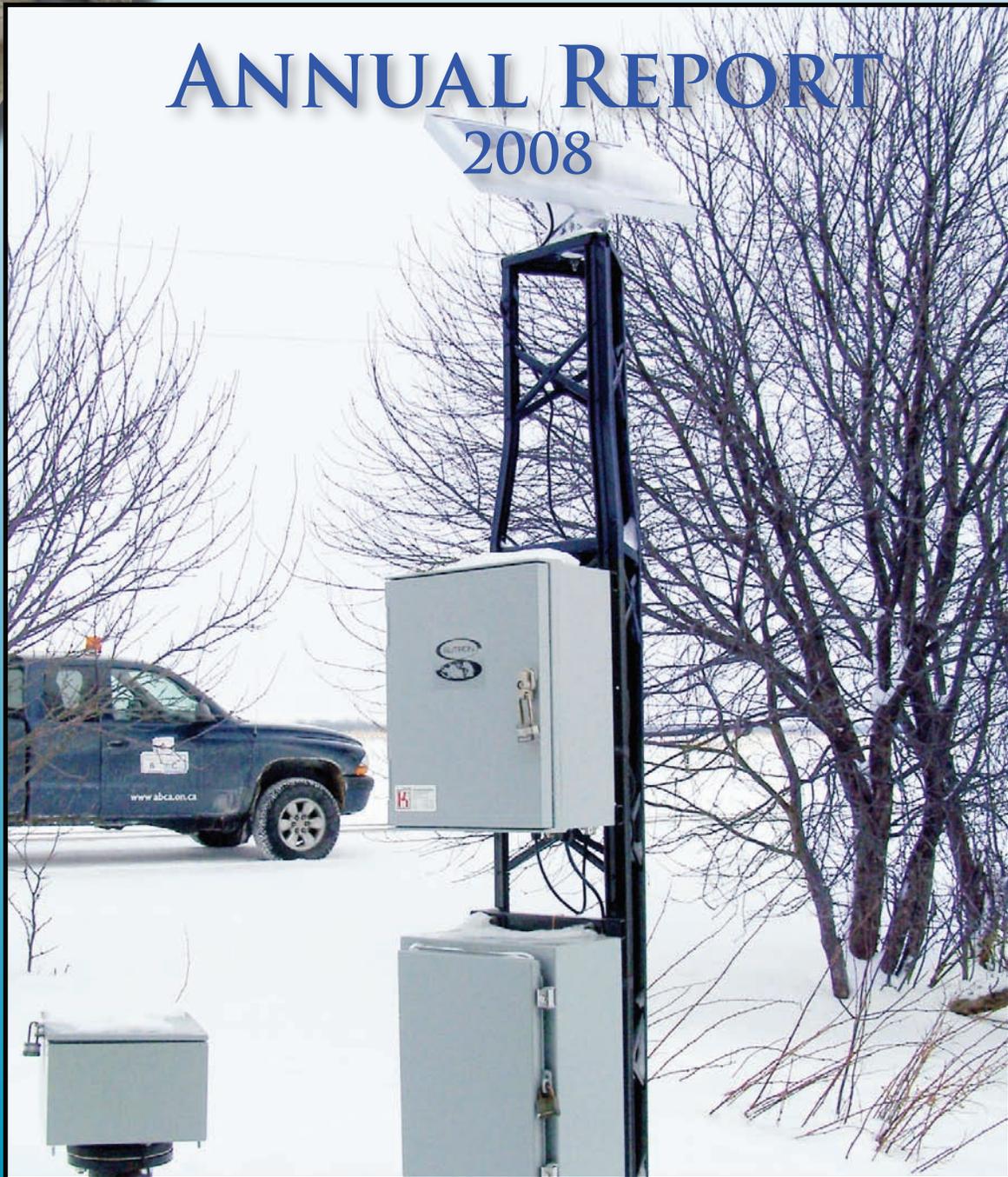




AUSABLE BAYFIELD
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



ABCA.ON.CA

BUILDING BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIENCE SINCE 1946

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABCA ANNUAL REPORT 2008

	Corporate Services, Pages 2 – 7		
<i>Page 2</i>	Message from the Chair		
<i>Page 3</i>	Board of Directors Message		
<i>Page 4</i>	General Manager's Report		
<i>Page 5</i>	ABCA Staff Report		
<i>Pages 6–7</i>	Training and Development		
<i>Pages 8–9</i>	Conservation Education		
<i>Page 10</i>	Communications		
	Water Management, Pages 11 – 19		
<i>Pages 11 - 13</i>	Monitoring Water Levels and Steam Flows		
<i>Page 14</i>	Groundwater Monitoring		
<i>Pages 15 - 16</i>	Water and Erosion Control		
<i>Page 17</i>	Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping Report		
<i>Pages 18</i>	Water and Planning		
<i>Page 19</i>	Regulations (Ontario Regulation 147/06: Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourse Regulation)		
	Drinking Water Source Protection, Pages 20–21		
<i>Pages 20–21</i>	Source Protection Planning, Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program		
	Healthy Watersheds, Pages 22 – 28		
<i>Page 22</i>	Community Action		
<i>Page 23</i>	Monitoring		
<i>Page 24</i>	Wetlands		
<i>Page 25</i>	Lakeshore Community Action		
<i>Page 26</i>	Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan		
<i>Pages 27 - 28</i>	Monitoring		
	Conservation Land Management, Pages 29–33		
<i>Pages 29 – 30</i>	Conservation Land Management, CA Development		
<i>Pages 31</i>	Forestry		
<i>Page 32</i>	Emerald Ash Borer		
<i>Page 33</i>	Terrestrial Species at Risk		
	Watershed Stewardship, Pages 34 – 37		
<i>Page 34</i>	Private Land Stewardship Program		
<i>Page 35</i>	Tree Planting Program Report		
<i>Page 36</i>	Conservationist of the Year		
<i>Page 37</i>	Special Awards – Community Groups, Staff		
<i>Page 38</i>	ABCA in the News – Sylvan Conservation Program at Camp Sylvan		
<i>Page 39</i>	ABCA Partnerships, Page 39		
<i>Pages 40 – 41</i>	Financial and Performance Summaries, Pages 40 – 41		
<i>Pages 42 – 44</i>	Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, Pages 42 – 44		



FRONT COVER PHOTO: Through funding from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE), and the Province of Ontario's Innovation program, the sinkhole well has been retrofitted with satellite telemetry and real-time water quality data logging capability. This well is one of 14 provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network wells in Ausable Bayfield watersheds. It was identified as a priority site for continued monitoring as a result of the ABCA Sinkhole Investigation Studies completed in 2006.

Chair proud to represent North Middlesex, watershed

Message from the Chair
of the Board of Directors,
Lawrence McLachlan

I am pleased to serve as North Middlesex's representative to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and I want to thank them for the opportunity.

North Middlesex has been, and continues to be, a strong supporter of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. However, the last time a representative from North Middlesex served as Chairman was in 1972 (*Bill Amos, McGillivray Township, 1969-72*).

It is also with great interest and pride that I serve as the ABCA's Chair.

As a farmer, and as a municipal councillor, I see the value in the work of the Conservation Authority. I also see the value in the conservation efforts of individual landowners.

Tree planting and other Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) are an important part of each landowner's ongoing management program. Individually, we can help improve our environment through small incremental actions. These positive actions collectively impact on the health of our local watershed resources. I personally would like to encourage more landowners to undertake to implement one new BMP each year.

The future direction of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority rests with the vision of the Board of Directors and staff. Revisiting our 15-year-old Conservation Strategy will be one important step in clarifying our future conservation efforts and services to landowners, partners and the member municipalities. As we do fewer large flood and erosion control projects and more monitoring, research and landowner services we need to keep the big picture in mind. We need to think of what is happening with climate change, the move from wells to pipelines as a source of municipal drinking water, the importance of our floodplain regulations, maintaining highly-motivated staff with the right mix of qualifications and maximizing partnership funding.

