

Ausable Bayfield **WATERSHED** Report Card 2018



Ausable Bayfield Conservation has prepared this summary to update you about the state of your forests and water resources.





Ausable Bayfield
Watershed
Report Card 2018



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A number of photos are by Brian Lasenby and used with appreciation.

Some photos, such as photo of water pitcher and glass, are by Daniel Holm of The Word & Image Studio.



Executive Summary

Welcome to the *Watershed Report Card 2018* for watersheds of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) area. We hope this report, a follow-up to our previous *Watershed Report Cards* in 2007 and 2013, provides meaningful information for landowners and community groups to protect and enhance our local environment.

Report cards are based on forest, surface water quality, and groundwater quality conditions in 16 subwatersheds in the ABCA watershed. These include three Bayfield River subwatersheds, eight Ausable River subwatersheds, two Parkhill Creek subwatersheds, Mud Creek, and two smaller Lake Huron subwatersheds.

Forest conditions are limited in Ausable Bayfield subwatersheds. In comparison to the previous *Watershed Report Card*, grades have remained steady and ranged from A to D, with most watersheds receiving a D grade.

Water quality has also remained steady for most subwatersheds. Grades ranged from A to D, with the majority of watersheds receiving C grades. Compared with the 2007 *Watershed Report Card*, four watersheds (Ausable Headwaters, Bayfield Headwaters, Black Creek, and Main Bayfield) have had

measurable improvements in *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) concentrations. Two watersheds (Lower Parkhill and Main Bayfield) have had measurable improvements in the concentrations of total phosphorus.

Groundwater quality, throughout the Ausable Bayfield area, is generally good. Several wells, however, tend to approach or exceed the drinking water standard for nitrate and the guideline for chloride, and therefore received less than an A grade.

Protecting and improving watershed health will require conservation actions that individuals can take on their properties, community actions, and actions by agencies. Each local *Watershed Report Card* suggests appropriate actions at each of these scales. When these actions are implemented together, they will have positive cumulative effects.

We can measure our collective efforts with every new report card and determine the best ways to continue to *save* (policies that help to protect some areas), *seed* (planting trees or creating wetlands), and *steward* (rural and urban best management practices that mitigate some land use activities) our local landscape.



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Principal Report Contributors:

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Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Species at risk and aerial photography

Water Resources Information Program (WRIP) – GIS mapping

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