



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Administration Centre
Morrison Dam Conservation Area

2:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Chair's Welcome and Call to Order
2. Land Acknowledgement Statement
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
5. Disclosure of intention to record this meeting by video and/or audio device
6. Approval of Minutes from November 21, 2024
7. **Business Out of the Minutes**
 - Vote on 2024 Proposed Operating Levies (Category 1 and 3), Capital Levy, and Budget – Davin Heinbuck
8. **Program Reports**
 - Report 1: (a) Development Review (O Reg 41/24) – Andrew Bicknell
(b) Violations/Appeals Update – Andrew Bicknell
 - Report 2: Conservation Lands Risk Mitigation – Implementation Framework – Nathan Schoelier
 - Report 3: Hazard Tree Policy – Nathan Schoelier
 - Report 4: Rock Glen Conservation Area 2024 Summary – Mike Bax
 - Report 5: Stewardship Funding Update – Angela Van Niekerk/Ian Jean
 - Report 6: Tree Planting Program – 2024 Summary – Ian Jean
 - Report 7: Ice Management Plan – Daniel King
9. **General Manager's Report** – Davin Heinbuck
10. **Committee Reports**
 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation – Abbie Gutteridge
11. Correspondence
12. New Business
13. Committee of the Whole
14. Adjournment

Upcoming Meetings and Events

February 20, 2025 Board of Directors annual Meeting
(Note: no meeting scheduled in January)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, November 21, 2024
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom
Morrison Dam Conservation Area

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Ray Chartrand, Adrian Cornelissen, Joey Groot, Steve Herold, Dave Jewitt, Dave Marsh, Wayne Shipley, Marissa Vaughan

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Jaden Hodgins

STAFF PRESENT

Elizabeth Balfour, Andrew Bicknell, Tina Crown, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Nathan Schoelier, Erik Strahl, Ellen Westelaken.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marissa Vaughan called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., welcomed everyone in attendance, and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION #BD 89/24

**Moved Dave Jewitt
Seconded by Dave Marsh**

“RESOLVED, THAT the agenda for the November 21, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting be approved.”

Carried.

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting or from the previous meeting.

DISCLOSURE OF INTENTION TO RECORD

None.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOTION #BD 90/24

**Moved by Steve Herold
Seconded by Ray Chartrand**

“RESOLVED, THAT the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on October 24, 2024, and the motions therein be approved as circulated.”

Carried.

BUSINESS OUT OF THE MINUTES

2025 Fee Schedule and Pay Grid

Davin Heinbuck, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, advised that the changes to the Fee Schedule and pay grid increase of 2.5% was incorporated into preparing the proposed budget for 2025. Direction at the Budget Committee meeting was that the pay grid increase was reasonable.

MOTION #BD 91/24

**Moved by Wayne Shipley
Seconded by Ray Chartrand**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the proposed 2025 Fee Schedule as presented, and

“FURTHER, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the pay grid increase of 2.5% as presented.”

Carried.

PRESENTATION

Adam Skillen, of Skillen Investment Management, presented a semi-annual update on the investment income since spring 2024. He noted that generally, the ABCA portfolio continues to perform well and is on an increasing trend. There has been some deviation from the ABCA targets of 35% equities and 65% bonds, but they are continually adjusting toward these targets. Adam noted that there could be more volatility in the coming years due to election outcomes, but that staying the course with ABCA investments has worked well in past years and advised Board members to continue in that direction.

MOTION #BD 92/24

**Moved by Ray Chartrand
Seconded by Joey Groot**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receive the update on investments for information.”

Carried.

PROGRAM REPORTS**1. (a) Development Review**

Andrew Bicknell, Senior Regulations Coordinator, presented the Development Review report pursuant to Ontario Regulation Ontario Regulation 41/24 *Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits*. Through the application process, proposed developments within regulated areas are protected from flooding and erosion hazards. Staff granted permission for 6 *Applications for Permission* and 2 *Minor Works Applications*.

(b) Violation/Appeals Update

Andrew Bicknell advised that there was no update on current violations and appeals.

MOTION #BD 93/24

**Moved by Wayne Shipley
Seconded by Adrian Cornelissen**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Board of Directors affirm the approval of applications as presented in Program Report # 1 – a) Development Review and receive the verbal Violations and Appeals update as presented.”

Carried.

2. Process for Administration Review Under Section 8 of Ontario Regulation 41/24

Davin Heinbuck presented an Administration Review Policy developed because of Ontario Regulation 41/24, and the new accountability requirements that were introduced in spring 2024. Section 8 of the regulation permits an applicant to seek a formal review of an application when there is a question regarding whether the application is complete or not, the reasonableness of requests for additional information, and when the ABCA has not provided a formal response within 21 days. Staff have drafted a process (attached) to reflect local concerns and capacity and is recommending delegating the review process to the Authority’s General Manager.

MOTION #BD 94/24

**Moved by Joey Groot
Seconded by Dave Jewitt**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors delegates the ABCA’s Administrative Review powers, as defined in Section 8 of Ontario Regulation 41/24, to the General Manager of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, and

“THAT the Board of Directors approves the Process for Administrative Review under Section 8 of Ontario Regulation 41/24 for use by ABCA staff.”

Carried.

3. Conservation Lands Strategy

Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager, presented the Conservation Lands Strategy, fulfilling requirements under Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services under the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act). There were several phases of consultation for this strategy including, public consultation through an online survey, consultation with the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, posting on the ABCA website for public consultation from October 1 through October 22, 2024, and a draft provided to stakeholders including municipalities, and volunteer groups. The feedback is summarized in the “What We Heard – Engagement Summary” in the strategy. Once approved, the Conservation Lands Strategy will be posted to the ABCA website for public availability.

MOTION #BD 95/24

**Moved by Steve Herold
Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Conservation Lands Strategy.”

Carried.

4. Workshop Renovation Tender Process

Nathan Schoelier reminded the Board that renovations to the ABCA workshop will be needed to meet accessibility requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). MR Engineering and Design Ltd. was the successful contractor for designing the renovation, and completing inspections to ensure the work is completed correctly. Matt Runge of MR Engineering and Design Ltd. advised ABCA staff that the contract administration process for a public tender would be significant and is not advisable for a relatively small project, as it could have financial impacts comparable to the actual construction costs. He recommended that the ABCA complete the tendering process by invitation, providing opportunities to local contractors recommended by the designer at the MR Engineering and Design Ltd., and that MR Engineering and Design Ltd. prepare the tender opportunities and distribute it at a cost of \$4000.

MOTION #96/24

**Moved by Dave Marsh
Seconded by Joey Groot**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves staff to retain MR Engineering and Design Ltd. to prepare a tender opportunity for the Morrison Dam Conservation Area workshop renovation project, and

“THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the tender opportunity to be distributed to contractors recommended by MR Engineering and Design Ltd.”

Carried.

5. Appointment of Risk Management Official/Inspector

Elizabeth Balfour, Drinking Water Source Protection Co-Supervisor, reported that the ABCA has entered into agreements to provide Part IV power enforcement services to eight municipalities, and in 2015 Mary Lynn MacDonald, Donna Clarkson, and Tim Cumming were appointed as Risk Management Officials (RMOs) and Risk Management Inspectors (RMIs) after completing the mandatory training. Recently, Elizabeth Balfour and Aaron Clarke have completed their training and require appointment by the Board. In addition, Mary Lynn MacDonald retired on May 31, 2024, and her appointment should be rescinded.

MOTION #BD 97/24

**Moved by Ray Chartrand
Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

“RESOLVED, THAT the reappointment of Donna Clarkson and Tim Cumming, and the appointment of Elizabeth Balfour and Aaron Clarke as Risk Management Official (RMO) and Risk Management Inspector (RMI) as required under Sections 48 (1-3) of the Clean Water Act, 2005 be approved, and

“THAT the appointment of Mary Lynn MacDonald as RMO/RMI be rescinded, and

“THAT a certificate of appointment be issued for Elizabeth Balfour and Aaron Clare as required by Section 48(3) of the Act.”

Carried.

6. ABCA Infrastructure Operational Plan

Daniel King, Water Resources Engineer, presented the ABCA Operational Plan that was prepared by staff to meet Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, Section 5: Infrastructure, of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The plan focuses on Parkhill Dam, as it is the only structure actively operated; however, there are several additional structures for flooding and erosion that are inspected and maintained by the ABCA. The plan will be reviewed and amended by ABCA staff as needed and is intended to be a living document that provides overview of these operations.

MOTION #98/24

**Moved by Joey Groot
Seconded by Dave Marsh**

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report ABCA Infrastructure Operational Plan for information as presented.”

Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Reference: Direction of Freezing of Fees

File: A.5.1

Brief: Davin Heinbuck noted that we have received notification from several municipalities regarding the current fee freeze, noting their support and willingness to sign a letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources. North Middlesex and Middlesex Centre reported that they also support the direction and will be sending notification to the ABCA.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Davin Heinbuck reported that ABCA will be sending an email out to municipalities with the Capital Asset Management Plan, as well as the full Schedule A for budgeting purposes. He noted that two pages of Schedule A was missed in scanning, however the total numbers were included in the initial email.
2. Chair Vaughan reminded the Directors that the next Board Meeting would be held on December 19 at 2:30 p.m. to allow all to attend the Christmas Dinner following the meeting. She also noted that there would be no meeting in January, but that the Annual General Meeting would be in February.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Marissa Vaughan
Chair

Abigail Gutteridge
Secretary

*Copies of program reports are available upon request.
Contact Abigail Gutteridge, Corporate Services Coordinator*

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Andrew Bicknell, Acting Water and Planning Supervisor
Subject: Applications for Permission
Ontario Regulation 41/24 – Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors affirm the approval of the permits issued by ABCA staff as outlined in the *Applications for Permission* Program Report.

The following *Applications for Permission* have been issued by staff since the last Board of Directors Meeting.