Budgets are always a challenge and during the current economic environment they will be even more challenging. As Chairman of the ABCA I would like to see the organization highlight its programs



Lawrence McLachlan,
2008 Chair of the
Ausable Bayfield
Conservation Authority
Board of Directors.

and services to the member municipalities in 2009. With a more clear understanding of the services provided by the ABCA, and the importance of these services to the work of the municipalities and the health of our watershed communities, there will be a willingness to provide financial support. We need to show that the organization is efficient and effective.

- The Drinking Water Source Protection program is provincially guided and funded. The program has challenges and complexities, and there is a need to balance the science-based process with practical planning, but the goal of clean drinking water should be of interest to all of us. Whether our water comes from a well or a pipeline, protection of our drinking water sources is something all of us can help achieve. Some people are willing to pay more for a litre of water than a litre of gas. It is our collective job to make sure that the cost of treating our drinking water does not increase because of contamination.

- Board members are key to the successful operation of the ABCA and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the board members. Specifically, I would like to thank Bill Weber for his years of service as Lambton Shores and Warwick representative and Adrian de Bruyn for his years of service on behalf of Adelaide Metcalfe and Middlesex Centre.

- In closing I want to extend my appreciation to the staff for your continued contribution to improving the health of our water, wetlands, forests, and knowledge and for the advice you provide to the Board of Directors.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide leadership and management, in cooperation with the community, to maintain and enhance the watershed resources now and in the future.

Directors are important voices for conservation in watershed community

Message from ABCA

Board of Directors

Nine individuals, appointed by 12 member municipalities, form the Board of Directors for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, ABCA.

The leadership, knowledge and dedication of these nine individuals needs to be four times greater than that of their 1980s predecessors.

Up to 1988, the ABCA Board of Directors consisted of thirty-two municipal and three provincial appointees, 35 in all.

Today, the watershed environment relies on these nine individuals to provide the leadership and foresight necessary to keep the ABCA the productive and efficient leader it has always been. These individuals have a responsibility to set budgets, policies and programs that will maintain and improve the health of watershed resources.

One very important role of a board director is to be a positive voice in the watershed community. These nine individuals represent the best of conservation in the community, at council meetings and at community functions.

To be a knowledgeable spokesperson for conservation these individuals need the best information available. Staff provide information to the board based on the projects, surveys, monitoring, presentations, reviews and enforcement undertaken on behalf of the Board of Directors for the member municipalities and the general public.

Most of these activities are well supported by the public and the municipalities but tough decisions still have to be made sometimes. The policies set by the board provide them with the information to help them make the right decision and not the decision that some individuals think is right.

With two new members joining the board in 2009 this means two will be leaving. A change in municipal representatives provides new ideas and opinions to their decision-making process.

Fortunately, the turnover of directors happens gradually, at a rate that maintains continuity in the overall budget, policies and programs of the organization.

Thanks, and all the best, go to Bill Weber, Lambton Shores and Warwick (2001 to 2008); and to Adrian de Bruyn, Adelaide Metcalfe and Middlesex Centre (1995 to 2000 and 2003 to 2008). These gentlemen will be remembered for their many positive contributions to the environment and making local watersheds safer and healthy places to live.

We look forward to the contributions of Mark Simpson (Lambton Shores and Warwick) and Dave Bolton (Adelaide Metcalfe and Middlesex Centre) to the future conservation programs, policies and budgets of the ABCA.

The Board of Directors thanks all of the staff for their dedication, support and belief in ABCA's mission of "providing leadership and management, in cooperation with the community, to maintain and enhance the watershed resources now and in the future."

2008 Board of Directors



Bill Siemon
Huron East



Adrian de Bruyn
Adelaide Metcalfe and Middlesex Centre



George Irvin
Bluewater



Jim Ginn
Central Huron



Dave Frayne
South Huron and Perth South



Lawrence McLachlan
North Middlesex



Bob Norris
West Perth



Paul Hodgins
Lucan Biddulph



Bill Weber
Lambton Shores and Warwick

Decades of conservation work has benefitted watershed, new innovations now needed for challenges of future

By Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

What is our future destination and how do we get there?

Our past actions of building flood and erosion control structures, protecting wetlands, planting trees, helping landowners undertake stewardship on private lands, informing and educating students, and keeping families from building in hazardous areas such as floodplains and on unstable soils, have all contributed to a healthier environment. They have created better environmental conscience and improved quality of life.

Our work is not done, however. We need to assess the needs of the watershed environment and what we need to know to better manage, protect and improve watershed resources. We need to know the right balance in forest cover relative to urban landscapes and agricultural land use that will support healthy streams and lakes.

Future Direction

What are the conservation issues of tomorrow?

Will the issues be the same but the solutions different?

What role will the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) have in the future model of protecting the watershed environment?

What will the pressures on the environment be: growing demands for safe housing, more and better recreational facilities, cleaner water, healthier forests and cheaper, high quality food? What will it cost? How much money will there be? How will we get there?

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

There are many factors for us to consider as part of our future directions. We will need to consider numerous variables such as climate change; the impact of the environment on human health; changing demographics; changing lifestyles and a growing number of seniors (baby boomers); changing agricultural practices; changing land uses such as wind farms; disposal of our garbage in landfill sites; our ability to monitor and illustrate the positive impacts of stewardship in maintaining ecological integrity and improving the quality of our water; and our next watershed report card, starting with a review of how we did the first one and what we need to do better.

When it comes to the ABCA's future roles and responsibilities we have already made a start. I believe it was a good first step for the Board of Directors to sanction the Lake Huron Charter – "We, the people(s) of the Lake Huron Watershed believe in a healthy, life-sustaining ecosystem that provides our cultural, economic and spiritual fulfillment. Through



ABCA General Manager Tom Prout

this charter we commit to working together to restore and protect the lands and waters of the Lake Huron Watershed for today and for all generations." The next step will be a review and update of ABCA's *Conservation Strategy*, our plan for the future. This review must be done in a more creative way than the last time. We need to ask more creative questions with a view to generating new possibilities and new solutions. Change will provide us with the opportunity of new solutions.

There will always be those new things we have to do like PSAB 3150 and Tangible Capital Asset Management or the Hazardous Materials Reporting for our buildings or Environmental Assessments. We don't need to spend time looking for these types of new activities: They will find us. We need to spend our time finding new and better ways of looking after the natural environment. These new ways might include Social Marketing, Choice Theory, better stewardship activities, legislation, or research-based knowledge we didn't have before. We need to determine what existing strategies move us closer to our vision "clean and usable watersheds where human needs and the needs of the natural environment are balanced to ensure quality of life and biological diversity today and in the future." Maybe our vision needs a tune-up?

Vision Statement

Our vision is one of clean and usable watersheds where human needs and the needs of the natural environment are balanced to ensure quality of life and biological diversity today and in the future.

New staff members at ABCA are assets to local agency

By Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) is one great team – working productively and positively together to create a more resilient watershed.

Their positive attitude and mutual respect for each other are the ABCA's greatest strengths.

Their knowledge and experience makes ABCA a leader. Staff members are results-oriented and problem solvers. Individually and collectively, their energy goes into learning from mistakes and determining the best way to achieve results.

Staff are committed to the goals of the organization. This, along with their collaborative work behaviour, contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

We would like to extend our thanks to those staff members who have contributed to the organization and gone on to other challenges.

We would also like to welcome new staff

STAFF REPORT

members who bring their enthusiasm, energy and fresh, new ideas to the organization.

We welcomed to the ABCA in 2008:

- Jenna Bowen, Project Assistant, Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Region.

- Aaron Clarke – we are glad to have Aaron return to the ABCA.

- Brian Horner, Financial Services Supervisor.

- Derek Matheson, Source Protection Technician, ABMV DWSP.

- Brynn Upsdell, Water Quality Technician.

We were also pleased to have with us in 2008, stewardship specialist Mark Funk, a third-year co-op student at University of Waterloo, who completed a four-month work term made possible in part by funding from the Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC) through their Student Research Project program.



