservationist of the Year Award winner in 1992 after he completed a project to fence cattle out of the watercourse and provide alternate watering. Since then he has planted trees on several farms and along creeks. The benefits of these trees include protecting creek banks, holding onto soil, and providing shade which lowers water temperatures for aquatic life. In the days when there was cattle at Ball Farms they did fencing and planting projects to reduce erosion. Erosion from wind and runoff is always an issue so “trees help to keep the soil in place.”

David says he’s not the only one planting trees – his neighbours are also working with us to plant trees for the future. Ball Farms is near Kerwood, Ontario. David is the third generation of his family to farm at the family farm. “I have been here all my life as was my father before me and his father before him,” he said. This self-described tree lover and bird lover has worked with us to plant about 40 acres of trees.

Featured Municipality:
Township of Adelaide Metcalfe

Participating landowner David Ball and Forestry Specialist Ian Jean.

About 10 per cent of David’s property is in trees. “I’m putting trees back where it’s not practical to use the big machinery of today.”

David likes the wildlife that shows up after he has planted trees, like deer and many kinds of birds (including meadowlarks, red-winged blackbirds, finches, orioles, turkeys, woodcocks, and hawks.) “Species show up we didn’t have before,” he said. David enjoys Carolinian tree species and the changing of colours in autumn when deciduous trees drop their leaves. People enjoy watching the trees grow over the years.

We thank David and we thank all the landowners making stewardship improvements in the Township of Adelaide Metcalfe. In the past 10 years, four landowners have restored 9.4 acres of wetlands and enhanced or retired an additional 9.6 acres of wet area surrounding the wetlands. In addition, 500 trees were planted around one of the wetland sites. These projects consist of excavations and berms to hold back water in flood plain areas.

Wetland projects provide water storage during storm events reducing flooding and erosion downstream. They allow sediments and nutrients to settle out and provide filtration, reducing sediments and nutrients that could end up in the rivers or Lake Huron.

Landowners have been doing good work beyond their partnership with the two conservation authorities. Everyone has a role to play in protecting water for current and future generations and we thank them for their efforts.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Landowners, residents, volunteers maintain parks, trails, nature areas

By Meghan Tydd-Hrynyk, ABCA Planning and Regulations Officer

The Municipality of Bluewater has three historic villages (Bayfield, Hensall, and Zurich). It has culinary, shopping and cultural experiences; five beautiful Lake Huron beaches; countryside; and schools. It has trails and nature areas such as Bannockburn Conservation Area. The municipality has landowners, residents and volunteers who devote countless hours creating a healthy watershed community. Bluewater also has a very special place called Pioneer Park, cared for by a very special group of people, the Pioneer Park Association.

This privately owned park, on the shoreline of Lake Huron, is in the scenic Village of Bayfield. In 1945 local resident Lucy Woods, with the help of Jessie Metcalfe and John Stewart, organized the purchase of the land for a park. It was incorporated and named Pioneer Park after Ontario granted a charter in 1947.

The mission and purpose of Pioneer Park Association is to promote the health and enjoyment of Bayfield and vicinity through owning, preserving, improving and managing park(s) open to the public without charge and other projects for the welfare of the community.

So residents and vacationers alike could access the beach and to maintain the parkland at the top of the slope, shoreline protection work took place at the base of the slope along Pioneer Park Association property. In 1984, the Association contacted Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) to install large concrete storm sewer pipes along the toe of the bank and fill with sand/gravel. Since then, the Park Association has worked with ABCA, the municipality, coastal engineers, and others on shoreline projects including in 2011; 2012; 2018; 2019; 2020; and in 2021. (More detail on these projects is outlined in the full article at **abca.ca**).

The collaborative approach with multiple landowners and agencies has allowed Pioneer Park to realize its mission statement. Pioneer Park is a notable example of Bluewater volunteers working hard for their community. Here are more:

In 2020, Blue Bayfield won our Conservationist of the Year Award.

Residents have practised stewardship and added rain gardens and rain barrels.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of Bluewater

This collage shows the toe of the Lake Huron bluff, near Pioneer Park in Bayfield, after shoreline projects. (2012; 2018; 2020; 2021).

The Bayfield River Valley Trail Association, along with many generous community donors, raised more than $70,000 to buy the Bayfield River Flats and to donate it to Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy for permanent preservation.

The Main Bayfield and Bayfield North communities have created and implemented community watershed plans.

The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation has generously invested considerable resources to support Great Lakes stewardship in Bayfield and area.

Volunteers from Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association have helped, for about 15 years, with water sampling and monitoring of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) at Lake Huron beaches. The dedication of these and other citizen scientists in Bluewater provides valuable data, to numerous agencies, about local water quality. We could not run the program without their help.

We congratulate Pioneer Park Association on three quarters of a century of stewardship of Pioneer Park.

We also thank all the residents, landowners, and volunteers in the Municipality of Bluewater for many decades of partnership on conservation projects that help to create a healthy watershed community.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

‘Experience our Nature’ in Central Huron

By Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Manager, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Experience our Nature! is the invitation on the 2021 Central Huron Fall Guide. With an abundance of natural areas including the Lake Huron shoreline, watercourses, valley lands, wetlands, woodlots, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and other environmentally sensitive areas, Central Huron has recognized its natural potential.

Watersheds in Central Huron are recognized as some of the more natural areas in the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) watershed area.

In 2021, ABCA celebrated its 75th anniversary (1946-2021) and we would like to acknowledge the contributions the residents and the Municipality of Central Huron have made to balance the interests of development and natural protection.

The shoreline watersheds and the Bayfield River watershed joined the ABCA area in 1972. Over the years since then, there has been a ‘willingness to try something new’ to provide the basis for community, building a strong economic foundation including a vibrant agricultural sector, with a focus on protecting and enhancing watershed resources.

From a watershed perspective, small, jump-able temporary streams or swales account for 90 per cent of a river’s flow. How we manage these systems helps us better manage flooding, erosion and water quality in downstream rivers and lakes.

Municipal staff at Central Huron, the late Tom Sinclair and Geoff King in particular, have demonstrated innovative approaches in the management of these ‘headwater’ systems. Responding to community concerns about water quality, Tom Sinclair helped to divert excess water from the Town of Clinton through a settling pond at the edge of Clinton.

The Municipal Drainage Superintendent of Central Huron, Geoff King, has helped to construct projects that help to meet ecosystem needs and improve agricultural production. The off-line sediment control pond on the Steenstra Drain, near the corner of Parr Line and Bayfield Road, is one example. Mr. King also helped with projects in the Gully Creek study.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of Central Huron

This photo shows Bayfield (in the Municipality of Bluewater); and north of that area, parts of the Municipality of Central Huron along the Lake Huron shoreline. (Dan Holm photo)

Mayor of Central Huron, Jim Ginn, has sat on the ABCA Board of Directors (2004 – 2012 and 2018) and served as the Chair of our Board (2010-2011). He promoted watershed actions that protect fish in Middlesex Centre; Bluewater; Huron East (with the Huronview Demonstration Farm); and (naturally!) Central Huron.

Since 2008, 30 landowners in Gully Creek, a shoreline tributary north of Bayfield, have employed many agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and supported the field and watershed monitoring. Best management practices have included reduced tillage, implementation of cover crops, nutrient management and the installation of 45(!) Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCoBs or berms). The evaluation of Gully Creek has helped to develop a broader awareness, provincially, around the importance of cover crops, improved soil health, and a ‘stacked’ approach to agricultural BMP implementation.

In context of the broad community support to recognize nature in Central Huron, recent land donations to the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy, including the Woodburne Farm and Mayhew Tract properties, demonstrate the deep commitment by members of the community. These donations mean that natural areas in the Municipality of Central Huron will be protected and experienced for generations to come.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

This collage of four photos shows Huron East students planting; water treatment operator Alyssa Keller in a video at the Seaforth water treatment plant; a school planting project; and Yellow Fish Road™ educational painting by a storm sewer in Seaforth.

Huron East located in Bayfield River headwaters

by Denise Iszczuk, Conservation Educator, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Over the years, the Municipality of Huron East has supported and partnered with Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) to educate local students about soil, water and habitat for all living things.

The staff and students of St. James and St. Columban Catholic Schools and Seaforth Public School have always been keen to learn about the world around them.

A favourite field trip is to study science at one of ABCA's conservation areas and even making the trip to Rock Glen Conservation Area near Arkona.

Many students in Grade 6 were immersed in outdoor studies while attending the Sylvan Conservation Program at Camp Sylvan.