*A Coastal Assessment was provided as part of the application

**Work commenced without a permit

Major Permits

- (1) PERMIT # 2024-58
NAME: Zelinka Primo Ltd. (c/o Mike Tkaczyk)
ADDRESS: 7571 Cornell Trail, Port Franks
MUNICIPALITY: Lambton Shores
PERMISSION TO: construct a new residential structure and related work.
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: October 28, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: December 3, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 26
STAFF NAME: Ellen Westelaken
- (2) PERMIT # 2024-55
NAME: 2156423 Alberta ULC (Southwest Marine)
ADDRESS: 70672 Bluewater Highway, Grand Bend
MUNICIPALITY: Lambton Shores
PERMISSION TO: To construct an additional Southwest Marine services warehouse.
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: October 21, 2024

PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 5, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 11
STAFF NAME: Erik Strahl

(3) PERMIT # 2024-54
NAME: Platinum Builders c/o Matt Reloux
ADDRESS: 72777 Ravine Drive, St. Joseph
MUNICIPALITY: Bluewater
PERMISSION TO: Re-construct a multi-level deck and associated work.
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: October 15, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 1, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 13
STAFF NAME: Erik Strahl

(4) PERMIT # 2024-53
NAME: Mike Hayton
ADDRESS: 73677 Shangri La Beach Road
MUNICIPALITY: Bluewater
PERMISSION TO: Install an armourstone shorewall and associated work
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: October 11, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 5, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 17
STAFF NAME: Andrew Bicknell

(5) PERMIT # 2024-38
NAME: Dorothea Mell
ADDRESS: 10192 Shoreline Drive, Grand Bend
MUNICIPALITY: Lambton Shores
PERMISSION TO: Construct a replacement residence and on site sewage disposal system
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: November 18, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 20, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 2
STAFF NAME: Andrew Bicknell

Minor Permits

- (1) PERMIT # MW2024-67
NAME: Eastlink Corp.
ADDRESS: Ridge Road
MUNICIPALITY: North Middlesex
PERMISSION TO: Fibre Optic Cable Installation and associated work.
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: October 29, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 7, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 7
STAFF NAME: Erik Strahl
- (2) PERMIT # MW2024-70
NAME: Brian Westelaken
ADDRESS: 40462 Rodgerville Road, Hensall
MUNICIPALITY: Huron East
PERMISSION TO: Install an on site sewage disposal system
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: November 18, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 20, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 2
STAFF NAME: Andrew Bicknell
- (3) PERMIT # MW2024-68
NAME: Tim and Sherri Staffen
ADDRESS: 74379 Snowden Crescent
MUNICIPALITY: Bluewater
PERMISSION TO: renovate an existing residence
COMPLETED APPLICATION RECEIVED ON DATE: November 5, 2024
PERMISSION GRANTED BY STAFF DATE: November 7, 2024
NUMBER OF BUSINESS DAYS TO REVIEW: 2
STAFF NAME: Andrew Bicknell

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager
Subject: Conservation Lands Risk Mitigation – Implementation Framework
Report Type: ACTION REQUIRED

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the framework described in this report for implementing conservation lands risk mitigation measures provided by Marsh Canada Limited.

Background:

Luke Pallister from Marsh Canada Limited (Marsh), Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's (ABCA) insurance broker, visited three ABCA properties on Thursday, September 12, 2024. The general intent of the visit was to: visit a cross section of typical properties operated by ABCA; obtain a general understanding of typical exposures and risk mitigating initiatives; review the activities ABCA allows; identify any obvious liability hazards; review documentations; and discuss opportunities for improvement. Marsh began offering these visits several years ago, have been working at visiting all conservation authorities. Overall, ABCA employs reasonable risk mitigation measures, and is working towards enhancing these measures as resources permit. A memo was provided by Luke Pallister on September 30, 2024, outlined opportunities for improving ABCA's risk mitigation efforts; the memo is appended to this report. This report provides a framework for implementing these improvements based on ABCA's duty of care to keep visitors reasonably safe while on the premises, and ABCA's resources to implement the improvements. There are cost estimates provided for various items; however, ABCA's financial forecasts and annual budget preparation will account for the required resources as the recommendation is implemented.

OFI-24-1

Staff have been updating Conservation Area signs over the past several years. Depending on the nature of the property, it may require one sign or several signs, to ensure that property visitors are provided with the applicable information. Approximately 35% of the properties that meet the 'managed' description provided by Marsh have updated signs, that meet their recommendations. It is important to update signs at the remaining 'managed' properties. Staff will prioritize updates based on visitor use, pending property changes that may affect the sign, as well as available resources. Approximately twelve signs are required at eight properties.

Resources:	Staff time – design and sign installation; Purchase – signs and materials
Estimate:	\$1500 per sign; an alternative that fulfills the recommendations will be considered

	for secondary entrances.
Timeframe:	Up to 5-years

OFI-24-2

ABCA does not permit ‘unmanaged/ unmaintained’ trails at its properties; if these types of trails exist, they may be unauthorized access points from neighbouring properties, or off-road vehicle trails. These activities are not permitted and are subject to the Trespass to Property Act (TPA) and signs are posted accordingly. However, there are locations (e.g., former log landing, and rights-of-way) that may be perceived as an access to ABCA property. Staff will review these locations and sign them accordingly, considering the recommended information provided in OFI-24-2.

Resources:	Staff time – review and sign installation; Purchase – signs and materials
Estimate:	\$250 per sign; the number of signs is to be determined
Timeframe:	Up to 10-years; ongoing as these locations need to be considering following property management activities

OFI-24-3

Staff have reviewed the recommendation that consideration should be given to investigating translation capabilities. From experience managing ABCA’s landholdings, including Rock Glen Conservation Area (RGCA) with relatively high visitor rates, staff do not feel it is a challenge locally. Further consideration will be given to the item during future signage reviews.

OFI-24-4

This opportunity for improvement may be addressed as new signage is designed and installed (see OFI-24-1 and OFI-24-2).

OFI-24-5

ABCA’s website contains much of this information. However, staff will review its location on the website, and consider any additional information that may be relevant to property visitors.

Resources:	A limited amount of staff time will be required.
Estimate:	N/A
Timeframe:	0 to 6 months

OFI-24-6

Staff complete inspections in accordance with ABCA’s Conservation Land Risk Management Inspection (RMI) policy. Inspection items are documented as ‘Good,’ ‘Monitor,’ or ‘Action Required;’ generally, staff document notes to describe what to monitor, or the action required. However, staff will begin documenting notes regardless of its identified condition (e.g., ‘Good - boardwalk inspected and free of any obvious slip, trip, and fall hazards’). No additional staff resources are required; and it will be implemented in accordance with the RMI policy inspection schedule.

OFI-24-7

ABCA has lifesaving equipment present at Morrison Dam Conservation Area (MDCA) that staff inspect as part of its risk management inspections. Staff will review the specifications of the equipment at MDCA with the recommended specifications provided by Marsh. Staff will also consider additional locations for lifesaving equipment.

Resources:	Staff time – review; Purchases –equipment (if determined to be required)
Estimate:	To be determined based upon its review
Timeframe:	Staff expect to complete the review within 0 to 6 months

OFI-24-8

Staff have been adopting this measure over the past several years. It is noted in the memo that ‘newer structures appear to generally meet the requirements ...’ ABCA does not have the resources to address every structure at one; therefore, as a structure requires maintenance, staff improve it by incorporating this risk mitigation measure. ABCA considers this a reasonable approach to adopt the improvement, within its capacity.

Resources:	Staff time – installation; Purchases - material
Estimate:	Wide range depending on the structure
Timeframe:	As maintenance is identified on structures

OFI-24-9

ABCA has two playgrounds located at RGCA, and one playground located at Clinton Conservation Area (CCA). Three recommendations are provided within OFI-24-9 that relate to these structures, to meet the recommendations, ABCA must:

- a) Install warning signage as recommended by Marsh
- b) No action required, ABCA staff complete inspections in accordance with ABCA’s RMI policy
- c) ABCA must consult a certified playground inspector for an annual inspection

Resources:	a) Install signs after completing a certified inspection b) No additional resources are required c) Professional services; follow-up staff work may be required
Estimate:	a) Design, purchase and install: \$600 c) \$1200 to \$1800
Timeframe:	a) Upon consulting a certified inspector c) Annually

OFI-24-10

It is important to develop an implement a formal hazard tree policy. Hazard tree inspections are completed as a component of ABCA’s RMI policy, but there is not a policy specific to potentially hazardous trees. It is noted in the memo that ‘... hazard trees appear to be generally well managed...’

Resources:	A limited amount of staff time will be required.
Estimate:	N/A
Timeframe:	0 to 6 months

OFI-24-11

RGCA has warning signage installed in relevant locations; however, staff will continue to monitor their condition and replace them accordingly.

OFI-24-12

RGCA has several signs installed that state that *'Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) does not monitor the water quality at this site. Bacteria levels in the watercourse may pose a threat to your health, or the health of your pet.'* Further consideration will be given to installing 'No Swimming' signs at RGCA, and the resources available to enforce this.

OFI-24-13

ABCA will work with Lambton Shores Nature Trails (LSNT), who funded and installed the kayak launch at Ausable River Cut Conservation Area (ARCA), to address the recommendation for the floating walkway.

Memo

To: Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship & Conservation Lands Manager

Date: 30 September 2024

From: Luke Pallister, Marsh Advisory Consulting Solutions

Subject: Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority - risk review

Copy: Glenn Sheppard, Marsh Canada
Emma Hipwell, Marsh Advisory

Nathan,

Further to our risk control visit to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority on Thursday September 12th, 2024, please see suggested Opportunities for Improvement below.

The general intent of the visit was to:

- visit a cross section of typical properties operated by your authority (e.g. managed, unmanaged) to obtain a general understanding of typical exposures and risk mitigation initiatives
- review the types of activities that the authority allows / provides on properties (e.g. hunting, hiking, snow shoeing)
- identify any obvious liability hazards (e.g. slip, trip and fall hazards, signage, attractive nuisances / allurements)
- review documentation (e.g. recorded inspections, incident reporting)
- discuss opportunities for improvement

Please note, the suggested opportunities below result from observations and discussions from the day of the visit and are not intended to be comprehensive in nature, nor are they intended to address all of your operational risk exposures. Marsh continues to work with the Conservation Ontario Insurance Committee on broader risk management initiatives to help all CA's streamline and more effectively manage risk. The intent is to ensure risk is managed in a consistent manner across the province. Where risk management best practices are in place, Marsh will help CA's share policies, procedures and strategies to help increase overall risk management capabilities.