Brynn Upsdell



Brian Horner



Aaron Clarke



Jenna Bowen



Derek Matheson



Mark Funk

Student learns about Carolinian species during work

Over the course of my four-month work term I helped the ABCA's Ecological Land Classification project by completing tree plots, vegetation surveys on Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority lands, and assisting in an internal database as part of the local effort to protect species at risk, such as Butternut, Goldenseal, American Ginseng, Green Dragon, and Flowering Dogwood.

Despite growing up on a vineyard in Niagara's fruit-belt, in the midst of an incredibly diverse part of Southern Ontario's Carolinian Zone, I must confess my previous lack of knowledge of diverse native flora and the habitat they require.

My work at the ABCA increased my knowledge. I'm increasingly impressed by the resilient survivors who may hold answers to disease-resistant species strains.

Working at the ABCA was an amazing experience. My co-workers were incredibly welcoming and inclusive. Their commitment to environmental improvements made a strong influence on me. It would be difficult to find an office with a better atmosphere.

– By Mark Funk, Stewardship Specialist, September - December 2008.

ABCA staff members learn, share expertise at events

By Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

Training and Development

Staff members of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) keep up-to-date on their jobs by attending current training and development opportunities as needed.

Staff have also been invited to share the ABCA's expertise by speaking, or taking part at, events outside the watershed, throughout Canada and, in 2008, even the United States.

Kate Monk, Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor, spoke in Tuscon, Arizona on July 29 to the Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference. Her topic was *'Finding Common Ground: Adapting watershed stewardship to community interests.'* Congratulations, Kate, on representing your Conservation Authority, Conservation Ontario and Canada.

Other ABCA staff speaking and active in conferences and events outside the watershed include:



Kate Monk



Alec Scott

Alec Scott, Water and Planning Manager:

May 6 – Conservation Ontario, Communications Meeting, Black Creek Pioneer Village, *'Communications and the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Program.'*

Kate Monk,

Supervisor of Stewardship and Conservation Lands:

- February 21 – Carolinian Canada Woodland Recovery Conference, London, *'ABCA Terrestrial Inventory Project.'*
- October 23 – Carolinian Canada/Ontario Land Trust Annual Conference, London, *'Connecting the Community to Conservation.'*
- November 13 – Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy – Achieving Resilient Agricultural Systems Workshop, *'Huron County Payment for Ecological Goods and Services Pilot Project.'*

Kari Jean, Aquatic Biologist:

- August 17-21 – American Fisheries Society (AFS) 138th Annual Meeting, Ottawa - *'Protecting Species at Risk Fishes through a Community Based Management Plan: The Old Ausable Channel near Grand Bend, Ontario.'*



Kari Jean

Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Coordinator:
– Lake Huron Framework

Davin Heinbuck, Lands and Water Technologist:



Davin Heinbuck

- February 25 – Rural Ontario Municipalities Association / Ontario Good Roads Association Convention, Panel Speaker, *'The Gains and Pains of Drains Explained.'*
- March 6 – Drainage Superintendents Course Presentation, *'Conservation Authorities and Their Role in Municipal Drainage.'*
- April 9 – DFO Partnership Workshop, *'Accomplishments and Current Issues Regarding Environmental Regulations and the Drainage Act'* –Joint Presentation with Tom Hoggarth (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and Sid Vander Veen (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs).

Cathie Brown, Project Manager (ABMV DWSP):

– Harriston, Certified Crop Advisors and University of Guelph Masters Students, *'Organizational Development.'*



Cathie Brown



Tim Cumming

Tim Cumming, Communications Specialist (ABCA, ABMV DWSP):

- October 20 – Conservation Ontario, Communications Meeting, Vaughan, *'The Media as Stakeholder.'*

Julie Hicks and Denise Biega, Conservation Education Staff:

- March - September – Numerous education programs and speaking engagements in the watershed and outside the watershed in London, Goderich, Holmesville, Stratford and elsewhere. Topics included: *'Fantastic Fossils!; Spring Has Sprung!; Habitat Improvements - Bat Boxes; Runners of the Woods; Bodacious Bugs and Awesome Arachnids!; Species-at-risk; Go Wild! Life's a Beach and Wild Watersheds.'*



Julie Hicks



Denise Biega

Congratulations to all ABCA staff for the development of their knowledge and for sharing their expertise with others.

Staff active participants on boards, committees

By Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer, ABCA

The following staff from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), as part of the Human Resources Framework, have been positive contributors through membership in regional, provincial and national committees, boards and organizations:

Tom Prout, General Manager

- Conservation Ontario
- The Ontario Rural Council
- The Centre for Rural Leadership
- The Grand Bend Community Foundation
- National Watershed Stewardship Coalition
 - Soil and Water Conservation Society Nominating Committee
- University of Guelph – A.D. Latornell Endowment Fund Chair.



Tom Prout

Kate Monk, Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor

- Conservation Ontario Watershed Stewardship and Forestry Working Group
- Conservation Ontario Conservation Areas Working Group
- Conservation Ontario Payment for Ecological Goods and Services Staff Committee
- ABCA Representative on West Nile Virus Committee – Huron and Middlesex Counties and Huron County Community Matters Committee

Davin Heinbuck, Land and Water Technologist

- PGMN Southwest Working Group Chair
- CO Representative on Drains Action Working Group and Land Drainage Committee
- Drainage Act and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART)
 - OMAFRA Drainage BMP Committee
 - Regional Environmental Emergency Team
- Drainage Superintendents Course Instructor



Tracey Boitson

Tracey Boitson, GIS/CAD Information Technology Specialist

- Conservation Ontario Regional IM Group (WOCA)
- Urban and Regional Information Systems Association – Ontario Chapter – Events Planning Committee



Geoffrey Cade

Geoff Cade, Supervisor of Water and Planning

- International Upper Great Lakes Study Coastal Zone Technical Working Group
- Lambton County Official Plan Steering Committee



Mari Veliz

Mari Veliz,

Healthy Watersheds Coordinator

- Lake Huron Georgian Bay Watershed Canadian Framework for Community Action

Cathie Brown, DWSP Project Manager

- Walkerton Clean Water Centre Board of Directors

Tim Cumming, Communications Specialist

- Huron County Tourism Association Board

Julie Hicks, Conservation Education Specialist

- Friends of Pinery Park Board of Directors
- Chair of Aquafest Education Planning Committee
- Huron-Perth Envirothon Planning Committee

Denise Biega,

Conservation Education Technician

- Huron Perth Agriculture and Water Festival Committee
 - Huron Perth Envirothon Planning Committee
 - Watershed Interpreters Network
- Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario



Angela Van Niekerk

Angela Van Niekerk, Resources Technician

- Middlesex Stewardship Council Technical Advisor

Judith Parker, Corporate Services Coordinator

- Heritage Sarnia Lambton



Judith Parker

Alec Scott, Water and Planning Manager

- Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Committee

Helping prepare our watershed leaders of tomorrow

By Julie Hicks, ABCA Conservation Education Specialist

Throughout 2008, education programs and special events have been at the forefront, providing and instilling better environmental conscience to students and adults alike through positive and memorable outdoor experiences.

Conservation Education

For the past eight years, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Spring, Fall and Winter Nature Programs have provided watershed youth with memorable environmental education experiences in an outdoor setting or classroom.

In 2008, 1,350 students participated in either half-day or full-day curriculum-linked nature programs in the classroom, or at one of the ABCA's Conservation Areas.

The most popular programs booked by schools in 2008 were *Fantastic Fossils*, *Species-at-Risk* and *Spring has Sprung!*

A record-breaking number of students, 2,749, participated in the Spring Water Awareness Program (SWAP), held at watershed schools in February and March, with students learning about river systems and the dangers around waterways during the seasonal transition from winter to spring.

Camp Sylvan Conservation Program

It was another great spring for the Sylvan Conservation Program



Conservation Education Specialist Julie Hicks shares information with interested participants from the Autumn Seniors' Walk and Talk event.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

at Camp Sylvan.

Seven schools attended camp, which holds the honour of being one of the longest-running residential Conservation Education Program in Ontario.

At camp, students from Grades

6 through 8, take part in 1.5 or 2.5 days of ecology-based, outdoor experiential programs on a variety of topics such as *Orienteering*, *What's in the Water*, *Wilderness Survival*, *Habitat Improvements* and the famous *Go Wild/Survival* program.