In 2011, students and staff at Seaforth Public School 'greened' up their school by planting trees and shrubs.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of Huron East

In recent years, the Municipality of Huron East participated in the Yellow Fish Road™ program of Trout Unlimited Canada for the painting of yellow fish by the storm drains. The yellow fish serve as a reminder that storm drains are linked to nearby rivers. Teachers and their students from Seaforth Public School were happy to get involved with this project.

The previous autumn, local support helped to produce a Virtual Tour of the Water Treatment Facility in Seaforth.

This engaging video can be viewed on Ausable Bayfield Conservation's YouTube Channel.

Hats off to Huron East!

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Lambton's 'other' shore: Ausable River & 75 years of conservation

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

The Municipality of Lambton Shores is blessed with natural features such as Lake Huron beaches, sand dunes, Carolinian forest and deep, fertile soils. With big Lake Huron forming the western border, it's easy to overlook the Ausable River, which is the eastern municipal boundary. One of the most species-rich river systems in Canada, the Ausable supports more than 80 fish species; 24 freshwater mussel species; and 21 reptile species.

Entering the municipality at Rock Glen near Arkona, the Ausable flows north through the Ausable River Valley, a provincially recognized Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) between Rock Glen and Thedford. The steep-sided valley is home to Carolinian forests with trees such as Flowering Dogwood; Sassafras; and Tulip Tree reaching their northern limit here. At the bottom of the valley, the river's sand and gravel riffles support rare freshwater mussels such as the Snuffbox; Northern Riffleshell; Wavy-rayed Lampmussel; and the Purple Wartyback.

The spring-fed Old Ausable Channel provides habitat to rare fish. The mouth of the Ausable River at Port Franks is a place of great biodiversity. The main river, Mud Creek, and small spring-fed inland lakes, wetlands and dunes support birds, mammals and reptiles. The Port Franks area is home to Ontario's only lizard (the Five-lined Skink) and was the last place in Canada where the extirpated Karner Blue Butterfly was seen.

An early conservation authority project was to support creation of Pinery Provincial Park in 1959. Ausable River Conservation Authority was part of a group that lobbied the Province of Ontario to buy the land. Initially unsuccessful, the conservation authority then produced the *Pinery Report* and presented it to service clubs and other organizations to build public support for a provincial park. The efforts paid off with the provincial decision to buy Pinery lands in 1957.

Rock Glen Conservation Area is another example of community collaboration. Park development surrounding the waterfall and river area was initiated in 1948 by Arkona Lions Club. In 1954 Ausable River Conservation Authority purchased the nine-acre park area, which has expanded to 60 acres.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of Lambton Shores

Clockwise from top left: Rock Glen Falls; Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group wins 2016 Conservationist of the Year Award; Rosalind Chang holds Lake Chubsucker at Old Ausable Channel; and start of Ausable River Cut.

Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre was moved to Rock Glen in 1985. The Lions still operate the museum (now being renovated) which, along with Rock Glen Falls, picnic grounds and trails, draw tens of thousands of visitors annually.

Lambton Shores is fortunate to have many active volunteer groups engaged in conservation.

Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group has made significant progress managing invasive Phragmites grass which threatens boating and habitat.

Lambton Shores Nature Trails has developed and maintained more than 20 kilometres of hiking trails with trail maps, interpretive signage and projects such as installation of a floating dock and stairs for canoes and kayaks at Ausable River Cut Conservation Area.

Lakeshore Eco-Network, through fundraising and educational events, supports tree planting, climate action and conservation in the region.

Drive along any rural road in Lambton Shores and you will notice where people are taking positive actions such as tree-lined streams; field windbreaks; and water control berms. This helps to reduce surface water runoff, erosion of soil and streams, downstream flooding, and sedimentation. The work of community groups, residents, and landowners is important for the viability and function of the river and the important natural habitat it supports.

Read the complete article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Conservation remains strong focus in growing township

By Shevaun Verhoog, ABCA Aquatic Resource Technician

The Township of Lucan Biddulph is home to tributary streams that contribute to the Little Ausable River. The township is also home of a growing number of residents. As the township grows, it continues to foster its close relationship with Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). “We consider the ABCA partners in our growth,” said Ron Reymer, Lucan Biddulph’s Chief Administrative Officer. “We all have an interest in making sure things get done correctly.”

He has worked for the township for more than 30 years. Over three decades, he and the township have developed a close working relationship with ABCA and its staff. The conservation authority and the township share the philosophy of finding cooperative and partnership solutions. “We try to work with people, to sit down together and figure it out,” he said.

Some notable projects over his past 30 years working with ABCA include two-zone flood mapping in the 1990s. Other projects include tree planting behind municipal buildings. Each year, the township buys trees for the parks and roadsides tree replacement initiative. Two trees are provided for every tree removed under their roadside tree replacement program. “Every year we buy trees and every year, from storms or from age, some trees need to come down,” he said. “Our policy is that when we remove a tree we plant two trees.”

The council, staff, and ratepayers of Lucan Biddulph have made local conservation a priority.

Students of Wilberforce Public School, Lucan, showed they are Watershed Champions with a Wetland Project and Nature Study Area at their school. (Watch the video!) ABCA’s Annual Reports document many stewardship projects each year by participating landowners in Lucan Biddulph. There is great value to these projects. They combine the investments of participating property owners with those of funding partners. There are benefits in economic terms of project value and in protection of the watershed resources upon which we rely. These actions protect water quality, soil health, and habitat for native fish species of the Little Ausable River.

Featured Municipality:
Township of Lucan Biddulph

In the top two photos, we see before and after planting photos at the Wetland and Nature Study Area, a Watershed Champions project, at Wilberforce Public School in Lucan. In the bottom photo, a tree planting crew plants trees in Lucan Biddulph. When the township has to remove a tree, they replace it with two.

Some of Lucan Biddulph’s residents have been recognized as Conservationists of the Year. For instance, Paul and Vic Hodgins, owners of Shadyside Farms, were winners in 2005. The award winner the next year was the Middlesex Eco Crew, nominated by the Township of Lucan Biddulph. The Eco Crew helped Lucan Biddulph municipal staff remove four truckloads of illegally-disposed garbage from a steep riverbank on Fallon Drive, north of Lucan, over three days.

These are just some examples of Lucan Biddulph putting conservation into action. There are many more.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation celebrated its 75th anniversary (1946-2021) in 2021. Our conservation authority looks forward to continuing to protect and enhance watershed resources through a close and productive working relationship with all of our 12 member municipalities, including Lucan Biddulph’s council, staff, and residents.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Tributary streams contribute surface water, groundwater to system

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

The rolling fields and productive farmland of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre supply water to three of southern Ontario's major watersheds: the Ausable, Thames, and Sydenham. The Ausable River itself does not flow through Middlesex Centre but several tributary streams contribute surface and groundwater to the system. These tributaries support important fish habitat and spawning areas within these streams and downstream in the main Ausable and, eventually, Lake Huron.

Farm owners and other residents of Middlesex Centre have a long history of land stewardship and conservation work. For the past 75 years, Ausable Bayfield Conservation has been fortunate to be able to work with the community to help with conservation projects for the benefit of its residents and the broader watershed. During the last two decades alone, Middlesex Centre landowners have partnered with Ausable Bayfield Conservation to complete more than 50 conservation projects.

If you drive along any of the rural roads you will see the results of these efforts: tree-lined streams, field windbreaks, and wetlands. Less visible but equally important are in-field grassed waterways and erosion control berms. These stewardship projects are very important for controlling surface water flow, reducing soil erosion and flooding, and reducing sedimentation of streams. By keeping topsoil in fields, this infrastructure also improves soil health and agricultural productivity. That's a true win-win.

Community leadership has been central to conservation. Local residents and farmer volunteers involved in the Middlesex Stewardship Council helped to support Ausable Bayfield Conservation efforts and projects in the area for many years. More recently, Trees for Lobo Township, a project started and run by community volunteers and now adopted by the Lions Club of Poplar Hill, provides trees for roadside planting in Middlesex Centre. During the past nine years, this initiative has seen more than 2,200 trees planted along roadsides in the township.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of Middlesex Centre

There are only two coldwater systems, in Ausable Bayfield watersheds, where Brook Trout are found. Nairn Creek and Black Creek are them. The Brook Trout has very specific habitat needs including cold water. Positive stewardship actions of landowners in Nairn Creek and area help to preserve this species.

Nairn Creek is the largest tributary stream in the Ausable portion of Middlesex Centre. Fed by groundwater springs at its headwaters near Denfield, where it is also known there as Denfield Creek, the water runs south to Lobo Township, then turns northwest to join the Ausable at Nairn. Nairn Creek is significant in that it provides coldwater habitat for Brook Trout. This fish species has particular water quality requirements such as constant water flow, cold water temperatures, high oxygen concentrations, low suspended-solid concentrations, and streambeds free of silt. The presence of Brook Trout is a testament to local conservation efforts, and highlights the importance of ongoing stewardship and care to ensure the viability of the trout.