This document and any recommendations, analysis, or advice provided by Marsh (collectively, the "Marsh Analysis") are not intended to be taken as advice regarding any individual situation and should not be relied upon as such. This document contains proprietary, confidential information of Marsh and may not be shared with any third party, including other insurance producers, without Marsh's prior written consent. Any statements concerning actuarial, tax, accounting, or legal matters are based solely on our experience as insurance brokers and risk consultants and are not to be relied upon as actuarial, accounting, tax, or legal advice, for which you should consult your own professional advisors. Any modelling, analytics, or projections are subject to inherent uncertainty, and the Marsh Analysis could be materially affected if any underlying assumptions, conditions, information, or factors are inaccurate or incomplete or should change. The information contained herein is based on sources we believe reliable, but we make no representation or warranty as to its accuracy. Except as may be set forth in an agreement between you and Marsh, Marsh shall have no obligation to update the Marsh Analysis and shall have no liability to you or any other party with regard to the Marsh Analysis or to any services provided by a third party to you or Marsh. Marsh makes no representation or warranty concerning the application of policy wordings or the financial condition or solvency of insurers or re-insurers. Marsh makes no assurances regarding the availability, cost, or terms of insurance coverage.

Opportunities for Improvement

OFI-24-1 Signage should be provided at all “managed” conservation area access points (e.g. gatehouses, parking lots, trailheads, either side of trails that cross municipal highways / roads / right of ways) that informs users, a minimum, of the following:

- a. In the event of an emergency call 911
- b. Cellular phone reception may not be available (if applicable)
- c. Name of Conservation Authority, Conservation Area, and Address
- d. If you see a concern or have a comment during your visit please let us know, phone number, website
- e. Stay on designated trails.
- f. Use caution. Trails are natural and may be uneven and slippery. Prepare for how the weather may affect your visit.
- g. Trails are not groomed/maintained in the winter (if applicable)
- h. List of activities “permitted” and “not permitted”.
- i. Site specific hazards such as cliff edges, poisonous plants.
- j. Legal disclaimer (Legal counsel should be consulted for specific wording).

NOTE: Most of the items above are included on one sign at the Rock Glen CA, with other items provided on various vintages of signs. It is suggested that additional signage, as provided in the one parking lot, be provided at least at the main entry (gate house) to the site. The above items are intended to provide conservation authorities with consistent advice for entry signage.

OFI-24-2 Signage should be provided at all “unmanaged / unmaintained” conservation area access points (e.g. parking lots, trailheads) that informs users, a minimum, of the following:

- a. In the event of an emergency call 911
- b. Cellular phone reception may not be available (if applicable)
- c. Name of Conservation Authority, Conservation Area, and Address
- d. If you see a concern or have a comment during your visit please let us know, phone number, website
- e. Stay on designated trails.
- f. Use at your own risk. Trails are not maintained and may be uneven and slippery. Prepare for how the weather may affect your visit.
- g. Advise others of how long you expect to be in this area.
- h. List of activities “permitted” and “not permitted”.
- i. Site specific hazards such as cliff edges, poisonous plants
- j. Legal disclaimer (Legal counsel should be consulted for specific wording).

OFI-24-3 Further to OFI-24-1 & 2 above, consideration should be given to investigating QR Codes on signage that provides a link to sign translation capabilities so that patrons that do not read English are adequately informed of sign content.

- OFI-24-4 In addition to the signage items suggested above (OFI-24-1 & 2), signage should include wording informing patrons not to feed animals.
- OFI-24-5 In addition to being posted on main entry signage at CA's, information on potential hazards posed by animals and plant life (e.g. coyotes, toxic plants) should be posted on the Authority's website to inform users on identification, precautions, etc.
- OFI-24-6 Formally recorded inspections of trails and associated fixtures (boardwalks, bridges, platforms, underpasses, trail markers, etc.) within managed conservation areas should be performed as frequently as internal resources allow (at least annually) and as determined by in-house land classification policy. The inspections should be recorded using a checklist and each element should include a basic description of what is actually being checked to provide context to each element (e.g. "boardwalk appears free of obvious slip, trip and fall hazards such as protruding nails/screws, missing treads, slippery conditions, etc. Handrails are provided and in place"). The inspection procedure should include a formal follow up process (i.e. monthly review of logs by management staff) so that deficiencies identified during the inspections are addressed in a timely fashion. Hazards that cannot be immediately addressed should be clearly identified (e.g. fluorescent paint on cracks, warning cones, etc.).
NOTE: Formally recorded "Risk Management" inspections are performed on a scheduled basis of conservation areas, however it is suggested that the inspections be expanded to include the considerations above.
- OFI-24-7 Where practical, the following should be considered for all boardwalks, platforms, picnic areas, and trails near waterways such as marshes, ponds and rivers and in the vicinity of docks, boat launches and dams:
- a. Lifesaving equipment (at regular intervals as appropriate) including the following:
 - buoyant throwing assist (life ring) with a 15 meter buoyant line attached
 - reaching pole (Sheppard's Hook) at least 3 meters in length.
 - b. Regular recorded inspections of the lifesaving equipment to ensure all equipment is maintained and in place.
- OFI-24-8 For improved safety, particularly that of children, consideration should be given to upgrading existing guards (railings) on pedestrian bridges, viewing platforms, etc. to comply with Part 9 of the Ontario Building Code, specifically:
- a. guards should be at least 1070 mm (3 ft 6 inches) high,
 - b. have no openings that allow the passage of a spherical object greater than 4 inches,
 - c. and be designed to prevent climbing.

It is understood that the pedestrian bridges, viewing platforms, etc. do not fall within the scope of the Ontario Building Code (OBC), however, it is Marsh Advisory's suggestion that in the interest of overall safety and liability exposure that bridges / platforms, etc. should be provided with guards complying to

the OBC whenever the elevation difference between the walking surface of the structure and the surrounding terrain is 600 mm or greater (i.e. fall height). In situations where the fall height is less than 600 mm, “kick plates” should be provided to reduce the likelihood of wheeled devices (e.g. strollers, wheelchairs) from rolling off the structure. The kick plates should be clearly identified with reflective tape or similar means (contrasting colour to the surface of the boardwalk / platform) so that they do not create a tripping hazard. Furthermore, railings complying with the OBC should be provided for all stairs with more than 3 steps.

NOTE: Newer structures (stairways, etc.) appear to generally meet the requirements above, however there are older structures that do not.

OFI-24-9 The following should be implemented for all playgrounds:

- a. Warning signage outlining that children should be supervised, age requirements, etc.
- b. Daily visual and weekly/monthly recorded inspections as appropriate by trained in-house staff utilizing a checklist.
- c. Annual playground inspections by a certified playground inspector in accordance with CSA Z614-14 – Children’s Playspaces & Equipment.

OFI-24-10 A formal hazard tree policy should be developed and implemented. A Hazard Tree Policy Leading Practice document developed by the 3D committee has been attached with this memo report to use as a guide.

NOTE: Based on discussions during the visit, hazard trees appear to be generally well managed, however there is no formal hazard tree policy as such.

Rock Glen

OFI-24-11 Further to OFI-24-1 (i) signage warning users of the inherent hazards caused by cliff edges / steep slopes should be provided both at the main entry point signage and on any individual trails leading to the cliffs / slopes.

OFI-24-12 In addition to the existing signage warning users that the “bacteria levels in the watercourse may pose a threat to your health, or the health of your pet”, consideration should be given to providing “no swimming” signage both localized at on the main entry signage to the site (See OFI-24-1).

Ausable River Cut

OFI-24-13 Improvements should be considered for the existing kayak launch to improve overall safety including, but not necessarily limited to:

- a. Replacement of the existing floating walkway (i.e. gangplank) between the river bank and the dock with a wider (as appropriate for a person carrying a kayak) and longer walkway so that even during periods of low water levels the slope of the walkway does not create an unusually steep walking surface. The walkway should be provided with a slip resistant surface and be provided with “kick plates” on either side.

- b. Further to OFI-24-1 (i), localized warning signage outlining canoeing / kayaking safety considerations, inherent hazards, etc.



ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Nathan Schoelier, Stewardship and Lands Manager
Subject: Hazard Tree Policy
Report Type: ACTION REQUIRED

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the hazard tree policy appended to this report.

Background:

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has inspected, and subsequently managed hazard trees as a component of its risk management inspections; however, no formal hazard tree policy has been adopted by ABCA. Risk management inspections are guided by ABCA's Conservation Land Risk Management Inspection Policy (2017).

Marsh Canada Limited (Marsh) visited several ABCA properties in September and followed up later with a memo that outlined opportunities for improvement. Luke Pallister, from Marsh, noted that "...hazard trees appear to be generally well managed, however there is no formal hazard tree policy as such." The recommendation of: A formal hazard tree policy should be developed and implemented.

Appended to this report is a draft hazard tree policy.

Hazard Tree Policy

Policy Statement

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) will take reasonable steps to maintain the safety of its lands for the public and its staff from potential hazardous trees.

Background

ABCA is committed to providing a reasonably safe environment for the public using and abutting its lands. Trails and other designated recreational areas are the priority, based on the level of use but all locations with potential to impact the public need to be considered.

This policy therefore guides the basis, frequency, and scope of the approach to identifying Hazard Trees and outlines the basic approaches to be taken in managing those hazard trees.

Application

This policy applies only to ABCA owned and/or managed lands.

Definitions

Acute hazard: a potential hazard that affects a portion of the tree, and may be addressed; these types of hazards are not likely to affect its overall structural integrity

Hazard tree: a tree that has a defect that makes it likely to fail in whole or part, posing a hazard to the public and staff

Occupier: having possession of, or has the responsibility of managing a premises

Premises: lands and structures

Property feature: includes designated entry points, parking areas, signs, managed trails, recreation-based assets, including but not limited to benches, boardwalks, bridges, washroom facilities, and pavilions; and other structures that support ABCA operations, including but not limited to administration buildings and workshops, gatehouses, and PGMN wells

Hazard Tree Assessment – Inspectors

Staff who perform hazard tree inspections will be referred to as ‘inspectors’ for the purposes of this policy. Inspectors are staff who regularly work within the lands department, that are familiar with tree basics, expectations, what to notice, and can identify changes and may be able to spot defects.