Continued on next page



Kari Jean, ABCA Aquatic Biologist, educates children at an Old Ausable Channel water quality session, wildlife session, clean-up and invasive species removal.

ABCA educators host special events, school programs

By Julie Hicks, ABCA Conservation Education Specialist

Continued from previous page

The Conservation Education staff of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) are busy each year planning and delivering special events that reach out in new ways to watershed residents of all ages, from children to seniors.

Special Events

Special events continued to be an integral part of the Education Department in 2008, with the introduction of four new Seniors Walk and Talk events.

Winter and autumn events were held at Morrison Dam Conservation Area near Exeter. Topics were: discussing winter feeder birds; and flora and fauna preparing for winter.

The spring and summer events were both held at the Rock Glen



Conservation Education Technician Denise Biega speaks to participant Dave Robinson at the Spring Walk and Talk Seniors' event at Rock Glen Conservation Area near Arkona.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

ABCA Special Event Attendance

Spring Water Awareness Program SWAP	2,749
Seniors' Walks and Talks	45
Family Day	
– Winter Wonderland	10
Envirothon	12
Huron-Perth Agriculture and Water Festival	619
Earth Day, Grand Bend	70
Bannockburn Fall Hike	280
Owl Prowl	130
March Break Day Camps	55
Summer Day Camps	84

Other Events Attended:

- Inventors and Science Fair
- Girls Unlimited Career Workshop
- Rekindle the Spark Workshop

Conservation Area near Arkona, focusing on: spring wildflowers and songbirds; and local history and fossils.

Thank you, volunteers and supporters

Thank you to those who volunteered and supported the Education Department during the ABCA's 62nd year. Without you many of our education programs and special events would not be possible.



Conservation Education Technician Denise Biega speaks to students at March Break Day Camp.

In 2009 . . .

The Conservation Education Department looks forward to another successful year delivering more conservation education programs and special events in 2009.

The focus will be on improving current programs, and creating new programs, attracting new schools, and ensuring continued positive relationships with long-standing local schools, with the overall intention of increasing the environmental awareness and conscience of the people living within the watershed.



Students take part in Earth Day Clean-Up around Old Ausable Channel, learning about need to protect native species.

Farm Media Day, Nature and Tourism events promote watershed

By Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist

Improved forest conditions and cleaner water can be realized when people who live in the Ausable Bayfield watersheds take positive action on their properties and in their communities.

We have our best chance of assisting landowners with their efforts to take these actions when we communicate effectively with them.

Communication may mean sharing what we know but it also means listening. Dialogue with the people who make environmental change possible may include information – but we also need to find out what would encourage them to undertake beneficial activities and what might be preventing them from doing so.

You will read in this *Annual Report* about some exciting efforts to protect and enhance larger watersheds by creating opportunities for communities to improve their local watersheds.

Staff talked with residents of those communities and began by asking, “What do *you* want to see happen?” The result has been active participation, practical implementation plans, and a community-guided model for change that is now being exported to other parts of the watershed.

Positive change on the landscape is happening because neighbours are setting examples of what can be done. Communities are deciding that they want to see improvements for the future and that they can be part of making that happen.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)

COMMUNICATIONS



An Agricultural Media Day was one of the outreach activities in 2008.

reached out to watershed residents and other partners in many ways in 2008.

Workshops, meetings, open houses, displays, special events, classes, print and broadcast information materials, surveys, media releases and media days, site visits, phone calls and interactive online tools were all part of the ongoing communications effort that involves all staff and many valued partners.

The ABCA also reached out to stakeholders by implementing more recommendations of the 2006 *Communications Plan*.

One of those recommendations was to host an Agricultural Media Day. We appreciate the farm and community newspaper reporters who took time to visit several landowner sites and communicate with their readers and listeners about their neighbours who were taking positive action.

The ABCA also co-hosted, with the Huron Tourism Association (HTA), an enjoyable evening called ‘*Visit the Sunny South of Ontario’s West Coast.*’

Communications Specialist Tim Cumming spoke on ‘*Nature and Tourism,*’ and Conservation Education Specialist Julie Hicks led a crowd of enthusiastic participants on a guided hike to showcase the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail as one of the gems of this part of Ontario.



Tim Cumming

We also heard about the exciting and growing pasttime of geocaching from enthusiast John Morgan.

We were proud to showcase our beautiful area to visitors.

Other communications activities included a season launch of the South Huron Trail Mobile, a unique and wonderful opportunity to bring nature to those who might not otherwise be able to experience it.

The year 2008 was also a year with a renewed emphasis on the importance of wetlands, ‘nature’s reservoir,’ in protecting water quality and quantity.

The ABCA launched a new and interactive web site that can better communicate the many opportunities the ABCA offers:

- The chance to make a difference in your community.
- Funding for your beneficial projects.
- Opportunities to recharge your spiritual batteries by connecting with nature, and the opportunities to improve human health through accessible trails, expand the mind through enlightening special events, and chances to contribute to watershed health.



There were several flooding events in the Ausable Bayfield watershed during 2008. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff were active monitoring the events and collecting data and issuing bulletins or advisories to municipalities. Photos at left and right show some of the flooding which took place near Crediton and Exeter during late December. Visit abca.on.ca for posted flood bulletins and advisories. In total, nine (9) Flood Safety/Monitoring Bulletins were issued to member municipalities in 2008.



ABCA Flood Forecasting Network assists municipalities

By Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist

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

This monitoring network also provides information on low water conditions, groundwater and surface water interactions and the relationship of stream flow to aquatic health.

The data collection network allows staff to monitor watershed conditions including water levels and precipitation on the major channels of the Ausable River, Bayfield River and Parkhill Creek watersheds.

In addition, the ABCA also has the ability to monitor groundwater levels in some of the significant aquifers in the watershed.

Computerized monitoring systems in the field transmit information by telephone line directly to the office in Exeter. With funding support from the MNR, maintenance of the streamflow monitoring stations is shared by ABCA and Environment Canada staff. Through an agreement with the Ministry

MONITORING WATER LEVELS AND STREAM FLOWS

of the Environment, the ABCA is responsible for maintenance of groundwater monitoring stations.

(See *Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network*, page 14).

Flood Emergency Planning

As part of its responsibility to promote planning for flood emergencies among its watershed municipalities, the ABCA hosted a Flood Emergency Planning Meeting in the Spring of 2008. The workshop was well-attended by municipal, county and provincial agencies.

In addition to general discussion about emergency planning, the workshop included presentations by ABCA staff on roles and responsibilities in flood emergencies, current watershed conditions, Flood Scenario Case Studies and the results from the 2008 Flood Warning Communications Test exercise.

Beyond the annual Flood Emergency Planning Meeting, the ABCA assisted several municipalities as they carried out Flood Emergency Planning exercises.

Continued on next page



The most significant flooding in 2008 occurred in December during a Dec. 24 – Dec. 29 snow melt event.

December saw most significant flooding in 25 years

Continued from previous page 2008 Flood Summary

The Ausable River watershed experienced four snow melt events from January through April. Fortunately, none of these events were severe, resulting in only minor nuisance flooding.

The recurring melts and run-off broke up river ice, thus preventing ice thickness levels that would promote ice jamming problems, specifically in the Port Franks and Grand Bend areas. No ice-jam-related flooding occurred.

The Bayfield River watershed, in the north, experienced significant snow melts in January and April. Ice conditions and break-up was monitored throughout these melts.

Streamflows returned to near normal through the spring and summer period. However, in September, the passing remnants of Hurricane Ike added nearly 100-125 millimetres (mm) of rainfall to the northern part of the watershed.

Fortunately, this rainfall was spread over a three-day period. Furthermore, dry watershed conditions allowed soils to accommodate nearly half of the rainfall through infiltration. Above-average precipitation and streamflows stayed with us through the fall.

From a Flood Forecasting and Warning Perspective, the year's most significant flooding event was the snow melt event of December 24th – December 29th.