Funding support, from local, provincial and federal programs is available to local landowners for many conservation projects. One of the key roles of Ausable Bayfield Conservation is providing technical advice and assistance in securing financial support for these beneficial projects. After the celebration of 75 years at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (1946-2021), we look forward to continuing this important work in partnership with the community.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

North Middlesex home to climate change station, dam, conservation area

By Tommy Kokas, Water Resources Engineer, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

A rich legacy of stewardship; flood forecasting, warning and prevention; conservation area enjoyment; local monitoring; and leading-edge provincial research has taken place in the Municipality of North Middlesex over three quarters of a century. That legacy is possible thanks to a productive partnership with the municipality and the landowners and residents of North Middlesex.

We do not have space here for the entire article so I invite you to read the full feature at **abca.ca**.

Parkhill Creek Climate Station

In 2011, Parkhill Creek watershed was selected as one of seven provincial sites for the installation of an integrated climate change monitoring station. In 2012, construction was complete and the station became operational, alongside the long-term flow monitoring station.

Parkhill Creek Integrated Water and Climate Research Station is one of Ontario's most comprehensive stations for monitoring weather and climate change impacts.

The station's development was funded through the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA), by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (now Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks or MECP). The initial investment from the Province of Ontario was nearly $100,000, with ongoing funding for the operation of the station.

The Parkhill station is the most comprehensive climate station in the Province with 29 sensors measuring 33 different parameters. Parameters include surface and groundwater quality and quantity, and meteorological and soil conditions.

Parkhill Dam

Parkhill Dam was created, in part, to protect agricultural land from flooding. That makes it distinct in Ontario.

The Town of Parkhill experienced frequent floods, originating from the Cameron-Gillies Drain, in the 1940s. At the same time, the flats in the lower reaches of the Old Ausable River, known as the Klondyke area, were developed into highly productive farmland and crops experienced considerable flood damage. In 1949, the need for flood control on Parkhill Creek was identified. Subsequent studies (1959 and 1963) showed the need to build a flood control dam.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of North Middlesex

Parkhill Integrated Water and Climate Research Station is the most comprehensive climate station in Ontario with 29 sensors measuring 33 different parameters.

Construction of Parkhill Dam began in 1967 by Redfern Construction Company Ltd., and it was completed in 1969.

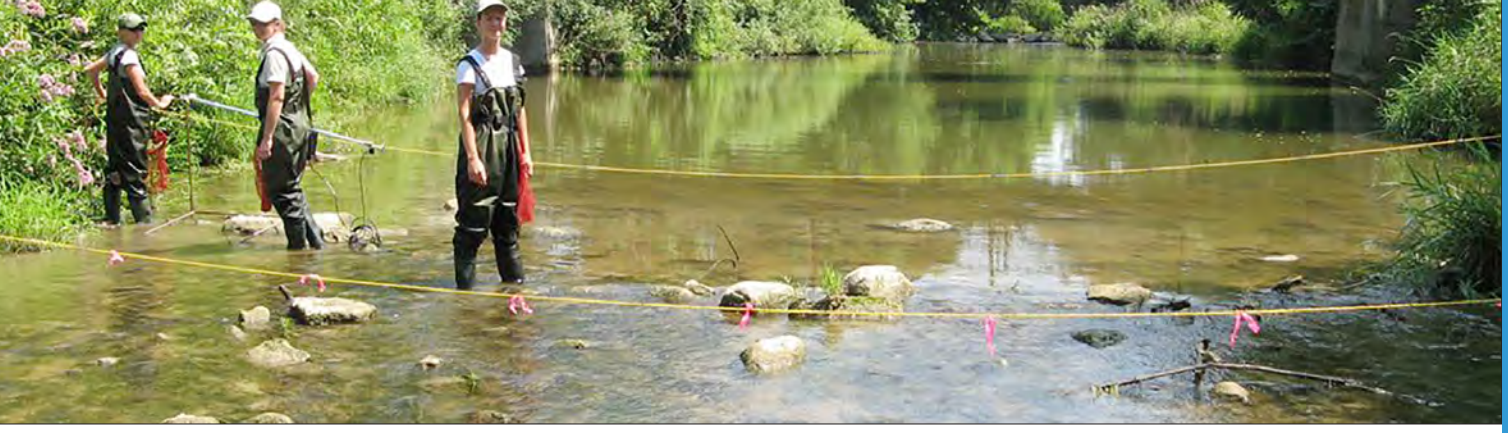
The primary goals were to provide flood control and streamflow augmentation for Parkhill Creek. Parkhill received flood protection by the Cameron-Gillies diversion included in the project. Secondary considerations were an emergency water supply and development of a recreational area based on the lake created by the project.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) maintains and operates Parkhill Dam. ABCA staff complete inspections each year in the spring, after the freshet. This includes inspecting the control tower; concrete integrity; embankment condition (riprap still in place); buoys being visible; no clogging at inlet (debris built up); etc. There are also piezometer wells on the north and south dam that monitor water levels below the dam throughout the year.

Thank you, all!

The partnership with North Middlesex and other partners in the municipality has protected agricultural land from flooding through Parkhill Dam; created a nature destination in Parkhill Conservation Area and Parkhill Reservoir and Scenic Lookout and Boat Launch; created a place to remember loved ones at the Commemorative Woods; and made improvements through local stewardship. I would like to thank you again for all you do for conservation. We look forward to many more years of partnership together.

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary



Ausable Bayfield Conservation staff members monitor mussel populations in the Little Ausable River, downstream of the Township of Perth South. Stewardship projects by participating landowners in Perth South help to reduce runoff and protect aquatic species at risk.

Stewardship work in Perth South protects mussels downstream

By Shevaun Verhoog, Aquatic Resource Technician, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

While most of the Township of Perth South drains towards Lake Erie, and only a small portion of the township is located in the Ausable Bayfield watershed (draining towards Lake Huron), the area is an important one as it contributes to the headwaters of the Ausable River.

Tributary streams along Highway 23, between Woodham and Whalen Corners, form the headwaters of the Little Ausable River. The Little Ausable runs through the Township of Lucan Biddulph before joining and becoming the Ausable River. This river eventually reaches Port Franks where it drains into Lake Huron. These streams are starting points for the lives of many animals. Some of these aquatic creatures are classified as species at risk, due to a decline in their populations.

Species found in the area include freshwater mussels. Freshwater mussels spend most of their life buried in the streambed. Freshwater mussels are similar to clams. They are known as bivalves. This means they are two shells attached on a hinge.

Mussels filter through water for their food and, as a result, they can act as indicators for water quality based on changes in their populations. In the Ausable River we find 26 different species of freshwater mussels. Six of those species are considered species at risk. These include the Kidneyshell; Snuffbox; Northern Riffleshell; Wavy-rayed Lampmussel; Rainbow Mussel; and Mapleleaf Mussel. These animals prefer clean, cool, and flowing water as their habitat, and can live for many years.

Featured Municipality:
Township of Perth South

Mussels are vulnerable to changes in water quality, such as an increase of pollution or siltation. Decreases in the water quality can result in a decline in the freshwater mussel populations, as they are unable to survive significant changes to their natural habitat.

Stewardship projects in Perth South, and other municipalities in the watershed, have helped decrease runoff of soil, pollutants and sediment. Field windbreaks, tree lines, vegetative buffer strips, and berms all help slow the flow of water running off into the streams. This helps maintain critical habitat for these species at risk. Projects like these can have impacts on the streams adjacent to where they are but can also influence the lives of species living all along the Ausable River.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority celebrated its 75th anniversary (1946-2021) in 2021 and we want to recognize projects and partnerships since 1946 in our 12 member municipalities. Through the means of this article we thank the Township of Perth South, and participating landowners, for their decades of stewardship and partnership. We look forward to continuing biomonitoring research and stewardship projects in Perth South, and our other watershed municipalities, over the next 75 years!

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Communities, volunteers have created and improved trails; innovative conservation by landowners protects soil, water

By Abbie Gutteridge, Chair, Ausable Bayfield Conservation 75th Anniversary Committee

The Municipality of South Huron has a variety of landscapes – from acres of farmland, to forested trails, to urban centres and lakeshore communities. This diverse area has been shaped by the people who call it home.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Administration Centre office has been located in South Huron for 75 years, first in Exeter, and later at the Morrison Dam Conservation Area east of Exeter since 1983. During this time, ABCA has had the privilege of working closely with the communities in South Huron on projects that benefit the entire municipality and the greater watershed.