ABCA may consult a professional arborist with a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, or equivalent, to assist with hazard tree assessments if a weather-event, or project, requires hazard tree assessments that exceed ABCA staff resources.

Hazard Tree Assessment – Inspection Areas, Frequency, and Response

ABCA's Conservation Land Risk Management Inspection (RMI) Policy outlines policy statements, inspection elements, and inspection frequencies that recognize the duty ABCA has as an occupier through the Occupier's Liability Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O2. As an occupier, ABCA has a duty to take such care that persons and their property entering on the premises are reasonably safe while on the premises. The Hazard Tree Policy will be employed as a component of the ABCA RMI Policy, including the inspection frequencies as determined by visitor use, and applicable duty of care standards; as well as the resources available to reasonably assess and manage hazard trees.

It is important to note that ABCA does not have the organizational resources to assess every single tree on its properties. Therefore, this section outlines the inspection areas, frequencies, and response, that are considered reasonable measures:

1. Trees that are located within 150% of their total height of an ABCA property feature or a location regularly visited by ABCA staff for work duties

Inspection Frequency: in accordance with the risk-based property groups, inspection schedule and elements defined in ABCA's RMI policy

Response: if staff receive a report of a potential hazard tree within this area, that is in addition to the defined inspection schedule, staff must assess the hazard within ten business days

2. Trees that are located within 150% of their total height of an adjacent property, where the tree may pose a risk to a structure (e.g., neighbouring house)

Inspection Frequency: ABCA will inspect the applicable tree(s) on an as-reported basis

Response: if staff receive a report for a potential hazard tree within this area, staff must assess the tree for hazards within ten business days

3. Trees that are located within 100% of their total height of an adjacent property, where there is no risk to a structure present (e.g., along an agricultural field)

Inspection Frequency: ABCA will inspect the applicable tree(s) on an as-reported basis

Response: if staff receive a report for a potential hazard tree within this area, staff must respond to the report, within fifteen business days. Considering access may be challenging in these areas, staff and the neighbouring property owner may determine a timeframe beyond fifteen business days, when access is available (e.g., waiting to access through the adjacent property, with their permission, after crop harvest) to assess the tree for hazards

When the potentially hazardous tree is near an adjacent property, staff may be required to rely on available resources, including property mapping, to determine ownership of the tree with the adjacent property owner.

Hazard Tree Assessment - Identification and Documentation

A tree that is identified as a potential hazard, will be assigned a management level by the inspector. The management level will be determined based upon the following criteria:

Table 1: Hazard tree management levels and criteria

Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% dead• Structural failure could lead to loss of life, serious injury, and/or property damage
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alive• Exhibits an acute hazard (e.g., hung-up branch) that may be addressed, removing the identified hazard• Acute hazard is unlikely to result in further structural failure
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be alive but is exhibiting signs of decline• Does not present an immediate hazard, but further decline of its condition may result in a potential hazard

Hazard trees will be documented with a GPS; no physical markings (e.g., flagging tape, or paint) will be applied to the tree. At a minimum, the following information will be documented:

- Inspector(s)
- Location
- Inspection date
- Management level
- Image of the hazard tree

The inspector(s) should also document any information regarding the hazard tree that they deem relevant to its condition (e.g., Level 2 tree is exhibiting greater than 50% crown decline).

Trees located within the inspection area that appear healthy, and do not meet the criteria described in Table 1, will not be documented.

Upon managing a Level 1 or 2 hazard tree, in accordance with the management described below, staff will document the date the management was completed, as well as describe the management (i.e., complete, or partial removal).

Hazard Tree Management

Hazard trees that are identified will be managed in order of priority, and not necessarily in the order in which they were identified.

All Level 1, and Level 2 hazard trees (or the hazardous portion thereof) must be managed within one year of being identified as a hazard. Managing the tree may include complete or partial removal of the tree.

All Level 3 hazard trees will be monitored in accordance with the frequency described in this policy. Through ongoing monitoring, an inspector may determine the following management approach for Level 3 hazard trees:

1. Condition remains stable, with no immediate hazards present.

Management: continue to monitor the tree

Timeframe: in accordance with the inspection frequency described in this policy

2. The tree develops an acute hazard

Management: the tree is considered a Level 2 hazard tree, until the hazard is managed. When the hazard is managed, the tree will return to a Level 3 hazard tree for ongoing monitoring.

Timeframe: the hazard must be managed within one year of identifying the Level 2 hazard. Ongoing monitoring will be completed in accordance with the inspection frequency described in this policy.

3. Condition continues to decline, and the likelihood of structural failure increases

Management: the tree is considered a Level 1 hazard tree, and the tree or hazardous portion of the tree must be managed

Timeframe: The hazard must be managed within one year of identifying the Level 1 hazard

Hazard tree management will be completed by trained ABCA staff. ABCA will support training for conservation lands staff, to ensure staff may effectively identify, and manage the typical scope of hazard trees. If ABCA staff do not possess the skills or resources to manage the identified hazard, an arborist may be required to address the hazard.

The invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an example of how disturbances impact conservation lands, and nature-based recreation. In terms of hazard trees, the EAB resulted in significant numbers of dead, and declining trees that posed potentially hazardous conditions to property visitors. If a future disturbance (e.g., pest, or weather event) generates many hazard trees, staff may consider restricting access to the property(ies). Access may be restricted until the hazard is addressed, or permanently, if resources are not available, or other management goals do not support the disturbance required to remove the hazard trees.

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Mike Bax, RGCA Superintendent
Subject: RGCA 2024 Summary
Report Type: INFORMATION REPORT

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report RGCA 2024 Summary for information as presented.

Background:

This report provides an overview of the 2024 season at Rock Glen Conservation Area (RGCA).

RGCA has two staff members present from May to October and a summer student during July and August. Fortunately, staff enjoy their experience at RGCA and often return for multiple seasons. Staff are responsible for operating the gate house, collecting entry fees, and answering visitors' questions; as well as maintaining the area to ensure a safe, and enjoyable experience. Staff were successful with an application to the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program in 2024, which contributed funding towards the summer student position.

RGCA provides a space for visitors, from near and far, to have a chance to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, in the Ausable River watershed. People enjoy the waterfalls, fossils, visiting the museum, walking trails, having family picnics and weddings, RGCA has many activities which draw people to the Arkona area.

Attendance 2024

The following table details outlines the number of visitors to RGCA, during the period of the year which RGCA is staffed.

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
Day Entry	4061	5680	11,020	11,140	4286	4442	40,639
Pass Entry	145	175	236	162	108	164	990

RGCA is maintaining a higher average annual attendance rate than pre-pandemic rates. Excluding 2020 and 2021, which realized drastic increases in attendance, attendance at RGCA in 2024 is approximately 130% of its average (2018 until 2024). It is also important to note that the option for

visitors to pay via e-transfer was introduced in spring 2024. Since e-transfer was introduced, 325 transfers have been made, for a total of 863-day use entries. Staff expect the option for visitors to pay via e-transfer to help RGCA to realize off-season revenue, as payment was previously limited to cash only during this time.

The following table outlines the number of passes, and pavilion rentals realized in 2024, and how it compares to the previous year.

	Number Sold - 2024	Percentage Relative to 2023
Family Passes	62	122%
Individual Passes	11	122%
Pavilion Rental	27	128%

The following are interesting stats that are tracked with the guest book, located in the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre:

- Guest book entries – 2183
- Guest book unique countries – 52
- Canadian and USA visitors came from 10 provinces and 17 states

Education at RGCA

RGCA staff work closely with ABCA’s Conservation Education department. RGCA provides an excellent venue for all ages to learn about nature, animals, trees, the watershed, and local history. In 2024, along with education staff, RGCA hosted 23 education programs. These programs were primarily for school groups, guiding groups and seniors' outings. The Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre that is located at RGCA, attracts visitors to RGCA, and provides a passive education experience to visitors.

2025 Priorities

RGCA continues to provide a valuable experience to conservation area visitors, and as a location to facilitate education programs. The 2024 season saw an increase in attendance numbers compared to the 2023 season; however, it is a level of use that staff feel is sustainable. The following are priorities for 2025:

- Maintain the number of passes sold
- Work with the education department to provide day camps during the summer months
- Continue to enhance off-season and “shoulder” season opportunities offered at RGCA

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Angela Van Niekerk, Wetland Specialist & Ian Jean, Forestry Specialist
Subject: Stewardship Funding Update
Report Type: INFORMATION REPORT

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report: *Stewardship Funding Update* for information as presented.

Background:

Stewardship Funding Program: Canada Nature Fund Projects (CNF): Improving freshwater habitat for species at risk in the Ausable Bayfield watersheds.

The Ausable River Recovery Action Plan (2018) has reconfirmed that the two main threats to aquatic species at risk (SAR) in the Ausable River are nutrient enrichment and sediment deposition. The primary goal of this multi-year project is to improve aquatic habitat in the Ausable River and Bayfield River for SAR freshwater mussels and fishes.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is providing \$330,000 in funding for April 2024 to March 2025 project year. Stewardship activities will include working with watershed residents for up to seven wetland restorations; up to 17 tree planting sites; up to 1,200 acres of cover crops; and up to five sediment and nutrient reduction activities (fencing out livestock and WASCOBS). As well as monitoring SAR fish and the SAR mussel fish hosts at six long term index stations and education and outreach in the Ausable and Bayfield River watersheds.

Project activities below show the Funding Breakdown by Activity.