For many parts of the watershed, this event was the most significant event in the past 25 years. Up to December 24th, snowpack water equivalent was anywhere between 100-125

MONITORING WATER LEVELS AND STREAM FLOWS

mm across the entire watershed. Rainfall amounts up to 25 mm on December 24th added to the moisture content in the snow. Although some run-off was experienced with this rainfall, a rapid freeze retained much of the moisture in the snowpack.

Warm temperatures (up to 14° C) and additional rainfall on December 26-27 caused a very rapid snowmelt. Streamflows began rising through the day on the 27th and it was not until the 28th that stream flows peaked in the Bayfield River and Upper Ausable Rivers.

Flows in the Lower Ausable River did not peak until the morning of the 29th. Many municipalities reported road closures and road washouts; however, most closures were the result of overland flow. The north part of the watershed experienced the most significant flooding, having received 25 mm of rain, approximately twice the amount observed south of Exeter.

As severe as the December flood was, conditions could have been a lot worse. The ABCA watershed was fortunate that actual precipitation amounts in the hardest-hit areas, were only half of what they were originally forecasted to be. In addition, no ice jam related flooding occurred due to the small amounts of river ice.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff monitored forecast models closely to determine the rainfall patterns and the potential flooding impacts. In total, nine (9) Flood Safety/Monitoring Bulletins were issued to member municipalities in 2008.



The year 2008 did not have the low-water events that were witnessed in 2007. At left, we see an almost-dry Parkhill Creek in 2007 and, at right, we see the same water course location in 2008.

ABCA actively involved in Ontario Low-Water Response Plan

By Alec Scott, P. Eng., ABCA Water and Planning Manager

Low Water Response

During 2008, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority continued to be involved in the Ontario Low Water Response (OLWR) Plan which was created after extreme dry conditions were experienced in parts of the Province in 1999.

The OLWR Plan is used as a guiding document for how municipal and provincial agencies should react during periods of water shortages and defines levels of response to low water conditions:

- Level I, where a 10 per cent voluntary reduction in water use is requested;
- Level II where a 20 per cent voluntary reduction in water use is requested, and;
- Level III, where mandatory water use restrictions may be put in place.

Low-water conditions cause concerns relating to lack of water for proper crop production, industrial and recreational uses and for domestic supply. A lack of water supplies also raises concerns for ecosystems, wetlands and fisheries.

The ABCA Low Water Response Team (WRT) was formed in September 2001 and is made up of municipal and provincial agency representatives as well as representatives from the ABCA, Ontario Stone and Sand and Gravel Association, Golf Course Owners Association, Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, Thedford-Grand Bend Vegetable Growers, Huron County Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario

MONITORING PRECIPITATION AND STREAM FLOWS

Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

Due to above-normal precipitation conditions in 2008, the WRT only held one meeting during the year.

Six monthly e-bulletin reports of watershed conditions were provided to the WRT but there were no new Low Water Advisories declared during the year.

As part of the Low Water Response program, a network of volunteer rain gauge readers was established within the watershed in 2005 with the majority of the volunteer readers using a web-based data entry system.

The approximately 20 volunteers continue to provide valuable information on the extent and amount of precipitation received in the watershed.

This supplements the existing automated rain-gauge network operated by the ABCA to support its water quantity programs.

Levels of Response

- **Level I**
Voluntary Reduction
10%
- **Level II**
Voluntary Reduction
20%
- **Level III**
Mandatory Water Use
Restrictions

ABCA has fourteen monitoring wells in watershed

By Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist

In a partnership between Conservation Authorities and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE), a network of groundwater monitoring wells is now in operation across the province.

The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) initiative has led to the development of more than 400 monitoring wells since 2001.

This was one of many steps taken since the water tragedy in Walkerton in 2000 and the increased interest in the groundwater resources in Ontario.

The ABCA has partnered in a number of groundwater studies and initiatives since the time of the O'Connor Inquiry, including the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.

The ABCA currently has 14 active wells throughout the watershed, five (5) bedrock wells and nine (9) wells drilled into the overburden. Hourly groundwater level data has been logged for over six years in some of the earliest wells. Telemetry at each well enables access to current water level information through a web-based component of the network. Based on the program's short period of record, groundwater levels are trending upwards from where they were in 2002. Annual cycles in groundwater levels are also consistent, highlighting the critical annual recharge periods of fall and spring.

In response to a very dry 2007, groundwater levels at the beginning of 2008 had receded considerably from their highs the previous year. Data shows that snowmelts in January and April provided significant recharge into the shallow aquifer systems. By the end of 2008, shallow aquifer water levels had recovered and in some cases were near their highest measured levels.

Water Quality Sampling is another critical component of the PGMN and the ABCA has groundwater quality data available for each well from 2003 to 2008. To match the core requirements province-wide, water quality is analyzed for nutrients, metals, general chemistry, and in addition, bacteria.



Davin
Heinbuck,
ABCA Lands
and Water
Technologist.

ABCA GROUNDWATER RESOURCES AND PROVINCIAL GROUNDWATER MONITORING NETWORK

In December of 2006, the ABCA adopted the 'Protocol for Actions,' whereby notices of exceedences of groundwater quality parameters will be sent, in writing, to the respective municipality and landowners on whose property the monitoring well is located. Since that time, several exceedence notices have been issued, most of which were for Sodium (aesthetic drinking water objective) and Fluoride, which occurs naturally in elevated levels throughout much of Southwestern Ontario.

The ABCA continues to be an active member of the Southwest PGMN Working Group. In 2004, the ABCA was instrumental in the organization of the working group, which includes members from twelve Conservation Authorities. The working group provides both support and a forum for CA staff responsible for administering the Groundwater Network. Based on the successful format of the group, similar working groups now exist in Northern, Central and Eastern Ontario. The working groups have played a major role in the advancement of the network.

Notable highlights of the program in 2008 included a renewed partnership agreement with the MOE. This agreement shows long-term funding commitments to assist with water quality analysis and equipment maintenance from the MOE and their commitment to the success of the program. In addition, the MOE invested approximately \$25,000 in groundwater quality data collection at the PGMN Sinkhole Well through the Innovation Funding Program.

Satellite telemetry will provide access to hourly levels of Nitrate, Chloride, pH, Conductivity and Dissolved Oxygen. Prior to this initiative, these parameters were measured annually. It is expected that hourly monitoring will provide valuable data on the possible surface and groundwater interaction in the area.

PGMN data also supports both the Flood Forecasting and Warning and Ontario Low Water Response Program.

CA staff inspect dams, erosion control structures

By Alec Scott, P. Eng., ABCA Water and Planning Manager

Structures, Operation and Maintenance

As part of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority mandate and agreements with watershed municipalities, the ABCA inspected and performed maintenance on water and erosion control structures owned or constructed by the ABCA.

These include Parkhill Dam, Morrison Dam, a number of flood control channels, and erosion control structures in various parts of the watershed.

Most of the inspections and actual maintenance work are carried out by Conservation Authority staff unless it is determined that it would be more efficient to contract the work out to local companies.

As a result of the inspections, minor repairs were completed on a number of structures by Conservation Authority staff. Work included vegetation control around structures and general minor repairs to prevent larger maintenance problems in the future.

Minor repairs conducted on several structures.

During 2003, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources announced The Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Funding program (WECI) to fund major maintenance work on Conservation Authority Flood and Erosion Control Projects. Under this program the ABCA can apply for 50 per cent grant funding for major maintenance projects.

Armstrong West erosion control performing as expected

Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program (WECI) projects completed in 2008 included:

Armstrong West

Erosion Control Project

The installation of seven (7) Bendway weirs to halt rapid erosion in the Armstrong West subdivision in Port Franks was substantially completed during late 2006. The project was considered to be major maintenance of the original 1949 Ausable River Cut project.

In 2008, a post-construction monitoring report was prepared. This report was required as a condition of the Class Environmental Assessment Report for the project. The report indicated no negative environmental impacts and that the structure was performing as expected.