Staff from ABCA have enjoyed working with many farmers on stewardship efforts throughout the municipality. Farms in Usborne and Stephen were among the early adopters of no-till and conservation tillage practices, with support from conservation programs.

Always innovators, today many South Huron farmers have added cover crops to their rotation to improve soil health and productivity and help water quality. This not only benefits the crops, but also helps to reduce erosion and sediment in local streams, rivers, and Lake Huron.

When visiting MacNaughton Park in Exeter, Ontario you will find the start of the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail. The eight-kilometre South Huron Trail follows the Ausable River and circles Morrison Reservoir, making it a scenic hike with diverse wildlife.

The MacNaughton-Morrison section of the trail was constructed in 2002 as a partnership between several organizations in the community including: Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority; Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation; Exeter Lions Club; the Municipality of South Huron; local landowners; and many other community supporters.

In 2018, Jones Bridge (dedicated by Donna Jones, in loving memory of Ted Jones) was built to connect the sections of the trail and allow walkers a safe way to cross the Ausable River.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of South Huron

In this collage of three photos, we see (clockwise from left); tree planting and stewardship in South Huron; some members of Friends of the South Huron Trail; and some beautiful sunflower cover crops planted to help improve soil health and water quality.

This bridge was made possible by generous donors and volunteers and is a testament to the spirit of community in South Huron!

The Friends of the South Huron Trail, formed in 2005, is a group of local volunteers who care for the trail and community by hosting cleanup days and events, fundraisers for the trail and provide support that increases opportunities for people with limited mobility to experience nature on the trail. This group continues to help make this trail a benefit to the health and well-being of the South Huron community.

These are just a few examples of positive partnerships that have developed over 75 years, and we look forward to the next 25 years of working with the communities of the Municipality of South Huron!

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

These photos show tree planting and stewardship and water quality monitoring. Residents of the Township of Warwick have been practising stewardship over many decades. These positive actions help to protect downstream water quality and species in the Ausable River.

Stewardship in Warwick Township has positive downstream benefits for Rock Glen Falls, Ausable River, species at risk

By Abbie Gutteridge, Chair, Ausable Bayfield Conservation 75th Anniversary Committee

Rock Glen Falls, located at Rock Glen Conservation Area in Arkona, Ontario, has always been an attraction to hikers, nature lovers and photographers. Rock Glen Falls feeds into the Ausable River, an important river system that provides habitat to several species at risk. Many people do not consider the origin of the Rock Glen Falls, however. Where does that water come from? The Hobbs-McKenzie Drain, along with several smaller drains, directly feed Rock Glen Falls. A portion of the drainage area lies north of Townsend Line but most of the watershed drainage area is located in the Township of Warwick.

The positive stewardship actions taken in this watershed directly protect the quality of water at Rock Glen Falls. This positive work also protects species at risk found in the Lower Ausable River. Those species at risk include the Snuffbox; Northern Riffleshell; and Mapleleaf mussels.

In total, just a little more than 17 square kilometres of Warwick Township falls into the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) watershed, while the majority contributes to the Bear Creek Headwaters; Brown Creek; as well as the Plympton Shoreline and Lambton Shores Tributaries in the St. Clair Region watershed.

Art Eastman lives and farms in Warwick Township. He is one of the landowners who does what he can to protect soil and water. For years, Mr. Eastman has planted trees and windbreaks on his property.

Featured Municipality:
Township of Warwick

"This is a windy area, so the main reason we plant the trees is to protect against wind erosion," he said. He also noted it was good for wildlife in the area. In addition, he has established wetlands on his property.

Positive actions throughout Warwick Township include tree planting projects, streambank stabilization, and establishing and enhancing wetlands. All of these individual actions add up to benefits for water quality downstream.

The Township of Warwick is also proactive in making sure there are opportunities for residents to dispose of large waste items and electronics. In October, the township hosted its Annual Fall Cleanup, which allows Warwick Township residents to take their large waste items and electronics to several depots, free of charge. By providing an easy way to dispose of these large items and electronics it protects creeks and rivers because it reduces the chance they might end up disposed improperly. Making it easy for residents to properly dispose of these items goes a long way to keeping our watershed clean.

We have been lucky to work in close partnership with the residents of Warwick Township for 75 years and we look forward to many more years of protecting our water and soil together.

Rivers get off to good start in West Perth

By Kate Monk, Projects Coordinator, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)

You wouldn't know, looking at the tiny creeks in West Perth, that they will become the Ausable River that reaches Lake Huron at Port Franks, or the Bayfield River at Bayfield. The people who rely on the river, throughout its journey to the lake, owe a large measure of thanks to the landowners who work diligently to conserve the headwaters. A drive through Hibbert Township and Logan Township shows the landscape features that help the rivers get off to a good start.

The most striking features include the tall, long rows of Spruce and Cedar trees. Most of these trees were purchased from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Reforestation Assistance Program. Some landowners planted the trees but many hired ABCA to do the planting.

For decades, landowners have been planting tree windbreaks to prevent the wind from eroding valuable topsoil.

Many of the windbreaks stretch the entire length of a farm and are more than fifty feet tall. With lower wind velocity, the soil stays on the fields where it's needed to grow crops. Windbreaks reduce wind speeds for up to 20 times their height. Although many windbreaks are perpendicular to roads, many have been planted along roadsides. These living snow fences can reduce the amount of snow blowing across roads, thereby improving driver visibility. They also provide habitat for beneficial bird species that will eat crop pests.

Windbreaks, planted along creeks and rivers, have the added benefit of shading the water, keeping it cool for fish and other aquatic life, and keeping soil from entering the creeks. Even grassed buffers can trap soil before it reaches the creek. These grassed buffers are often used by farm equipment to avoid compacting farm fields and farm families enjoy walking along the creeks. The corridors of green provide excellent wildlife habitat.

Windbreaks that surround farmsteads are called shelterbelts. They help reduce heating costs and cooling costs while providing a more pleasant environment for livestock and farmers.

Featured Municipality:
Municipality of West Perth

In this photo collage of seven photos, are shown (clockwise from top left): 1. The Staffa sign in the headwaters of the Ausable and Bayfield Rivers; 2. A forest in the 'Back 40'; 3. A buffer in West Perth; 4. A West Perth windbreak; 5. Conservation tillage in West Perth; 6. A West Perth forest; and 7. A shelterbelt in West Perth.

Hibbert is known for the back-forty forests; the long, linear woodlots in the middle of concessions. These include seeps and springs that feed the headwater streams. The snow stays in these woodlots a little longer in the spring to extend the spring freshet and augments base flow. Rain falling in woodlots also recharges aquifers. As an added bonus, the Sugar Maple woodlots produce maple syrup which supplements farm income.

It's not just trees that help the rivers get off to a good start. Farmers are practising crop rotation, conservation tillage, planting cover crops and installing berms and grassed waterways to keep the soil on the fields and build soil health, making it more resilient to drought and heavy rainfall events. Every one per cent of organic matter in the soil can absorb an inch of rain.

Thanks to the landowners in the Ausable and Bayfield headwaters for their dedication to conservation!

Read the entire article at abca.ca:
https://www.abca.ca/about/anniversary

Partnerships help us understand how to enhance Lake Huron

By Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Manager

This map (at right) underscores the importance of the multi-scale, collaborative approach the Healthy Lake Huron partnership has enabled since 2012.

There is variability in topography and management systems across the Lake Huron basin. We do not manage erosion and water quality at the lake level. Landowners and producers, with support from numerous agricultural and conservation organizations, have been managing soil and water at the field scale for decades.