Stewardship Project Funding	\$136,620
Stewardship Program Delivery	\$79,080
Environmental Monitoring	114,300
TOTAL	\$330,000

CANADA NATURE FUND: YEAR to DATE SUMMARY (April 2024- March 31, 2025)

Project Type	Available Funding	Approved Projects	Approved Funding	Remaining Funds
Fragile Land Retirement	\$36,820	9	\$24,761	\$12,059
Wetland Restoration	\$26,300	6	\$15,250	\$11,050
Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Activities	\$26,000			
Cover Crops	\$47,500			
TOTAL	\$136,620	15		\$23,109

Funding rate is up to 50% of project costs. However, where projects meet the eligibility requirements of both programs the federal and provincial funding can be stacked to recover up to 100% of project costs.

Below is a summary of new projects approved by ABCA staff since the last Stewardship Report.

Applications for funding: FRAGILE LAND RETIREMENT (Tree Planting)

The following applications for funding have been received and approved by ABCA staff.

CANADA NATURE FUND				
File #	Name	Location	Details	Grant
AB-3660	Dalgetta Farms	Lot 6, Con 11 West Williams, North Middlesex	Expand and enhance treed buffer along Ausable River tributary. 60 trees, potted Oak and maple. ABCA completed project in October 2024.	\$1578 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
AB-3670	Jeff Damen	Part Lots 3 & 4, Concession 9 West Williams, North Middlesex	Expand and enhance treed buffer along the Ausable River. 270 trees, spruce and deciduous (oak, maple tulip tree). ABCA completed project in October 2024.	\$4320 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
AB-3686	John Wuerth	Lot 25, Concession 1, Stephen Township, South Huron	Expand and enhance treed buffer along the Ausable River. 70 trees, 2 ft conifers and 6 ft bare root deciduous. ABCA to plant in spring 2025.	\$1600 Matching funds from Huron Clean Water Project
AB-3689	Jeff Borland	Part Lot C & D,	Establish tree windbreak	\$1600

		Concession 8, Usborne, South Huron	between cropped fields; fields drain into tributary of Little Ausable River. 100 cedar for 300m windbreak. ABCA to plant in Spring 2025.	Matching funds approved from Huron Clean
AB-3692	Mike Partridge	Part Lot 30, Con 1 Biddulph, Lucan Biddulph	Enhance treed buffer along Little Ausable River. 95 trees, mix of spruce, cedar, maple, oak, and native shrubs. Landowner planted in October 2024; ABCA provided tree stakes and wraps.	\$1626 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
AB-3710	Brad Cann	Lot 25, Con 7 Usborne, South Huron	Establish treed buffer around constructed wetland and field border. 220 trees, mix of cedar and hardwoods. ABCA to plant in spring 2025.	\$1575 Matching funds proposed from Huron Clean Water Project
AB-3711	John Coleman	Part Lot 1, Con 2 Stanley, Bluewater	Establish trees on floodplain of Bannockburn River. 500 trees, mix of Cedar, Spruce, and lowland hardwoods. ABCA to plant in spring 2025.	\$2250 Matching funds proposed from Huron Clean Water Project
TOTAL				\$14,549.00

Total: \$14,549 at this review meeting / \$24,761 of \$36,820 approved for term.

Applications for funding: WETLAND RESTORATION

The following applications for funding have been received and approved by ABCA staff.

CANADA NATURE FUND				
File #	Name	Location	Details	Grant
AB-3602	Fletcher Wetland	Lot 12, Conc 12, Lobo, Middlesex Center	Restored 3 wetlands for water storage during storm events, trap and treat sediment and nutrients, reducing erosion going into the constructed open drain that becomes Bear Creek. 1 acre restored.	\$3,500 Matching funds from Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Middlesex
AB-3576	K&B Warner Wetland	Lot 10, Con 8, West Williams, North Middlesex	Restored 4 wetlands for water storage during storm events, and filtration of water with native plants. Retired 3 acres along low wet field and	\$4,061.47 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation

			restored 1 acre. We planted native plants to help filter, add diversity and speed up recovery.	and Parks
AB-3577	Larouche Wetland	Lot 8, Con 2, East Williams, North Middlesex	Restored 1 wetland in old gravel pit area to improve water quality by filtration. Restored 0.4 acre.	\$3,090.19 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
AB-3579	Pullen Wetland	Lot 14, Con 1, Hullett, Central Huron	Restored 1 wetland in wet edge of pasture area to provide water storage during storm events and improve water with filtration of native plants that are planted. Retired 1.15 acres and restored 0.5 acre wetland.	\$2,739.27 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and Huron Clean Water Project
AB-3623	Haak Wetland	Lot 18 Con 2, Hullett, Central Huron	Restored 1 wetland in wet edge of field to provide water storage, collect sediments and nutrients and allow it to settle out in wetland, and filter water. Retired 0.7 acres and restored 0.2 acre wetland.	\$989.90 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and Huron Clean Water Project
AB-3621	Cann Wetland	Lot 25, Con 7, Usborne, South Huron	Restored 1 wetland in old gravel pit area to improve water quality by filtration. Restored 0.2 acre wetland.	\$869.17 Matching funds from Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and Huron Clean Water Project
Total				\$15,250.00

Total: \$15,250 at this review meeting / \$15,250 of \$26,300 approved for term.

Background:

Wetlands Conservation Partner Program restores and enhances wetlands in priority areas across Ontario to improve functionality and/or connectivity of wetlands; conserves existing wetlands and their features and functions; supports municipalities with stormwater management to mitigate climate change; improve shoreline resiliency to climate change impacts.

This project is to improve water quality, mitigate excess stormwater flow, preserve, and increase SAR habitats, prevent flooding, build climate change resiliency in the Great Lakes watersheds. The ABCA will restore and enhance 24 wetlands through wetland restoration and tree planting for 2024. Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is providing \$117,000. They have approved \$34,000 to support project delivery (site visits, project coordination, design, monitoring, outreach, and education) and \$43,000 for goods (trees, native plants, native seed) and \$40,000 for wetland project implementation.

Projects have already been shown and approved as these are matching the CNF or Nature Smart funds.

Funding rate is 50% of project costs. However, where a project meets the eligibility requirements of federal and provincial programs, funding can be stacked to recover up to 100% of project costs.

The following are the project categories and grant ceilings per project.

Project type	Grant rate	Total Funds
Wetland Restoration	50%	\$40,000
Fragile Land Retirement	50%	\$43,000
Project Delivery (ABCA)	-	\$34,000

WETLANDS CONSERVATION PARTNER PROGRAM: YEAR to DATE SUMMARY

(January 2024- December 2024)

Project Type	Available Funding	Approved Projects	Approved Funding	Remaining Funds
Wetland Restoration	\$40,000	13	\$40,000	\$0
Fragile Land Retirement	\$43,000	17	\$41,222 including seed, plants for wetlands	\$1,778
TOTAL	\$83,000	30	81,222	\$1,778

Wetlands Conservation Partner Program (MECP)				
File #	Name	Location	Details	Grant
AB-3382	Alexander Wetland	Lot 2 Con Bayfield, Goderich, Central Huron	Restored 4 wetlands to provide water storage and filtration to improve water quality to Bayfield River.	\$2,075.56 Matching funds from Canada Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3553	Giroux Wetland	Lot 3, Con A, Stephen, South Huron	Restored 1 wetland to provide water storage and filtration to improve water quality. Restored 0.15 acre and planted native plants to help filter, add diversity and speed up recovery.	\$2,865.56
AB-3196	Gokstorp Wetland touchups	Lot 13, Con 7 ECR, McGillivray, North Middlesex	Restored sediment basin at inlet of wetland and touched up outflow basin and added rocks to slow water down. We planted native plants to help filter, add diversity and speed up recovery.	\$3,000
M-3989	Oakes Wetland	Lot 67, PT Lot 68, Central Huron	Restored 6 wetlands for water storage and to improve water quality. Retired 18 acres of rolling hay field and restored 2.3 acres of wetlands. To be planted with native plants around the wetlands and trees throughout. We planted native plants to help filter, add diversity and speed up recovery.	\$10,000 Matching funds from Huron Stewardship Council, Maitland Valley CA, Huron Clean Water Project, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Landowner.
AB-3622	Serenity Nature Reserve Wetland	Lot 11, Con 18, Stephen, South Huron	Retired 7.4 acres and restored 0.45 acre wetland.	\$6,058.09 Matching funds from Huron Clean Water

				Project.
AB-3576	K&B Warner Wetland	Lot 10, Con 8, North Middlesex, West Williams	Restored 4 wetlands for water storage during storm events, and filtration of water with native plants. Retired 3 acres along low wet field and restored 1 acre. We planted native plants to help filter, add diversity and speed up recovery.	\$2,500 Matching funds from Canada Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3577	Larouche Wetland	Lot 8, Con 2, North Middlesex, East Williams	Restored 1 wetland in old gravel pit area to improve water quality by filtration. Restored 0.4 acre. Phragmites managed around wetlands and proposed wetland before works completed.	\$3,100.29 Matching funds from Canada Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3579	Pullen Wetland	Lot 14, Con 1, Central Huron, Hullett	Restored 1 wetland in wet edge of pasture area to provide water storage during storm events and improve water with filtration of native plants that are planted. Retired 1.15 acres and restored 0.5 acre wetland.	\$6,000 Matching funds from Huron Clean Water Project, Canada Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3623	Haak Wetland	Lot 18 Con 2, Central Huron, Hullett	Restored 1 wetland in wet edge of field to provide water storage, collect sediments and nutrients and allow it to settle out in wetland, and filter water. Retired 0.7 acres and restored 0.2 acre wetland.	\$1,250 Matching funds from Huron Clean Water Project, Canada Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3621	Cann Wetland	Lot 25, Con 7, South Huron, Osborne	Restored 1 wetland in old gravel pit area to improve water quality by filtration. Restored 0.2 acre wetland.	\$1,794.26 Matching funds from Huron Clean Water Project, Canada

				Nature Fund (CNF).
AB-3714	Quinn's phragmites management	Lot 7, Con 10, Lobo, Middlesex Center	Managed phragmites around restored wetlands.	\$715
AB-3715	Strapp's phragmites management	Lot 30, Con 15, London, Middlesex Centre	Managed phragmites around wetland and natural wetlands in the back that buffer Nairn Creek.	\$320
AB-3716	Johnson's phragmites management	Con 7 S PT Lot 3, West Williams, North Middlesex	Managed phragmites around wetland.	\$321.24
Total				\$40,000

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Ian Jean, Forestry & Stewardship Specialist
Subject: Tree Planting Program – 2024 Summary
Report Type: INFORMATION REPORT

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report Tree Planting Program – 2024 Summary for information as presented.