Port Franks

Ice Management Project

This project involves proposed maintenance dredging of the 1949 Ausable River Cut project to

WATER AND EROSION CONTROL

reduce ice jamming potential in the Port Franks area. In 2008, a report was prepared including information from soundings of the channel, environmental investigations and creation of a hydraulic model for the channel. Critical areas for dredging were identified in the report.

In addition, due to the possible presence of species-at-risk mussels in one of the potential dredging areas, a mussel survey was conducted. The results of the survey indicated that no species-at-risk mussels were in the potential dredge area.

A meeting with approval agencies who would be involved in any application for dredging also took place to determine their requirements and concerns.

In December, the Municipality of Lambton Shores decided that they did not wish to proceed with any dredging work at this time.

Therefore, the Ice Management Report will be finalized early in 2009 with a section outlining the steps which would be required if dredging is considered in future years.

Continued on next page



Railings were installed in 2008 on the catwalk to the Parkhill Dam control building. A locked gate was also installed to prevent unauthorized access.

Railings installed on catwalk to Parkhill Dam

Continued from previous page

Parkhill Dam Safety Fencing

In 2008, railings on the catwalk to the control building and the maintenance deck were installed at Parkhill Dam. The catwalk railings meet building code and also include a locked gate preventing unauthorized access to the catwalk.

On the maintenance deck, the railings were designed to be removable during the winter months when they could be damaged by ice.

Grand Bend Area E Stability Study

In 2006, a review of the 1985 Grand Bend Area E Erosion Project identified that the depth of the river bed in front of the steel sheet pile wall was lower than identified in the original design drawings.

As a result, Riggs Engineering Consultants were hired to conduct an analysis of the existing conditions to determine if there was a danger of failure of the wall.

The report indicated that, although there may be a long-term danger of failure due to the scouring of the river bed, the risk of failure in the short-term appears to be small.

WATER AND EROSION CONTROL

Recommendations ranged from a more detailed monitoring program for the steel wall to the addition of earth anchors to strengthen the wall.

A meeting will be held with adjacent landowners early in 2009 to present the results of the study.

Exeter Dam

Environmental Assessment

At the request of the Municipality of South Huron, ABCA organized a public meeting in October to discuss options for the future of the Exeter Dam. Because one of the possible options would include decommissioning of the dam, grant funding for this work was provided through the WECI program.

71 people attended the public meeting. The general consensus was that the public was not in favour of decommissioning the dam and, in fact, would like to see the area around the dam enhanced. Information on the long-term cost for keeping the dam in place and in good repair was provided to South Huron Council.

A decision from council on how they wish this study to be completed is expected early in 2009.

Geographic Information Systems support programs

By Tracey Boitson, ABCA GIS/CAD Specialist

Geographic Information Systems, or GIS, supports both programs and projects at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

GIS, as the name implies, has information that is linked to a spatial or geographic location. It is for the storage, display and analysis of geographic data. At the ABCA, GIS staff can be involved in creating databases, linking databases to a spatial layer, data manipulation (aggregation, changing file formats, etc.), map creation, or more complex analysis involving queries, map algebra, or modeling. Staff are also involved in acquiring data such as aerial photography or vector (line, polygon, and point) sets.

In 2008, we saw the continuation of many projects related to and relying on GIS. The ABCA continues to be involved in the six-CA Web Mapping project giving the public access to the ABCA data via a Web Mapping Portal (www.camaps.ca).



The second phase of the project saw a change of technologies to allow for a new and efficient data distribution mechanism to our partners. In the future, information related to Drinking Water Source Protection may be distributed through this type of project.

High-resolution aerial photography was flown in the Spring of 2007 for the Lake Huron shoreline, as part of the SWOOP photography project. As a derivative of this, the ABCA acquired detailed elevation and vector data in 2008.

Work began to create three-dimensional (3-D) models of the shoreline which will be used for determining the 3:1 stable slope along the shoreline. The 3-D models allow planning and regulation staff the ability to better visualize the shoreline and may also aid in visualizing areas susceptible to flooding in the Port Franks area.

The Core Datasets project began in 2008 with updates to our Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) mapping and consolidation of all property-related geographic data into a single Geodatabase.



Tracey Boitson

GIS MAPPING REPORT

Updates to the water flow layer also began using the SWOOP photography as a base while definitions and methodologies were established for updates to the Natural Areas layer (woodlands, plantations, riparian corridors, etc.). Work continues in 2009 to complete the project.

Updates to the regulations mapping occur when new information becomes available through site visits or other means. In 2008, changes occurred largely due to the identification of several Provincially Significant Wetlands in Middlesex and Lambton counties. New maps have been distributed to our member municipalities.

GIS supported several special projects with mapping and/or database creation and maintenance. These projects included:

- Land Securement planning
- Asset Management planning
- The Ausable River Recovery Strategy (ARRS)
- Property document scanning and property data updates
- The Volunteer Rain Gauge Network
- Sub-watershed studies
- Wetland projects, and;
- Internal GeoPortal updates and maintenance

As well, GIS staff work with partners to provide information and input into projects. This year included working with Ducks Unlimited to create a Waterfowl Productivity Model for the Ausable Bayfield watershed.

Staff also provided GIS information and/or services to Municipalities updating Official Plans or Zoning By-laws. Assistance or service was also provided to community groups or non-profit organizations in 2008, including the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation, the Bayfield Ratepayers Association (Bayfield Trail), Talbot Land Trust, and the Lambton Trail Association. Consultants continue to come to the ABCA for aerial photography and/or other data to complete projects for both the municipalities and for the private sector.

ABCA provides reviews, natural hazard comments for plans

By Geoffrey Cade, ABCA Supervisor of Water and Planning

As part of the municipal land use planning process, Conservation Authorities not only provide input on broad land use policies (municipal Official Plans and zoning by-laws) but also on numerous individual planning applications such as severances, minor variances, and subdivisions.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's role in the municipal planning process is two-fold. The Conservation Authority is the lead agency providing natural hazard comments to landowners and municipalities. The ABCA assesses how a development proposal conforms with provincial policy, with the Conservation Authorities Act and with Authority policies. As development takes place, it is important that it be located safely away from such hazardous areas as floodplains or unstable slopes. CA comments help prevent future risks to life and property, and to protect the interests and liability of our member municipalities.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority provides Natural Heritage advice to landowners and municipalities. As part of the planning process, it is vitally important that development take into account the need to protect natural areas and those areas which provide a source for clean ground and surface water.

In 2008, the Conservation Authority provided formal comment to its member municipalities on 96 different planning applications. The ABCA also responded to numerous information requests from members of the public, from lawyers and from real estate agents. In 2008 the Authority provided written response to 100 inquiries from lawyers.

These inquiries are very important in providing prospective purchasers of property, or people wishing to do work in high-risk areas, a prior understanding of the natural hazard risks involved.

In recent years the Conservation Authority has noticed increased inquiries and building activity along the Lake Huron beach, below the top of the bluff. It should be noted that, despite current low lake levels, this area continues to be hazardous for development and is regulated by the ABCA. In



Geoffrey Cade

WATER AND PLANNING

In addition this activity is often governed by local municipal by-laws.

Residents should call the Conservation Authority and their local municipality to discuss development and site alteration proposals before initiating work.

In 2008, the ABCA was involved in an Ontario Municipal Board Hearing over a proposed new cottage along the Lake Huron shoreline in the Armstrong West area of Port Franks. The granting of a minor variance by the municipality had been appealed to the board by another resident of the area. The testimony provided by Conservation Authority staff focused primarily on the hazardous nature of the area. Natural heritage issues were also touched on.

The decision rendered by the board was important to the ABCA as it reinforced the Conservation Authority's position with respect to the hazardous nature of the area. The decision was also important as it placed significant weight on the Authority's role as a permitting agency concerned with protecting life and property against natural hazards.

As development – or re-development – takes place the amount of stormwater that runs off of a site can increase. The quality of this run-off is also often degraded. Therefore, the management of the quantity and quality of this run-off is important in helping to protect downstream watercourses. Through 2007 and 2008, the ABCA has been working on a review of the Authority's Stormwater Management Policy, first adopted in 1994.