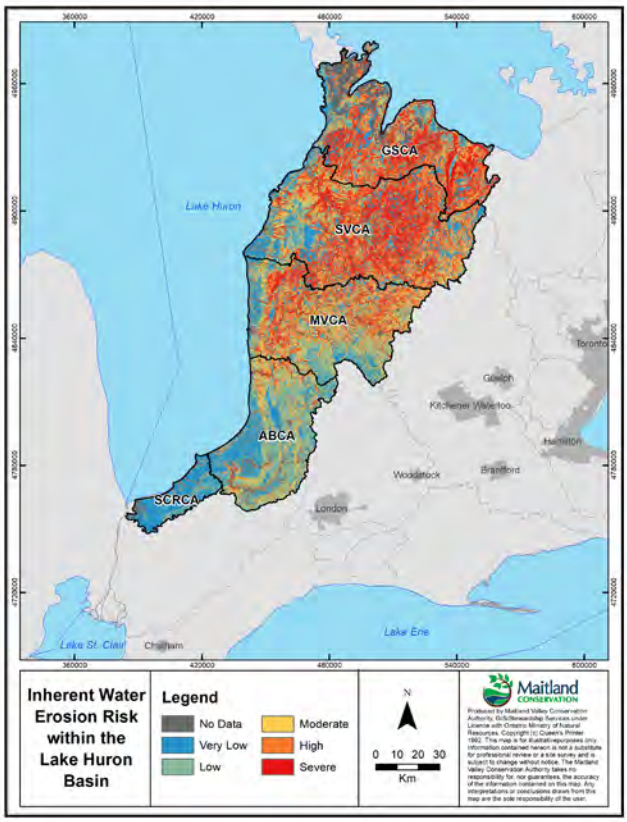
Establishing and maintaining robust relationships with landowners and producers helps society to understand how field-level decisions determine overall soil health and water quality of inland subwatersheds and Lake Huron as a whole.

This partnership has provided staff, at conservation authorities and other partner organizations, to look at things at different scales – from the lakewide scale to the sub-watershed and even local property scale. We have been able to 'zoom in and zoom out' to mitigate water quality and erosion starting at the property scale to local watershed scales.

Table 1: 2021 ABCA Water Quality and Bio-monitoring Stations

Type of station	# of stations
Dry weather – water quality	37
Wet weather – water quality	14
Best Management Practices Verification	10
Citizen Science	6
Fish	23
Reptiles (turtles)	5
Benthic macroinvertebrates	20

The number of stations reflects the funding commitments from year to year and there may be overlap between types. This does not include dissolved oxygen, temperature sites or vegetation plots.



Lake Huron Basin Inherent Water Erosion Risk

At Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), the Healthy Watersheds program has made it possible for many partners to share their perspectives with each other and to learn from each other. We do this by monitoring at 143 stations and working with 19 community groups.

In the next few pages, Healthy Watersheds staff, from ABCA, highlight important collaborative efforts from 2021. These efforts provide better understanding of tile drainage innovations and cover crop implementation; improving habitat conditions for imperiled freshwater animals; and understanding phosphorus dynamics in the nearshore of Lake Huron.

Table 2: 2021 Community Outreach by ABCA Healthy Watersheds Team

Community Outreach	Number
Community Groups	19
Community Events	18

Huronview survey shows interest in soil, water updates; Water quality data from Huronview Demo Farm to be studied

By Shevaun Verhoog, Aquatic Resource Technician and Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Mgr.

In 2021, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff continued to monitor water quality and water quantity at both the subsurface drains and overland pathways at the Huronview Demonstration Farm hosted by the Huron County Soil and Crop Improvement Association (HSCIA).

We conducted a survey, in 2021, of 60 local farmers and participants who attended the Drainage Demo Day in 2019. Respondents wanted information about the cost of the drainage innovation project installation and updates on soil and water conditions. A report on the survey and updates about the project are found online at **Huronview.net**

The report estimates that contoured drainage costs approximately 15 per cent more than conventional and that the additional cost of control gates would depend on the style of gate and the topography of the field.

While on the Huronview website please check out our videos explaining various best management practices and water quality monitoring initiatives taking place.

Healthy Watersheds staff helped to write a successful Alliance Grant proposal to Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

Huronview Demonstration Farm

Volunteers Pat Heffernan and Renee Sandelowsky, of Bayfield, help to clean out and maintain wood duck boxes at Huronview Demonstration Farm near Clinton.

This project will support an M.Sc. Hydrogeology student to analyze water monitoring data from the Huronview Demonstration Farm.

Healthy Watersheds staff monitor water quality and quantity and aquatic communities, including fish, freshwater mussel and benthic communities; enhance wetlands; and conduct watershed studies, including *Watershed Report Cards*, and community outreach.

Mari Veliz
Healthy Watersheds Manager

Kari Jean
Aquatic Biologist

Hope Brock
Healthy Watersheds Technician

Angela Van Niekerk
Wetlands Specialist

Shevaun Verhoog
Aquatic Resource Technician

Rosalind Chang
Healthy Watersheds Technician

NEW SIGNS RECOGNIZE COVER CROP PLANTING BENEFITS – Margaret Kroes, who farms with her husband, Jack, near Clinton, Ontario, is one of the local agricultural producers planting cover crops. Here, Margaret stands beside a new '*We've Got it Covered*!' sign.

Producers in watershed have '*got it covered*' with cover crops

By Hope Brock, Healthy Watersheds Technician

Main Bayfield watershed producers continue to show interest in planting covers crops. For the second year in a row, producers planted approximately 750 acres of cover crops thanks, in part, to funds from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation.

Sixty-four per cent of these farmers were new applicants to the program. Cover crops benefit soil health *and* water quality by reducing the loss of nutrients and topsoil, reducing erosion, and building organic matter in soil. To recognize producers using cover crops and to encourage others to think about use of cover crops in their operations, producers displayed signs along their field edges declaring '*We've Got it Covered*!'

Peer-to-peer learning was supported with a Cover Crop Workshop and local demonstration projects.

Main Bayfield Watershed

WE'VE GOT IT COVERED! – Brandon Coleman, of Coleman Farms near Kippen, Ontario, is one of the local agricultural producers planting cover crops. New signs, saying '*We've Got it Covered*!' are in place at several farms of participating landowners in Bayfield and Lake Huron tributary watersheds.

Port Franks, Lambton Shores protect turtles

By Hope Brock, Healthy Watersheds Technician and Kari Jean, Aquatic Biologist

The turtle monitoring program, and the great work of the volunteers, helps Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) biologists to better understand turtles and the habitats they use.

Early spring marked the launch of an online reporting form on the ABCA home page, which streamlined community sightings reports. People in Grand Bend and Port Franks areas reported sixty reptile sightings.

Community-Based Turtle Monitoring

ABCA hosted a virtual tour of the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre where participants were given a behind-the-scenes look at what happens at this turtle hospital. Funding for the virtual tour is gratefully acknowledged from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation.

Gully Creek is an ONFARM watershed

By Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Manager

Since 2008, landowners in the Gully Creek watershed, north of Bayfield, have implemented best management practices (BMPs). Monitoring and modelling has shown water quality in Gully Creek is improving.

With ongoing study we can ask more detailed questions such as:

- Do some rural BMPs have both a field-scale and a watershed-scale benefit?
- What are ways to implement more BMPs?

These questions are addressed by multi-stakeholder collaboration, such as the On-Farm Applied Research and Monitoring (ONFARM) program, that bring different perspectives to the topic.

Bayfield North Watersheds

Three pillars of ONFARM are:

- Establishment of on-farm paired trials in-field to identify soil health indicators and test the effectiveness of BMPs in cooperation with farmers.
- Continuation of water monitoring and modelling to better understand soil health and water quality linkages and examine the cost-effectiveness of BMPs.
- Enhanced engagement opportunities with stakeholders and farmers to foster a network of demonstration farms.

Monitoring, protecting aquatic species in Ausable River

By Kari Jean, Aquatic Biologist

The Ausable River watershed continues to be of national significance and a priority for Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The Ausable River watershed is home to 26 freshwater mussel species and 85 fish species including some that are considered Species at Risk (SAR). Fish and mussels are important contributors to good river health and are sensitive to sediment and nutrients. Their presence can be used as an indicator of habitat conditions.

In 2021, with support from the federal government's Canada Nature Fund (CNF) and Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP), we sampled 10 fish index monitoring stations in the Old Ausable Channel (OAC) and the Little Ausable River as part of a long-term biomonitoring program.

We found 34 species of fish species including four varieties of SAR. We completed stewardship projects in the OAC and Little Ausable River to enhance water quality as well. Sampling at the same sites, in future, will track changes in the fish community, including SAR, over time. This can help to tell us more about the health of the river.

Ausable River Recovery – Monitoring and Community Outreach

Ausable Bayfield Conservation's Davin Heinbuck and Kari Jean hold juvenile, endangered Lake Chubsuckers at OAC.

In 2021, we conducted education and outreach events virtually via short videos and social media to provide information to community members about: Ausable River fish; freshwater mussels and reptile species; their habitat threats; and opportunities to protect aquatic species at risk through good stewardship practices.

This native plant buffer zone helps clean water before entering the stormwater management pond. This allows for extra treatment of water before it's released into the Little Ausable tributaries. At the same time, it provides valuable habitat to native wildlife including bees, butterflies, birds and amphibians.

Campanale stormwater pond after September flooding.

October planting at Campanale Stormwater Pond. This rain garden helps absorb nutrients and filter water runoff from the subdivision.