Background:

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) provides a full-service tree planting program, through technical advice, tree sales and planting services to watershed landowners in the spring and fall each year. The program supports projects that benefit watershed health such as reforestation, field windbreaks and riparian buffers. Below is a summary for 2024.

Number of Trees Planted/Distributed:

LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION			2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
SPRING	ABCA-plant		46	47	32	31	30	37
	Pick up orders		160	150	147	160	138	120
FALL	ABCA-plant		8	10	4	5	5	6
	Pick up orders		29	39	44	43	44	25
			243	246	227	239	217	188

The tree planting program is a service provided to watershed landowners through ABCA’s stewardship program. The tree planting program operates on a cost-recovery basis and is supported through technical service fees, and tree sales. Local support for the stewardship program helps secure funding from external partners; this funding supports landowners in completing stewardship projects. In addition to the local support for stewardship programs, local cost-share funding was provided by the Huron Clean Water Project and West Perth Healthy Forests Initiative. Provincial funding was sourced through the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Parks. Federal funds were sourced from Forests Ontario, Canada Nature Fund, Canadian Agricultural Partnership and Nature Smart Climate Solutions. Non-government funding was provided by the Sunset Community Foundation and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation.

ABCA planting services are available to landowners throughout the watershed. ABCA also works with Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) to support MVCA with delivering their program. Below is a summary of projects completed by ABCA staff in each municipality. The conservation authority tree planting program and services are available to local municipalities. In 2024, ABCA worked closely with Bluewater, Lucan Biddulph, South Huron and North Middlesex on tree planting initiatives.

PROJECT LOCATION for trees planted by ABCA staff		
		TOTAL
	Adelaide Metcalfe	-
	Bluewater	11
	Central Huron	
	Huron East	4
	Lambton Shores/Warwick	2
	Lucan Biddulph	5
	Middlesex Centre	1
	North Middlesex	12
	South Huron	9
	West Perth	4
	MVCA	6
	TOTAL	54

Thanks to engaged landowners, and support from member municipalities, and partnering organizations, the ABCA Tree Planting Program has a broad reach across the watershed. The program is an important way for ABCA to connect with landowners and help them make positive improvements to their properties and the watershed. Through this collaboration, planting trees is an effective means to achieve the ABCA mission to protect, improve, conserve, and restore the watershed in partnership with the community.

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Daniel King P.Eng., Water Resources Engineer
Subject: ABCA Ice Management Plan
Report Type: INFORMATION REPORT

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the report ABCA Ice Management Plan for information as presented.

Background:

The attached plan has been prepared by staff to meet Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, Section 4: Ice Management, of the Conservation Authorities Act.

The focus of the plan is the monitoring and messaging of ice buildup and ice jam risk as part of the comprehensive Flood Forecasting and Warning program.

The ABCA Ice Management Plan will continue to be reviewed amended and updated by ABCA staff as needed in the future. It is intended to be a living document that provides overview of these operations.

As per O.Reg. 686/21, following the Board's receipt of this report, it will be posted on the ABCA website.

ABCA Ice Management Plan



Prepared by Daniel King P.Eng.

Water Resources Engineer

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Revisions:

Date	Revision Note
Dec 11, 2024	Draft for Board Approval

Contents

- 1. Introduction and Background 3
- 2. History of Ice Jams in the Ausable and Bayfield Rivers 3
- 3. Ice Management 4
- 4. Flood Emergency Plan 5
 - Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook/Water Safety 5
 - Flood Watch 5
 - Flood Warning 5
- Appendix A – List of Historic Ice Management Studies and Direction 6
- Appendix B – ABCA Flood Emergency Plan 6

1. Introduction and Background

The seasonal build up and breakup of ice cover on the Ausable and Bayfield rivers are a natural process that can present unique challenges to forecasting natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. Different approaches to managing ice have been undertaken in our watershed and studied by the ABCA since the organization's inception. The current practice of the ABCA is to monitor ice formation and thickness and other features as part of River Watch activities. When the risks posed by flooding increase, include that information as part of regular flood messaging.

2. History of Ice Jams in the Ausable and Bayfield Rivers

Ice jams in the ABCA watershed have a long-documented history. We have newspaper reports of jams in Arkona and Rock Glen from 1910 and 1911. As ice jamming is a natural process, they certainly took place even earlier than this.

Here is a list of a few notable reports of ice-jams within the ABCA watershed:

- ❖ 2018 – February
 - Large amounts of ice and significant damage in the lower Bayfield River, and Bayfield Marina. A portion of the river was observed flowing in reverse due to an ice jam.
- ❖ 2011 – January
 - Roads overtopped and flooding due to ice jams in the Ausable River in Port Franks.
- ❖ 2009 – February
 - Ice flowing into the Bayfield Marina causes significant damage.
 - ABCA staff recorded deep moving ice at Ausable river at Sylvan Bridge, due to the shape of the valley in this location up to 5 m (16.5 ft) of ice flow is possible in this location.
 - In this month, there was a 2-day delay between ice breakup in the Ausable and Bayfield River.
- ❖ 1968 – February
 - Newspaper interviews of Ice Jams being removed with dynamite. This was not always effective for clearing the river of ice.
- ❖ 1935 – Port Franks
 - Reports of groceries and mail being delivered by boat March 5-11.
- ❖ 1934 – Port Franks
 - Heavy damage, reports of ice jam at the mouth of the river in Pt. Franks. A second jam “at the bend in the river” raised water even higher.
- ❖ 1911 – Rock Glen
 - Few details about a “Bee” being held Feb 3 to cut ice and “lessen the danger”. Reports that when ice went out flooding occurred in other areas downstream.
- ❖ 1910 – Arkona
 - Reports of crowds gathering to watch the ice go out March 6th.

Since 1946 the ABCA and our partner organizations have studied ice jams extensively and taken a variety of different approaches based on these study results. These studies are listed in Appendix A. The effect of ice in rivers is closely tied to the flooding and erosion hazards that are monitored and managed by ABCA. While ice jams behaviour is related to channel morphology, the location of jams is unpredictable and can occur anywhere along the river after ice cover has formed. The process of ice breakup and jamming are difficult to model and less predictable than the riverine flooding which is mapped and modeled to support ABCA’s flood forecasting and warning or regulatory mapping programs. As has been seen in the history of the Ausable River, Parkhill Creek and the Bayfield River the breakup and removal of ice-jams can lead to additional downstream impact. The Lower Ausable River specifically has been identified as an area with characteristics favourable to ice jam formation.

3. Ice Management

Based on these previous studies, and their conclusions, ABCA’s current approach, as with other riverine flooding hazards consists of monitoring and messaging.

As part of seasonal field work, when ice develops on the Ausable and Bayfield rivers staff periodically monitor the ice condition with the following risk-based table shown below in Figure 1:







GUIDE to ICE CONDITIONS					
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 0
Lowest risk of ice jam flooding				Highest risk of ice jam flooding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intact sheets - No cracks or water - Looks strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intact sheets - Cracks and/or water - Looks weak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early breakup - Cracks and open water, ice lifted - Ice not moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breakup - Ice chunks - Ice moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ice Jam - Ice not moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post Ice breakup - Ice may be on shore - Water receded
					

Figure 1: ABCA Guide to Ice Breakup Conditions

When conditions are documented by ABCA Staff during River Watch that have the potential for ice breakup, these conditions and where they have been observed are included in the Watershed Condition Statements, Flood Watches, and Flood Warnings sent out by the designated ABCA staff person as laid out in the Flood Emergency Plan.

4. Flood Emergency Plan

ABCA Staff communicate with municipal staff when ice jams are occurring or likely to occur. The ABCA Flood Emergency Plan outlines the responsibilities of ABCA Staff and other organizations in the event of a flood. The Conservation Authority is not responsible for the notification of individuals during a flood event. Notification is sent to selected agencies and officials including Municipal Partners and the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Municipalities then notify their citizens and respond to the emergency as appropriate.

This is consistent with how River Watch, ice jam monitoring and messaging is done by ABCA Staff. When ice monitoring results require it, ABCA Staff include appropriate messaging in the notifications sent to the contacts specified in the Flood Emergency Plan. These include the following types of messages:

Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook/Water Safety

These are general notices which provide a general reminder of safety around watercourses which serves as a reminder of unsafe conditions when there is a potential for high flows but only limited flooding. These may be issued when a major storm is pending, above normal snowpack conditions exist or when general conditions suggest high runoff potential. Information about ice cove may be included in these messages when appropriate.

Flood Watch

A flood watch is a notification for municipal flood coordinators and other primary contacts that the potential for flooding exists and is issued to the affected municipalities. In the description of a flood watch the potential impact of flooding and the relevant hydrometeorological forecast conditions are described. If there is risk associated with ice pack that has been identified by ABCA field activities this information would be included in the messaging for the Flood Watch.

Flood Warning

A Flood Warning is issued when flooding appears inevitable based on current and forecasted conditions. These warnings will generally specify specific flood damage centres. Upon receipt of a Flood Warning municipal officials should issue warnings to households, business and industry that may be threatened. When high risk of ice breakup and jamming exists or has already occurred and has been observed by ABCA Staff conducting River Watch, this information is passed on to the Flood Duty Officer who includes the relevant details in the Flood Warning.

Further detail on these types of flood messages is included in the ABCA Flood Emergency Plan in Appendix B.

Appendices:

Appendix A – List of Historic Ice Management Studies and Direction

[Click Here for Link](#)

Appendix B – ABCA Flood Emergency Plan

[Click here for link](#)

ABCA Program Report

To: Board of Directors
Date: December 19, 2024
From: Davin Heinbuck, General Manager/Secretary Treasurer
Subject: General Managers Report
Report Type: INFORMATION

Recommendation:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the General Managers Report for information as presented.