In 2008, the 1994 ABCA Stormwater Management Policy document was examined to determine what changes might be required. In general, it was discovered that the 1994 document was very comprehensive and only a few sections needed to be updated to bring it into conformity with today's practices.

In the fall of 2008, a stakeholder meeting was held to present the key points which would need to be updated in the document. A draft of the revised SWM Policy document should be available for review in March 2009.

ABCA regulations are *Ontario Regulation 147/06*

By Andrew Bicknell, P. Eng., ABCA Regulations Coordinator

Through the Conservation Authority's Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (*Ontario Regulation 147/06*), the ABCA is empowered to regulate specific activities.

Areas which are regulated include river or stream valleys, the Lake Huron shoreline, watercourses, hazardous lands and wetlands. Development affecting these areas may require the permission of the Authority to ensure that the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of land is not affected. One primary objective of the Authority's regulation program is to direct new development away from hazardous lands such as flood plain or areas of relative steep, unstable slopes so as to safeguard against loss of property and risk to life.

In the context of today's changing climate, the value of a wetland is perhaps more and more recognized. Wetlands provide many benefits on the landscape. Wetlands improve water quality, aid in the control of flooding, facilitate groundwater recharge, and provide a host of other benefits.

The year 2008 saw some changes in stewardship activities and perhaps an increased focus on the beneficial attributes of wetlands and toward the promotion of new wetlands within the ABCA watershed where opportunities exist. The development of a new wetland area must be implemented in such fashion so as to recognize the importance of the wetland in terms of 'ecological benefit' while at the same time having regard for other impacts resulting from the creation of a new wetland such as the impact on hydrological function.

Regulations and planning staff worked closely with stewardship staff at the ABCA, working cooperatively in order to balance the ecological issues along with the natural hazards and regulations concerns considering a number of these important wetland development projects.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff continue to work closely with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Staff review in-water work proposals and provide initial screening to ensure that watercourse alterations are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the federal

REGULATIONS



Statistics for 2008

- 56 Minor Works Permits
- 63 Applications for Permission
- 73 Fish Habitat Reviews (including 40 municipal drain reviews)

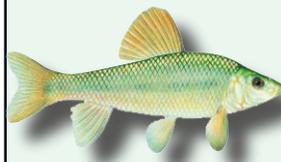


IMAGE SOURCE:
Joseph R. Tomelleri

Fisheries Act. The Fisheries Act prohibits the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat without prior authorization.

Additionally, where there are possible SAR (Species at Risk) considerations, the Authority will refer the file to the DFO for review in regard to impact of the work proposal on SAR and their habitat. In 2008, new provincial legislation, the *Endangered Species Act (ESA) 2007*, was passed for the protection of species at risk in Ontario. In accordance with the new provincial legislation, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) screening is required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for all new works in or around water.

The Conservation Authority has traditionally issued permits under Regulation 147/06 to allow dredging activities to occur within the marina environments of Bayfield, Grand Bend and Port Franks. This business practice is slowly evolving in response to environmental needs and changing legislation. Species-at-risk protection measures have had an influence in regard to permitting and legislative controls on such activities.

As well, changing environmental conditions, such as continued relative low lake levels which have been experienced over the last number of years, can have an impact on operations and the issues affecting our lake shore and riverine systems within harbour areas.

An additional consideration is in regard to sediment budget along the nearshore lake areas. Sand in these areas is naturally transferred through wave action and wind. Beaches provide a natural barrier to the effects of lake storms and the energy from wave action which leads to erosion.

In future, there is likely to be increased awareness in regard to overall sediment budget and specifically in regard to operations such as dredging where there may be a need to scrutinize more closely how these dredged materials are best handled and managed.

For example, there may be increased need to return the predominantly sand materials back into the natural system in order to allow these naturally occurring processes to continue as opposed to continuing the traditional practice where much of these materials have been historically hauled away and disposed off site.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION



The Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Committee welcomed new member John Vander Burgt in 2008. Shown above (in photo taken in 2009) are: (front row, left to right) Rowena Wallace; Gerry Rupke, Acting Chair; Larry Brown, Chair; Marilyn Miltenburg; Karen Galbraith; (second row) Mike McElhone; Bob Worsell, Liaison, Health; Matt Pearson; Jim Nelemans; Don Jones; Jim Ginn, Liaison, Source Protection Authorities; (back row); Bob Bresette, Liaison, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation; John Vander Burgt; Al Hamilton; Ian Brebner; Keith Black; Bill Rowat. Not in photo are Meredith Schneider and Gib Dow.

Source Protection Committee

MUNICIPAL

Marilyn Miltenburg (North)
 Ian Brebner (South)
 Meredith Schneider (East)
 Don Jones (West)
 Jim Nelemans (Central)

ECONOMIC SECTOR

Keith Black (Agriculture)
 John Vander Burgt (Agriculture)
 Rowena Wallace (Agriculture)
 Gib Dow (Commerce)
 Al Hamilton (Industry)

OTHER SECTORS

Matt Pearson (Environment)
 Bill Rowat (Environment)
 Mike McElhone (Property Owners)
 Gerry Rupke (Public-at-Large,
 Ausable Bayfield Source Protection
 Area)
 Karen Galbraith (Public-at-Large,
 Maitland Valley Source Protection
 Area).

LIAISON MEMBERS (Non-voting)

Jim Ginn
 (Source Protection Authorities)
 Bob Bresette
 (Kettle and Stony Point First Nation)
 Bob Worsell (Health)
 Jennifer Arthur
 (Ontario Ministry of Environment)
 Kennon Johnson
 (Walpole Island First Nation)

Source Protection Committee completes first full year of work

By Cathie Brown, Project Manager

It was a busy and exciting year in the Drinking Water Source Protection project as the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee, Ontario's first, had its first full year of work in 2008.

Six local, multi-stakeholder working groups were formed in the year as well as a Municipal Subcommittee. The six local working groups are in Listowel, Wingham, Exeter, Parkhill, Clinton and Kingsbridge/Port Albert. We appreciate the work of close to 100 volunteers on these groups who completed the majority of an intensive training program with expected completion in 2009.

The Source Protection Region



hosted four public events in May to speak with the public about the Draft Proposed Terms of Reference, which was subsequently submitted to the Ontario Minister of the Environment for consideration.

To replace outgoing committee member Mike Strang, the Source Protection Committee welcomed its newest member, John Vander Burgt, in 2008. We look forward to working with John.

Thanks to Mike for his excellent and thoughtful contributions.

The Source Protection Committee and Working Groups were able to attend two special

events, a Vulnerable Areas Tour in the spring with guest speaker Bruce Davidson and a 'Backyard Briefs' event in the summer on personal stewardship to protect drinking water.



Cathie Brown,
 Project Manager.

The year 2009 promises to be a busy year with Assessment Report preparation and an active calendar of public outreach. We look forward to working with you to further protect the drinking water sources in our region.

Drinking water stewardship program had first full year in 2008

By Tim Cumming, ABMV Source Protection Region Communications Specialist

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) formalized the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP) in 2008.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), in partnership with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA), has been delivering the stewardship fund program locally since late 2007.

Originally, the program was called the Source Protection Program (Stewardship).

The program was not only formalized in 2008 but the Province of Ontario also made it possible for municipalities to accept vulnerable area lines for the purposes of the program, thus expanding the number of eligible properties.

Education and outreach specialists Chris Van Esbroeck and Dallas Campbell communicated directly with owners of homes, farms and businesses through Open Well events and other public outreach activities, site visits, phone calls and other means.

The Open Well weekend barbecues were very well-attended as families came out to find out about their local municipal water source.

There were several Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) projects initiated through the first round of



stewardship funding and promising interest shown in the program.

The local delivery agents were optimistic that the expansion of the program in 2009 would lead to even more uptake by owners of homes, farms and businesses.

The project highlighted some of your neighbours as Citizen Champions: home owners, farmers and business people who are active in protecting drinking water sources.

Late in 2008, Derek Matheson joined the Source Protection Region to work on Source Protection Planning and Source Protection Stewardship activities.