Green infrastructure work in partnership with Lucan Biddulph

By Rosalind Chang, Healthy Watersheds Technician

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has worked in partnership with the Township of Lucan Biddulph to:

- Build stormwater management projects that reduce sediment and nutrients entering watercourses in Little Ausable subwatershed. The Little Ausable is home to the Black Redhorse, a species-at-risk fish. Funding from Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program supported restoration projects on municipal and private lands.

  In 2021, Scouting groups, local school students and councillors helped plant more than 500 wetland plants in a rain garden enhancement and stormwater management pond buffer zone.

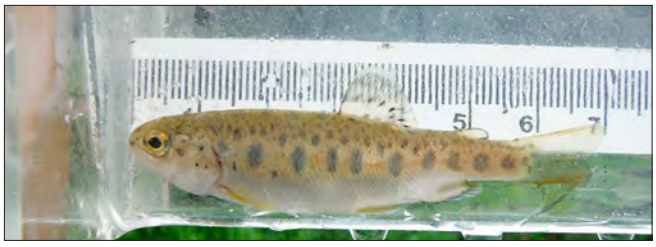
- Incorporate naturalized areas in new residential developments. Low Impact Development (LID) helps protect downstream habitat for species at risk and provide valuable green spaces for members of the community to gather and enjoy nature.

Several fish species are found in our local municipal drains

By Kari Jean, Aquatic Biologist

Many rural watercourses in Ontario are designated as municipal drains. Drains are classified into categories developed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

Classification is based on a drain's flow characteristics and types of fish living within it and helps to determine the best time of year for drain maintenance activities. Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided funding in 2021 that allowed Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority to continue with a monitoring program where fisheries assessments are conducted within drains.



Here we see a young Rainbow Trout found in a local municipal drain.

In 2021, we assessed 13 drains. The types of fish found included: different species of minnows, Perches, Sunfishes, suckers, Bass, Catfishes and young Rainbow Trout.

ABCA works with U.S. partners to quantify sediment loads

By Shevaun Verhoog, Aquatic Resource Technician and Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Mgr.

Thanks to funds from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, the Healthy Watersheds department was able to assist the University of Michigan, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on a project to quantify the sediment and related phosphorus coming from the nearshore of Lake Huron.

Healthy Watersheds staff sampled seven resuspension events, in Lake Huron between Grand Bend and Port Franks, with participating agricultural producers between March and November, 2021.

Results from this work will help to inform a better understanding of land-lake linkages and help to address water quality issues throughout the Great Lakes Basin.

Water Sampling

Agricultural producers joined Ausable Bayfield Conservation staff on a Lake Huron water sampling project in 2021.

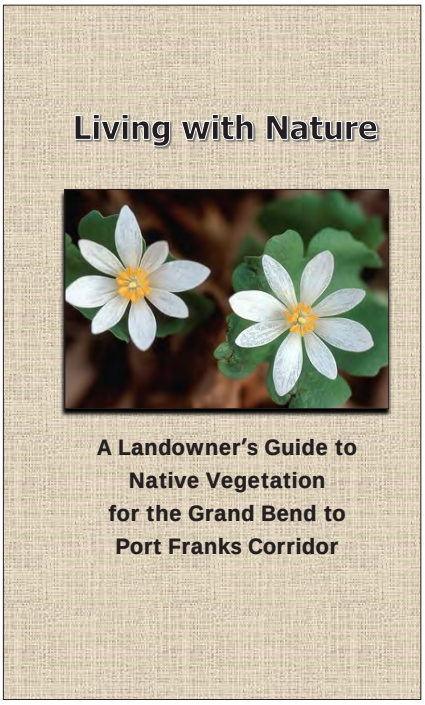
Working closely with Old Ausable Channel (OAC) community

By Rosalind Chang, Healthy Watersheds Technician

In 2021, the Habitat Stewardship Group of the Huron Woods community, with support from Healthy Watersheds staff, created a handful of pollinator plots for the David Suzuki Foundation's Butterflyway Project.

Further upstream, Southcott Pines Park Association's Environmental group continued to cut and rake Eurasian watermilfoil out of the Old Ausable Channel (OAC) to manage its density and spread and provide space for native vegetation to return.

Efforts to develop ideal water levels and dam and culvert maintenance are ongoing, as well as on-the-ground projects to restore bank vegetation and prevent erosion across the residential part of the channel.



This native species planting guide, by Kari Jean and Ian Jean, was reprinted in 2021.

The *Living with Nature* guide, a native plant guide for gardeners, was updated and reprinted, with copies being purchased by neighbourhood organizations and residents. There are limited quantities available for purchase through Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

Other communication highlights for the year include a webinar hosted by ABCA featuring Dr. Nick Mandrak, an esteemed species-at-risk fish researcher. This talk highlighted the OAC's ecological significance, a tree Walk and Talk for Southcott Pines Park Association, and site visits and recommendation plans for restoration and enhancement work on residential lands adjacent to the channel.

Figure A: Before construction.

Figure B: After restoration of second wetland in Thedford, with wetland seed broadcasted and oat cover crop and native plants planted around disturbed soils and edge of wetland. The other wetland has a dead tree placed in the shallow area for turtle basking habitat.

Working with landowners, we constructed eight wetlands

By Angela Van Niekerk, Wetlands Specialist

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff worked with participating landowners and volunteers to construct eight wetlands on four sites in 2021. This is a total of 3.7 acres of wetlands created. Working together we planted 2,500 plants over eighteen restoration sites.

Most projects were in the Ausable or Mud Creek watersheds. We were able to plant native plants with a class from South Huron District High School to add more biodiversity for the rain garden at Jessica's House. In addition, volunteers helped plant more native plants around the pond and butterfly garden at the Huron Hospice Residence.

This is the second year that we have worked with Baker's Nursery in Bayfield to grow native plants for wetlands and habitats in the community.

Thank you to all the landowners who appreciate and protect natural areas of their properties. The wetland restoration program would not be successful without the landowner participation and funders' support.

Wetlands

Figure C: Vegetation in marsh provides habitat for a Green Darner Dragonfly as well as filters our water.

Thank you to the volunteers and landowners who helped plant around the wetlands and cleaned out wood duck boxes. Thank you to the contractors that help with the restoration process. 2021 funders include: Canada Nature Fund (Fisheries and Oceans Canada); the EcoAction Community Funding Program; Ducks Unlimited Canada; Middlesex Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS); Huron Clean Water Project; Rural Lambton Stewardship Network; and the landowners.

New artwork, *A Watershed of Clay*, was installed at Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre in 2021. In photo are Hannah May and Nina Sampson.

A Fishing Tackle Recycler receptacle was donated by Blue Fish Canada and installed at Morrison Dam Conservation Area, in 2021, by Matt Fryer, of Lucan, above.

Increased conservation area use continues

By Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager

Conservation area use remained above normal throughout the ongoing pandemic. Fortunately, we were able to keep properties open to the public throughout 2021. Increased safety measures (consistent with Provincial, Municipal and local Public Health measures), at conservation areas, continued to keep users and staff safe.

Rock Glen Conservation Area (RGCA) remained a popular location for visitors in 2021.

We welcomed Michael Bax into the role of RGCA Superintendent. We thank Dale Cable and Johnathan Levitt for their help as Conservation Area Assistants. We welcomed Brooklyn Rau to our department, through the Canada Summer Jobs program, as the Conservation and Restoration Technician.

Managing invasive species, such as invasive Phragmites and Giant Hogweed, on lands owned by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), is a priority.

Trained staff and contractors complete invasive species management. This includes annual Phragmites management along the Ausable River through Lambton Shores. In 2021, ABCA worked with Municipality of Lambton Shores, Lambton Shores Phragmites Working Group, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Green Shovels Collaborative, and engaged landowners in the community of Port Franks. Together, we completed Phragmites management in L-Lake, Mud Creek, and the Ausable River.

The work completed in 2021 was the first phase of this larger project.

Conservation Land Management

Management in subsequent years will address invasive Phragmites in this important wetland ecosystem.

We appreciate the ongoing support and dedication of partners in this project for the long-term success of the management work.

Conservation area projects took place with funding from project levy, conservation area revenue, partners and donations:

- Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre, at RGCA: ceiling renovation; renovation of the entrance door, to make the lower level accessible; and Arkona Lions Club renovated the displays.
- Ausable River Cut Conservation Area: replacement of existing stairs with safer stairs to provide access to Ausable Cut.
- Installed and upgraded conservation area signboards at: Morrison Dam; Clinton; Bannockburn; Parkhill CA Scenic Lookout; Parkhill CA Boat Launch; and Rock Glen.
- Morrison Dam Conservation Area (MDCA): Replaced bridge deck, added supports to the bridge on the Deer Run Trail. Donations towards MDCA supported this project.
- Rock Glen Conservation Area: Completed top loop of a new nature trail, to enable users to better explore nature at RGCA.