Introduction

I am pleased to provide the Board of Directors with a brief update on ABCA projects, programs, partnership updates, funding opportunities and activities over the past few months (summer). Information about Conservation Ontario(CO) and some of its activities on behalf of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities will also be included when new information is available. If you have any questions feel free to discuss with me. This is not an inclusive list, only some highlights.

Conservation Ontario

The Conservation Authority Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Administrative By-Law Model was originally prepared to facilitate the updates and approvals of new CA Administrative By-Laws by the legislated deadline of December 2018. This encouraged consistency across CA's. Maintaining current By-Laws is a key action identified under the Conservation Ontario Governance Accountability and Transparency Initiative. All CAs are encouraged to update their Administrative By-laws. The changes are editorial in nature and primarily to bring the language up to date.

Conservation Ontario Council meetings have been set for 2025. The Annual General Meeting will be April 14th, followed by quarterly meetings on June 23rd, September 22nd, and December 8th.

ABCA Meetings and Special Events

1. The Annual Bruce Redman Car Show and Community Day was held at Rock Glen CA on Saturday, September 21st. The Arkona Lions organized the event and had 90 vehicles displayed. Approximately 300 people visited during the event, and a total over 500 people for the day.
2. Greek Night Dinner fundraiser was held on October 21, for the Parkhill accessible trail loop project of Friends of North Middlesex Trails (FNMT).
3. Owl Prowl at MDCA had 111 in attendance, over 2 evening sessions. Additional Owl Prowls in Varna (Bayfield Trails Association) and Exeter for the Zurich Scouts.

4. The Commemorative Woods ceremony was held at Morrison Dam on September 15th. 450 people were in attendance.
5. Hope Brock and Mari Veliz assisted Huron Soil and Crop with a cover crop planting demo day at Huronview Demonstration Farm in which cover crops were seeded aerially by drone into standing soybeans on September 20th. Approximately 40 people attended.
6. Hope, Cristen Watt, and Cassie Greidanus provided outreach and education at the 9th annual turtle hatchling release on August 29th. Approximately 900 people attended.
7. Nathan Schoelier attended an Ecological Gifts Program (EGP) information session, hosted by Conservation Ontario and Ontario Land Trust Alliance. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation is an eligible recipient through EGP, and currently owns 3 properties certified as Ecological Gifts.
8. Ian Jean and Nathan Schoelier hosted the September Huron Clean Water Project (HCWP) meeting at ABCA's office. Between MVCA and ABCA, 68 projects were presented for a total grant request of approximately \$148,000.
9. Brooklyn Rau and Nathan attended the final Huron Clean Water Project meeting for 2024. ABCA presented 31 projects with a total value of \$103, 071 for a grant request of \$30, 439. Staff also presented the draft 2025 HCWP budget, and recommended 2025 HCWP requirement amendments to the Project Review Committee.
10. Ian and Nathan met with Hannah Cann, Resiliency & Stewardship Coordinator, at Perth County, to discuss the 2025 guidelines for the Perth County Stewardship Program. The program is entering its second year. The local contribution helps to leverage external funding to further support landowners in completing their projects.
11. Ian led tours of the Warner Nature Preserve for the Grand Bend and Area horticultural society on October 1st and the 'Grand Men' group on October 8th. Both tours had over 30 in attendance.
12. Cassie and Rosalind Chang have been active in the AMDSB Environmental Forum for both elementary and secondary students. The elementary student focus is on how to better incorporate the schoolyard outdoors into their education. Secondary students will be creating conservation plans for their school, focusing on issues specific to their school environment.
13. Rosalind has met with teachers and administrative staff at Hillside School in Kettle Point on to engage in conversations about providing partnerships for youth.
14. Rosalind attended the Rekindle conference from November 6-8th at the Albion Hills Field Centre in Caledon. She learned more about partnerships happening between Indigenous and First Nation communities and Conservation Authorities across the province.
15. The Londesboro and District Lions Club hosted a second Water Wise public information event on November 14, 2024. 39 water bottles were brought in and taken to Huron Perth Public Health for testing. Funding made possible through the Huron (County) Clean Water Project.
16. The Source Protection Committee met on Wednesday Sept 25th in Holmesville. The meeting was followed by a retirement luncheon for Mary Lynn MacDonald, graciously provided by Chair Matt Pearson. Carol Leeming, the new Agricultural rep. for the Committee was in attendance.
17. Mari met with the Conservation Ontario Watershed Report Card Working Group Co-Chairs & Sub-working Group Chairs to continue to build on last year's WRC launch and get the sub-working groups going early, working on improvements to the indicators, and methodologies.
18. Tim Cumming, Mari and Davin attended the Healthy Lake Huron (HLH) Executive meeting. HLH is a multi-partner initiative focused enhancing Lake Huron's southeast shore, from Sarnia to

Tobermory, through community engagement and on-the-ground action. The meeting brought together 20 partners, including federal departments, provincial ministries, counties, and local conservation authorities, for a productive discussion on the future of the HLH initiative.

19. Cristen attended a virtual Conservation Authority Long Term Monitoring (CALM) Group meeting on Nov. 14th focused on Communicating Science and Open Data.
20. Mari and Rosalind attended the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems Initiative (GLFEI) Symposium on November 20th at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington. The event was hosted by Canada Water Agency and TRCA to showcase various coastal wetland restoration projects. ABCA was invited to attend due to ongoing work with the OAC proposal.
21. Further to Item 20 above, meetings are ongoing with partners (Pinery, Friends of OAC, University of Toronto, GEI, ECCC) regarding the Coastal Resiliency application for OAC funding.

ABCA Projects, Programs and Studies

1. The 2024 phragmites management season is complete for County of Huron roads, roadsides and lands for five municipalities in Huron County, Lambton Heritage Museum, Maitland Valley CA's stewardship projects & lands, Hullett Marsh, and 13 private landowner sites. We continue to manage phragmites on ABCA lands.
2. Brooklyn Rau has continued to receive Cover Crop Incentive Program applications. Over 4500 acres have been enrolled so far, partnering with 44 landowners.
3. Fall Tree Program is complete. A total of 1640 trees will be planted by ABCA staff at 9 private landowner sites and roadside projects for the Municipality of Bluewater and South Huron. Additionally, 30 watershed landowners purchased 750 trees for planting on their property.
4. Staff have finished re-surfacing parking lots at Ausable River Cut CA, Clinton CA, Bannockburn CA, Lucan CA and Morrison Dam CA. Parking at Rock Glen CA has been expanded by 13 spots to support increases in pavilion rentals.
5. Nathan visited several ABCA's properties with Marsh Insurance, to complete a risk mitigation assessment.
6. Kari Jean and staff have completed freshwater mussel surveys in the Ausable River at 5 index sites. These sites have been sampled every 4-5 years since 2006 to track changes in populations over time. Species at risk mussels were found at each of the sites including Rock Glen where SAR mussel numbers have declined in recent sampling years.
7. Ben Riggan and Aaron Clarke have been working on the soil moisture project for ONFarm. This has included research, purchase and installation of equipment, and GIS analysis.
8. Angela VanNiekerk and Ben completed 23 wetlands at 11 Sites. 18 other sites were enhanced.
9. Christie Brown and Kari have completed 2024 DFO Drain sampling. The purpose of this project is to classify "not rated" drains to help guide drain maintenance activities. Fisheries, habitat and flow data were collected to inform each drain's classification.
10. Christie has finished sampling at 16 PGMN for water quality; 5 were selected in 2024 for additional pesticide monitoring with Health Canada.
11. Annual benthic sampling has been completed at the 16 sites throughout the watershed.
12. Erik Strahl continues to work with partners on municipal Drainage Act proposals.

13. Ellen Westlaken attended the Central Huron Official Plan Review meeting. Central Huron is seeking advice from associated CAs for the updated official plan.
14. Andrew Bicknell and Ellen attended pre-consultation meetings for Draft Plan of Subdivisions – Azar Lands, Jowett’s Grove Rd., Bayfield, and at Union / William St., Parkhill.
15. Daniel King and Christie continue to meet with Water Survey Canada Tech to discuss the upgrades and replacement of stream gauges at Black Creek and Parkhill.
16. Daniel, Christie and Davin attended the regional Southwestern Ontario Flood Forecasting Alliance meeting hosted by MVCA, and the Provincial Flood Forecasting Workshop hosted by Conservation Ontario, Toronto Region CA, and MNR.

ABCA Training

1. Jeff VanNiekerk has completed his Joint Health and Safety Committee certified member training and will continue being the worker certified member contact at ABCA.
2. Nathan, Reese Thompson, Jeff and Derek Dolmage attended the Conservation Areas Workshop. It’s a forum to share and discuss opportunities/challenges in conservation area management.
3. Geoff Cade, Ellen and Erik attended the “CA Coastal Network November 2024 Workshop: Building Towards Coastal Resilience”, on November 18th.
4. Daniel attended the Canadian Dam Association webinar on November 20th on dam inspection protocols.

Other Items

1. Rock Glen Conservation Area has closed for the season. 2024 saw over 40,600 paid entries. The museum guestbook had 2183 entries, including visitors from 10 provinces, 19 different states and 53 countries (including Canada and US).
2. Mike Bax, Reese, Jeff and Nathan completed 5 days of patrols on ABCA properties during the two Controlled Deer Hunt weeks in November and one in December.
3. The Communications Plan Update Committee (Tim, Rosalind, Nathan, Daniel and Hope) has been meeting monthly to build upon successes of our communications program. The committee's work is already resulting in new innovations, and changes to the 2024 Annual Report.
4. Donna Clarkson and Tim have been taking part in Conservation Ontario meetings related to a proposed video, for 2025, marking the 25th anniversary of the water contamination event, and tragedy, that occurred in Walkerton, Ontario.
5. On November 13, the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley (ABMV) Drinking Water Source Protection Region (SPR) issued a Notice of call for applications for a source protection committee (SPC) member to represent the Environment sector. Current SPC environment rep. John Graham has elected not to remain on the committee for another term. The application deadline was Friday, December 13, 2024.