We thank the community and municipalities for their ongoing support of conservation areas. From donations to trail building and maintenance, everyone helps ensure ABCA properties maintain environmental function and are available for all to enjoy.

Conservationists of the Year 2021

From left to right in photo, are Keith Strang; Jeff Den Otter; Mike Strang; and Geoff Strang, of Strang Farms, shown in front of a constructed wetland at Geoff Strang's property. Ausable Bayfield Conservation named Keith, Mike, and Geoff Strang as Conservationist of the Year Award winners in 2021. The agricultural producers from this family farm at RR 3 Exeter build soil health and prevent soil erosion by using cover crops, crop rotation, vegetative cover as well as innovative conservation tillage, variable seeding, and fertilizing. They also share their experiences with peers and have restored a wetland and established watercourse buffers.

ABCA staff present in climate change video webinar series

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) was pleased to have a representative on South Huron's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Advisory Committee and to be an active partner in their *Rising to the Challenge* Climate Change Video Series. ABCA staff members presented twice in the series.

ABCA's Hope Brock and Tommy Kokas presented on *Valuing Green Infrastructure*. They showed how building, protecting and enhancing natural features helps us to adapt to extreme weather and our changing climate.

Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist Ian Jean presented on *Trees, Stewardship, Grants and Preparing for the Future*.

In Ian's talk as part of the video webinar series, he discussed how tree planting, forest management, and stewardship – with grant and staff support – can reduce our impact on climate change.

Stewardship and Conservation Lands

Stewardship and Conservation Lands staff implement boots-on-the-ground watershed stewardship, conduct monitoring, and provide nature preservation and recreation, and more.

Nathan Schoelier
Stewardship and Land Manager

Ian Jean
Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

Tony Drinkwalter
Field Services – Land

Jeff Van Niekerk
Field Services

Michael Bax
Rock Glen Cons. Area Superintend.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation's Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist, Ian Jean, joins Kerwood-area agricultural producer David Ball, in this photo, to look at some of the trees they have planted at Ball Farms.

Landowners, community, staff plant tens of thousands of trees

By Ian Jean, Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

Planting trees remains an important action people are taking to improve watershed health.

Through the spring and fall tree planting programs provided by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), more than 42,000 trees were planted to establish windbreaks, watercourse buffers or reforestation projects. This involved the participation of more than 230 individuals, farms or other businesses who used the ABCA tree planting program. These efforts to protect soil health and water quality also enhance local biodiversity and overall watershed health and resilience.

Stewardship staff at ABCA provided technical support and trees to several municipal partners. The municipalities of Bluewater, Central Huron, Lambton Shores, Lucan Biddulph, North Middlesex and South Huron all used the ABCA tree program for part of their parks or roadside planting initiatives. Our staff provided planting services for the Bluewater Roadside Tree Planting Program and for a large, five-acre forest restoration project on Lucan Biddulph property north of the treatment plant.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Tree Planting Program

In April, Phase 2 of the new Commemorative Woods was completed at Klondyke Sports Park south of Grand Bend. This project is a partnership between the Lakeshore Eco-Network, Rotary Club of Grand Bend, Municipality of Lambton Shores, and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF). The official opening ceremony was held on October 2nd. This new Commemorative Woods, administered by ABCF, will provide the Grand Bend and area community with a location for tree sponsorship and reflection.

Pursuing cost-share funding, to support landowners who wish to undertake beneficial tree planting projects, is an important role for staff. Canada Nature Fund, Forests Ontario, Huron County Clean Water Project, Middlesex Clean Water Project, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association programs provided financial support for tree planting.

Conservation lands provide ecological benefits

By Ian Jean, Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

With more than 8,000 acres of forested land, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) is the largest forest owner in the watershed. With an average of 14 per cent forest cover across the watershed, ABCA manages, in conservation, more than nine per cent of the watershed forest resource.

Slightly more than 3,000 acres are eligible and enrolled in the provincial Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP). The conservation authority manages provincially designated conservation lands to protect significant features, which are exempt from property tax.

Research is permitted on conservation authority lands via Special Use Permits. In 2021, ABCA land was used to assist with three new research studies. During May, field surveys were completed at Parkhill Conservation Area, Mystery Falls, Sadler Tract, and Rock Glen Conservation Area. The survey was for a species-at-risk plant, Eastern False Rue-anemone.

The work was completed by an independent biologist for an updated status report for the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). In August, a PhD student from University of Lethbridge visited Parkhill Conservation Area to collect seed from Green Violet, a rare plant. Around the same time, a Wilfrid Laurier University Master's student conducted a search for another rare plant, Hazel Dodder, on ABCA lands north of Rock Glen. There was an historic record for the species but none were found during the recent survey.

The remaining 5,000 acres of ABCA forest is enrolled in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program. The ABCA Forest Management Plan provides the framework for management.

Conservation of biodiversity and ecological function, improved forest health and provision of recreation activities are the primary management objectives.

Forest Management on ABCA Lands

Active management, including selective timber harvest, occurs on 100-200 acres annually.

ABCA staff assess forests on an ongoing basis. When a selective thinning operation may be beneficial to the stand and commercially viable, staff develop a silvicultural prescription. Staff mark individual trees for selective thinning according to a forestry prescription that achieves the short-term and long-term management objectives.

Management in 2021 consisted of thinning conifer plantations. For row-planted conifers, thinning is done primarily to accelerate the transition from a planted stand of low diversity to a natural forest with greater diversity and wildlife value. Approximately 15 acres of Pine was thinned in Hay Swamp. This was a second thinning operation on trees planted in the 1960s. Another 15 acres of Pine and Spruce were thinned at Kime Tract north of Parkhill. This was a first thinning operation for row-planted conifers established in the 1980s. In both cases, thinning was completed to improve spacing in the planted Pines and to improve light conditions required for naturally regenerating hardwood trees.

Marked timber is sold though the tender process with revenue from the sale of timber helping to offset the cost of owning forested land. OTS Contracting, of Woodstock, submitted the highest-revenue bid of $65/cord for Pine and Spruce. A total of 424 cords of Pine and Spruce sawlogs were harvested with revenue of $27,569. Logs were processed at three mills north of Waterloo in to a range of materials from timber frame, dimensional lumber, boards and planks to supply the Ontario market.

Stewardship services work with resilient communities to build resilient watersheds

By Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager

Nathan Schoelier

The ongoing circumstances and uncertainties experienced during 2021 have demonstrated the resilience within our communities and the ability to adapt to new circumstances to strengthen as a community.

The stewardship team continues to remain adaptable, working with dedicated landowners to build upon the foundation of resilience in the watershed. Projects such as tree planting, wetlands and other stewardship enhancements can build the resilience that makes watersheds better prepared to adapt and recover from extreme events including floods, droughts and extreme weather.

The ongoing financial support from funding partners, at all levels of government, and private organizations provides the support for the stewardship team to offer cost-share programs to watershed landowners; working together to build resilient watersheds.

The County of Huron increased its funding contribution to Huron Clean Water Project in 2021, further supporting water quality improvement projects in Huron County. The Huron Clean Water Project grant review team met virtually five times during 2021, approving 300 stewardship projects for cost-share funding. Cover crops, erosion control and tree planting projects were the top three project categories.

Middlesex County provided cost-share funding through the Middlesex Clean Water Program in 2021. Middlesex Clean Water Program supported three erosion control projects and one tree-planting project in the watershed in 2021.

Staff worked with the County of Huron and three municipalities in Huron County, as well as Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, Friends of Hullett Marsh and multiple private landowners to manage invasive Phragmites.

Private Land Stewardship Program

Rick Kaptein Jr. uses no-till, cover crops and permanent pasture on his Bayfield-area rolling farm, Tulip Lane, to keep soil on the land. We thank all the local landowners protecting soil and water.

Stewardship Projects and Grants by Municipality

Municipality	Projects	Grants
Bluewater	30	$49,139
Central Huron	12	$32,627
Huron East	18	$19,998
Lambton Shores	8	$25,435
Lucan Biddulph	7	$14,248
Middlesex Centre	6	$23,671
North Middlesex	29	$70,598
South Huron	25	$47,498
West Perth	2	$1,250
TOTALS	**137**	**$284,464**

NOTES: Totals do not include funding from programs delivered by Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) that did not receive assistance from Ausable Bayfield Conservation staff members.

The invasive Phragmites management program continues to grow, implementing a more holistic management approach across the watershed, which is important for managing this invasive wetland plant on a landscape scale.

As we move forward, the stewardship team remains adaptable, building upon lessons learned, and looks forward to working with funding partners and dedicated watershed landowners to build watersheds resilient to future impacts.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation would like to thank the funding partners that make cover crop incentive programs possible and the participating landowners who plant them.

Landowners reach new high with cover crop enrolment

By Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager

Landowners in our watershed enrolled almost 5,000 acres of cover crops in 2021 into cover crop incentive funding programs.

Cover crops enrolled in 2021 were planted during the late summer or early autumn. They will be present over winter to protect soil and water resources, during the off-season growing months, until spring 2022.

Cover crops enrolled through cover crop incentive funding programs only provide a snapshot of the actual number of acres planted with cover crops in the watershed. Many dedicated landowners are committed to the benefits provided to their farming practices, as well as the environment, from leaving cover crops intact over the winter, to cover the soil during the vulnerable, over-winter period. This commitment from landowners results in many acres of over-wintered cover crops planted outside of funding programs as well.

Cover Crop Incentive Programs

Table 1: Cover Crop enrolment in the Ausable Bayfield watershed from 2016-2017 until 2021-2022

Cover Crop Over-Winter Season	Acres of Cover Crops
2016-2017	2,768
2017-2018	2,864
2018-2019	2,824
2019-2020	2,929
2020-2021	3,919
2021-2022	4,982

Financial support from partners provides the opportunity to offer these important cover crop incentive programs across the watershed. Cover crop incentive programs, combined with the dedication and willingness of landowners to adapt new practices, to benefit soil and water resources, leads to the continued success of over-wintering cover crops across the watershed.

Klondyke Commemorative Woods opened

By Dave Frayne, Chair, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation

Planting trees is a time-honoured way of paying tribute to loved ones and to celebrate special events.

The year 2021 saw the opening of the new Klondyke Commemorative Woods at the Klondyke Sports Park in Grand Bend.

There were 200 trees planted in 2020 and 2021 from donations received at the 2019 Grand Bend Rotary Autumn Indulgence Gala.

This commemorative woods site was made possible through a partnership between Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF), the Lakeshore Eco-Network, and the Municipality of Lambton Shores.

More than 40 community members attended the dedication ceremony on October 2 and a tree was planted in honour of Hank Winters, one of the founders of the Lakeshore Eco-Network and the inspiration for this project.

Winters family members at the arbour at the entrance to Klondyke Commemorative Woods. The arbour and mounted *Winters Walk* sign are in memory of the inspiration for this project, Hank Winters, a founder of Lakeshore Eco-Network. The Eco-Network erected the Arbour thanks to a Community Vibrancy Grant. The Arbour houses plaques for the founding donors of the Klondyke Commemorative Woods in Grand Bend.

Morrison Dam Tree Dedication Service held virtually

The Morrison Dam Tree Dedication Service was held virtually on September 19, 2021, in partnership with Haskett Funeral Homes of Exeter, Lucan, Zurich and Seaforth. Family and friends were invited to watch the video ceremony.

ABCF supports Conservation Education

It was challenging in 2021 but conservation educators delivered programs where and when possible and in new, creative ways. ABCF was pleased to support their work:

- $1,854 towards community programs for non-profit groups
- $1,182 subsidy for students participating in an outdoor education program

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ABCF support for Healthy Watersheds

- $1,000 towards species-at-risk turtle monitoring in the Port Franks area
- $1,000 for Ausable River outreach and education near Ailsa Craig
- $1,000 towards monitoring species-at-risk fish in the Ausable River
- $1,000 towards Old Ausable Channel community engagement and biomonitoring

Continued on next page

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation Board of Directors

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Anne Melady Dublin
David McClure Grand Bend
Peter Darbishire Exeter
Roger Lewington Bayfield
Robert Norris Staffa
Janet Clarke Exeter

Foundation donates $5,000 to museum upgrades

Continued from previous page

Conservation Lands and Stewardship

In 2021, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation was pleased to provide $5,000 toward accessible upgrades to the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre at Rock Glen Conservation Area. Specifically, a new accessible door was installed for accessible access to the Education Room.

Raising funds for community in new ways in 2021

The need for conservation projects continued in 2021 but we needed to be creative and adapt to an ongoing pandemic by finding new ways to raise funds for the community and that's what we did. I would like to thank all the people who support Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and our work with your generous donations and support.

Conservation Dinner

The Conservation Dinner, of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and Exeter Lions Club, was online in 2021 for the first time. The Virtual Conservation Dinner online auction, along with funds raised from the Exeter Lions Club's 50-50 raffle draw and donations and restaurant dinner proceeds, raised more than $40,000, in net proceeds, for projects in the community. The 50-50 raffle draw had a record prize of $6,300.

For the first time, we held two livestream cable TV broadcasts, prepared by FauxPop Media Inc. and broadcast thanks to cable TV providers (Hay Communications; HuronTel; and Tuckersmith Communications Co-operative TCC). Generous local restaurants took part in our first Dining for Your Community program.

I would like to thank all donors and local businesses and other supporters of the Conservation Dinner. This fundraiser has raised more than $1.25 million for our communities over more than 30 years.

South Huron Trail Golf Fundraiser

The South Huron Trail Golf Fundraiser was held in a different way in 2021. Instead of a lunch and social time, golfers booked tee times at Ironwood Golf Course on August 23. There were fewer golfers this year but thanks to generous financial donations from those golfers and others $4,690 was raised. Thanks to the generous community donors.

Janet Clarke appointed as new director

By Dave Frayne, Chair, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation

Janet Clarke

In 2021, we welcomed the newest member of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) Board of Directors, Janet Clarke.

On behalf of the Conservation Foundation, I would like to welcome Janet to the board. We will be stronger for her contributions. Janet has been active in the local community since 1986. I have had the honour of working closely with Janet on the Conservation Dinner Committee where she is a long-time volunteer and a hard-working, diligent, and enthusiastic member. Janet has volunteered with the Conservation Dinner Committee for a decade and is a Past Chair. She tutors students and she has been involved in many other local activities including volunteering with the charity golf tournament for the South Huron Trail, Owl Prowls, and the turtle program.

A native of Toronto, Janet has lived in Exeter since 1986. She had a lifelong dream to live in a small town and is thrilled to have lived in South Huron for more than 30 years. A retired secondary school teacher, Janet taught in Moosonee, Clinton, and Exeter before retirement.

Land trust permanently protects five important areas

By Roger Lewington, Chair, Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC)

Thanks to generous public donations of land and money, over the past decade, the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC) protects five important nature areas:

- Heaman Tract (2019), near Ailsa Craig, donated by Janet Heaman in memory of Jack Heaman
- Woodburne Farm (2018) and the Elliott Property (2021), near Goderich, donated by Ilse Elliott and her late husband William Elliott
- Bayfield River Flats (2017) in Bayfield, donated by Bayfield River Valley Trail Association (BRVTA) and community donors
- Mayhew Tract (2015), near Holmesville, donated by the Mayhew Family, in memory of Jack and Iris Mayhew

We could not have accomplished this without the donors. The protection of these beautiful properties is possible thanks to the families and organizations who donated this land and to the local people who donated towards land acquisition and maintenance. We are so very lucky to have such thoughtful, generous, and visionary people in our area.

A donation to the local land trust is a local way to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. These donations of land and/or funds help to permanently protect nature areas with local benefits such as water quality, forests and habitat, and public enjoyment and recreation.

Preservation of natural areas is one of the most effective and permanent ways to keep our air and water clean and to ensure habitat for plants and animals now and in the future.

Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy

In the coming year (2022), our land trust will look towards the second decade of land preservation in this historic part of Ontario. Your support, as a community, will be vital in continuing our progress in the next ten years.

The Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy was formed in 2011, by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, a registered Canadian charity. The land trust serves the area of the historic Huron Tract from the early days of settlement. The HTLTC is a volunteer organization with a separate board of directors and is a member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. The Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy accepts donations and bequests of land and gives people in the Huron Tract area a way to make a positive difference by helping protect and restore land, water, and nature.

We would like to thank all the families who have donated land and all the generous community members who have made donations to preserve these important natural areas for the future. They are truly leaving a lasting local land legacy.

Board of Directors – Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC)

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Inside Back Cover

This is the page for the inside back cover.

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Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)
71108 Morrison Line • RR 3 Exeter, Ontario • N0M 1S5
Phone: 519-235-2610 • **Toll-free:** 1-888-286-2610 • **Website:** abca.ca • **E-mail:** info@abca.ca