MINUTES

AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 26, 2024

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

Janet Clarke, George Irvin, Roger Lewington, Dave McClure, Anne Melady, Charles Miner, Robert Norris, Bob Radtke

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave Frayne

OTHERS PRESENT

Tina Crown, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Nathan Schoelier

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Charles Miner welcomed the Foundation Board Members and called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Acting Chair Miner asked that we add the topic of corporate visibility under New Business.

MOTION #12/24

Moved by Robert Norris

Seconded by George Irvin

“RESOLVED, THAT the November 26, 2024 agenda for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation Annual meeting be approved as amended.”

Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOTION #13/24

Moved by George Irvin

Seconded by Janet Clarke

“RESOLVED, THAT the minutes of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation meeting held on May 14, 2024 be approved.”

Carried.

BUSINESS OUT OF THE MINUTES

None.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Junior Conservationist

Abbie Gutteridge, Foundation Secretary, reported that Graeme Irwin of Lucan was the 2024 Junior Conservationist, who supported ABCA staff in July and August. She reported that Graeme was an excellent addition to ABCA staff and spent the majority of his time helping the Healthy Watersheds department with various types of field work, or in helping with Nature Day Camps. Abbie reported that the Foundation will be posting this position again in 2025. ABCA is applying to the Canada Summer Jobs program to try to obtain some funding to offset the costs of hiring a Junior Conservationist.

Student Environmental Grant

Abbie Gutteridge reported that there were three applicants for the Student Environmental Grant in 2024, all in different stages of post-secondary environmental education studies. All were from within a watershed municipality. The applications were provided to Foundation members to score. All scores were very close this year, but the highest was received by Emily Dearing of Staffa. A cheque for \$1000 was presented to Emily this summer by Chair Dave Frayne, and the video of the presentation will be shown at the Partner Appreciation Evening in March 2025.

Morrison Dam Commemorative Woods Tree Dedication Service

Abbie Gutteridge reminded Foundation members that the Foundation partners with Haskett Funeral Homes for a tree dedication service each September. This year, the service was held on Sunday, September 15, and Chair Dave Frayne brought greetings from the Foundation. Memorials numbers from both Haskett Funeral Homes and the Foundation were higher this year, and accordingly there were approximately 450 attendees at the service at Morrison Dam Conservation Area.

Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy

Roger Lewington provided a brief update on several of the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC) properties. He reported that the pedestrian walkway at the Bayfield River Flats was completed in spring, and the opening held in June, which was well attended. The Bayfield Lions Fishing Derby was also held at the River Flats, with no incidents this year, due to excellent work by ABCA staff. Finally, the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association, who is responsible for

some of the trail maintenance on the property, was successful in receiving funding in the amount of over \$125,000, for erosion control efforts and invasive species management.

Roger reported that ABCA staff continue to maintain the Woodburne property. Mrs. Elliot has had some health concerns of late, and is in the hospital at present until alternate arrangements can be made for her ongoing care.

The arboretum at the Warner preserve is well underway with planting, and a grand opening was held this spring for donors to the arboretum. There have also been several school tree plantings at the property. Roger reported that the property committee is working through options for some amenities to support education programs on the property, such as a porta-potty, but must work within the EcoGift status, which limits options.

Finally, Roger noted that there have been several other property inquiries for the HTLTC, and members will continue to liaise with the interested parties.

BILL AND ILSE ELLIOT ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND

Nathan Schoelier, ABCA Conservation Lands and Stewardship Manager, reported that in June 2024 Ilse Elliot donated RBC shares to be held by the Foundation, which will be used to establish the Bill and Ilse Elliot Environmental Trust Fund as per her wishes. ABCA staff worked with Mrs. Elliot to establish Terms of Reference for the Trust Fund to ensure that the use of the funds aligns with her wishes. In general, the funds are to be used for summer student opportunities at ABCA, nature education programs for youth, conservation properties maintenance to ensure safe access and enjoyment of nature, and to work with potential land donors to increase the amount of land protected for future generations. The annual dividends of the trust fund will allow for approximately \$30,000 available for use each year. These funds will be divided so that \$10,000 is available for conservation education, \$10,000 for facilitating landowner contact for new properties, and \$10,000 for maintenance and summer student employment. The full Terms of Reference are attached.

MOTION #14/24

Moved by George Irvin

Seconded by Dave McClure

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation Board of Directors approves the Bill and Ilse Elliot Environmental Trust Fund Terms of Reference.”

Carried.

2024 PROJECT UPDATES AND 2025 FUNDING REQUESTS

Morrison Dam Commemorative Woods Expansion Update

Nathan Schoelier reported that ABCA staff have completed the first phase of the upgrades and expansion at Morrison Dam Commemorative Woods. This phase saw a new accessible path put in around the east section of the commemorative woods area that connects to the South Huron Trail. Staff are also in the process of speaking with staff at the Municipality of South Huron regarding access to the west side of the commemorative woods. Once this access has been established, ABCA staff will be prepared to install the accessible path on that section, and it can then be used and accessed for future memorial trees.

Funding Proposals

Abbie Gutteridge reported that there were two funding proposals from organizations this year that required a charitable partner, both of which were submitted to the Sunset Community Foundation's fund for the Greater Grand Bend Area Community. The Lakeshore Eco Network partnered with the Foundation and were granted \$4,400 for tree planting efforts at Klondyke Sports Park, and the ABCA was granted \$7000 for planting trees and native species at the Warner Preserve and Triebner tract with students from Grand Bend Public School and South Huron District High School.

Healthy Watersheds Funding

Kari Jean, ABCA Aquatic Biologist, thanked Foundation members for their support over the 2024 season. The projects supported by the Foundation in 2024 included \$1,000 toward Species-at-Risk Turtles in Port Franks – Community Engagement; Stewardship and Education in the Old Ausable Channel; and \$1,000 toward Monitoring and Outreach to Protect Species-at-Risk Fishes and Mussels in the Ausable River watershed. Kari provided an update on the successes of each of these projects.

In 2025, Kari will be continuing some of the projects and adding in one new project. She is requesting funding in the amount of \$6,000 for projects including: Monitoring and Outreach to Project Species-at-Risk Fish and Mussels in both the Ausable and Bayfield watersheds; Species-at-Risk Turtles in Port Franks – Community Engagement; and Monitoring in the Morrison Dam and Parkhill Dam reservoirs. Healthy watersheds staff revisit this project every 10 years, which examines the diversity and abundance of fish species, as well as habitat information.

Forestry and Stewardship Funding

Nathan Schoelier did not request funding for 2024, but had two requests for 2025. First, he is requesting \$2,500 for some properties signs for some of the lesser used conservation lands, as there is usually less funding for these lands as opposed to conservation areas. Secondly, he is proposing a tree sale for those who wish to purchase fewer trees than is typically permitted with

ABCA's tree planting program. This program would take place in the fall and would be available to residents across the watershed. He is requesting \$3,000 to help administer this program.

Education Project Update

Cassie Greidanus, ABCA Conservation Education Coordinator, provided an update on activities accomplished with 2024 Funding. This funding included \$2,520 toward Community Programs for Non-Profit Groups, and was used for library programs, as well as scouts and cubs groups and some day camps; \$2,000 toward program supplies; and \$600 toward a live owl presentation at the Owl Prowl held on November 15. Cassie also had a fourth request for funding at the last Foundation meeting for the Oaks and Acorns program in the amount of \$1,250, to match funds from the Sunset Community Foundation.

This year, Cassie does not have specific funding requests, as funding for education will come from the Bill and Ilse Elliot Environmental Trust Fund. However, she provided a breakdown of how those funds are intended to be used over the coming year. This will include \$3,650 toward the Oaks and Acorn program; \$3,150 for 14 free library programs; \$2500 for programs supplies and development; and \$750 for live owls for the Owl Prowl event.

PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET

Tina Crown, ABCA Financial Services Coordinator, presented the proposed 2025 budget to the ABCF Board of Directors, with the 2025 ABCA funding requests included in the figures.

MOTION #15/24

Moved by Bob Radtke

Seconded by George Irvin

“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation approve the proposed 2025 Budget as presented, which includes the funding requests presented by ABCA staff.”

Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Villis Family Wildlife Area

Nathan Schoelier reminded the Foundation of the Villis property along the Ausable River. It was uncertain to which organization the family would donate this property, but they settled on the Foundation, and the donation was completed in summer 2024. There has been no public announcement, as Mrs. Villis would like her family to be present for any formal announcement or event. This may occur in spring 2025. This property is approximately 50 acres, and there are plans for tall grass prairie restoration to take place. There is also some farmed land on this

parcel, and an agreement has been made with the current renter for one year, with potential to renew for two more years.

Greek Night, Parkhill ON

Abbie Gutteridge reported that a fundraising dinner was held at Niko's Restaurant in Parkhill, to raise funds for the Parkhill Trails project, an effort of the ABCA and the Friends of North Middlesex Trails. Almost 90 people attended the dinner, and had a great time. \$20 from each ticket sold was donated directly to the project.

Corporate Visibility

Acting Chair Charles Miner, noted that he has been at several events where Foundation or ABCA staff are not visible as they do not have enough signage (e.g. at a table for an event). He thought that this might be something the Foundation could help fund. In addition, it was noted that it would be good for Foundation members to have name tags to help others identify them at events.

MOTION #16/24

**Moved by Dave McClure
Seconded by George Irvin**

“RESOLVED, THAT staff arrange for signage to be made and name tags acquired for Foundation members to help with corporate visibility.”

Carried.

Trail Benches

Abbie reported that there have been a number of donations for benches along the South Huron Trail this year. She did have an inquiry from a local gentleman who wanted his son to build a memorial bench for the trail, rather than donate and have staff construct the bench. Foundation members agreed by consensus that this would not be acceptable, as safety standards need to be maintained, as well as visual standards. In addition, part of the donation helps to fund ongoing maintenance on the bench.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

None.

NEXT MEETING

The next Foundation meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Janet Clarke and Anne Melady adjourned the Foundation meeting at 4:24 p.m.

Charles Miner
Acting Chair

Abigail Gutteridge
Recording Secretary