Information on ODWSP in the region can be obtained at the local web site sourceprotectionstewardship.on.ca or the local planning web site at sourcewaterinfo.on.ca



Kate Monk (far left), of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, and Doug Hocking (far right), of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, joined Goderich Mayor Deb Shewfelt on an 'Experts' radio program at **AM920.ca** to promote stewardship efforts by landowners and funding opportunities for owners of homes, farms and businesses near municipal intakes and wells. Shewfelt was a member of the Ontario advisory committee which made recommendations for the creation of a drinking water stewardship fund.



Derek Matheson, Source Protection Technician, joined the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region in 2008. Part of his time will be spent on working with owners of homes, farms and businesses to provide funding for beneficial projects near wells and intakes through the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP).

Lake Huron Framework for Community Action



Mari Veliz



Hope Brock



Abigail Gutteridge



Kari Jean



Brynn Upsdell



Angela Van Niekerk

Community involvement, monitoring, local action contribute to an improved Lake Huron watershed

By Mari Veliz, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Coordinator

Taking Community Action

People have become increasingly aware of environmental issues and want to know what they can do to improve the environment.

Two components of the Healthy Watersheds program at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) are to work with community groups and other natural resource agencies to monitor and enhance local waterways.

Healthy Watersheds staff have been working with communities in the Ausable, Bayfield and smaller Lake Huron tributaries to take action and improve local watercourses (*see the following reports*).

Staff also conducts water quality and bio-monitoring across the ABCA jurisdiction to measure the aquatic health of the area.

Community involvement and monitoring are both important components of working

HEALTHY WATERSHEDS REPORT



toward an improved Lake Huron.

(See lakehuroncommunityaction.ca or contact Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Coordinator, for more information at 519-235-2610, toll-free 1-888-286-2610 or e-mail mveliz@abca.on.ca).

Ausable River is one of only four rivers on planet where species-at-risk Northern Riffleshell mussel still reproducing

By Brynn Upsdell, ABCA Water Quality Technician

Ausable River

The Ausable River, located on the northern fringe of the Carolinian Zone, is a nationally significant watershed for the preservation of aquatic biodiversity within Canada.

At least 26 species of freshwater mussels, 83 species of fishes, and 21 species of reptiles have been found. Many species are rare and 16 aquatic species have been designated by COSEWIC (Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada), including six mussels, six fishes and four reptiles.

The Ausable River Recovery Team (ARRT) is made up of representatives from universities and provincial and federal agencies. The team came together in 2002 and completed background studies for the Ausable River Recovery Strategy (ARRS). This draft strategy provides a working guide for monitoring and habitat improvement projects.

During 2008, the ABCA received funding from the Endangered Species Recovery Fund (funded by World Wildlife Fund Canada and Environment Canada) and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to identify critical habitat in the Ausable River for eight aquatic species at risk.

The species at risk include two fish (Black Redhorse, Eastern Sand Darter) and six freshwater mussels (Kidneyshell, Mapleleaf Mussel, Northern Riffleshell, Rainbow Mussel, Snuffbox, Wavy-rayed Lampmussel) that are either endangered or threatened in Canada. Their critical habitats are areas of the river that need to be protected for them to survive.

Two Black Redhorse were found at a site in the Ausable River north of Ailsa Craig. This site is the furthest downstream that the Black Redhorse has been found.

Five of the six mussel species were found at the locations surveyed in 2008. A site north of Arkona had the highest density of the Snuffbox in all of Canada. Two Northern Riffleshell, which has disappeared from 95 per cent of its historical range in North America, were found at the same site.



MONITORING

The Ausable River is very important for this species because it is one of only four rivers in the world in which the Northern Riffleshell is reproducing.

We also learned that the Mapleleaf, Northern Riffleshell, and Snuffbox inhabit longer stretches of the river than we previously thought.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) is currently working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to define the location of critical habitat for each species individually and for all of the species combined. This will help to direct action-oriented projects that will prevent these species from disappearing from the Ausable River and hopefully help their populations to grow.

In the winter of 2008, the ARRT received funding to provide landowners with grants to reduce nutrient and sediment loadings. Nutrient and sediment loadings are thought to pose the greatest threats to aquatic species at risk.

The funds were provided in part by the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and were matched with private landowner contributions.



ABCA monitors *E. coli* concentrations in Bayfield River

Bayfield River Monitoring
The Municipality of Bluewater and local residents' associations (Bayfield Ratepayers Association, Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association) are pursuing a Blue Flag designation for Bluewater beaches and the Bayfield harbour.

The beaches in Bayfield do not always meet a Blue Flag criterion that relates to *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) concentrations.

One possible source of *E. coli* to these beaches is the Bayfield River. With assistance from the Bayfield Ratepayers Association and the Municipality of Bluewater, the ABCA monitored *E. coli* concentrations in the lower Bayfield River watershed during 2008 to determine typical concentrations for this area and to help identify actions that can be taken to reduce *E. coli* contributions to nearby beaches.

The 2008 monitoring program showed that *E. coli* concentrations throughout the lower Bayfield River watershed were typical of rural streams in the ABCA area and often higher following rain events.

Rural, non-point source water pollution comes from many sources which vary both temporally and spatially. Improvements to water quality are therefore best identified and acted upon by individual landowners. Because land treatment must be targeted to areas where improved management will have an effect, consultation with local agencies might help to ensure that well-intentioned efforts will help to meet watershed objectives.

Please contact Brynn Upsdell for more information about Bayfield River monitoring activities. Phone **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610** or e-mail bupsdell@abca.on.ca

Healthy Headwaters partnership helping restore wetlands

By Angela Van Niekerk, ABCA Aquatic Resources Technician

Development in Southern Ontario has meant many changes to the natural environment. Currently, only two per cent of the Ausable River landscape is in wetlands (areas that are seasonally or permanently wet with poor draining soils and hydric plants).

A key wetland function is water storage important for maintaining soil moisture during times of drought to enhance crop production and reducing downstream flooding. As well, wetlands improve water quality by filtering pollutants.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) is undertaking a wetland restoration project with cooperation from the community. Representatives from the community such as interested landowners, local municipal councillors and the Ontario Ministry of the Natural Resources (MNR) have become involved to assist with the wetland restoration project.

The process is comprised of a mapping exercise that was completed in 2007 and an ongoing public outreach component. All landowners in the Ausable watershed between Ailsa Craig and Arkona received a letter to ask if they had wet areas that needed to be enhanced.

The response to this letter resulted in tree planting projects and three wetland restoration projects in 2008. These wetland restoration projects included planting trees in small unproductive areas of land,

WETLANDS

creating ponds where water lies naturally in the landscape, planting

stream-side vegetation, enhancing pond vegetation and enhancing oxbows to hold water longer.

Thanks go to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a significant grant to continue the wetland restoration process and expand the outreach to include all of Middlesex and Huron Counties for three years.

Partners from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, Middlesex Stewardship Council, Huron Stewardship Council and Ducks Unlimited have partnered to provide the Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative the ability to provide technical advice and assistance in completing wetland projects.

We continue to look for interested landowners who have flooding, soil erosion issues or need more streamside vegetation on their properties in Middlesex and Huron Counties.

Contact Angela Van Niekerk, Aquatic Resources Technician, at the ABCA if you are interested in enhancing wet areas on your property.

Phone **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610** or e-mail avanniekerk@abca.on.ca



Communities near lakeshore active in local watershed planning

By Abigail Gutteridge and Hope Brock, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Technicians

Residents are active in lakeshore and inland communities in Central Huron, Bluewater and throughout Ausable Bayfield watersheds, in local planning efforts.

Local plan development with community involvement in 2008 included:

Central Huron Lakeshore Watersheds

The Bayfield North Watersheds Plan will describe the natural and human geography of the area north of Bayfield.

Over the past year, community interests and issues have been developed in a series of workshops and meetings.

Overall, it seems that the community is keen to enhance the natural areas (including water quality in Lake Huron) but recognize that a balance is necessary in this area that is both rich in natural heritage and attractive to development.

The plan, once developed, will recommend approaches and actions that will help to ensure that natural features are protected and the watershed is enhanced.

The planning committee held several events in 2008, including summer open houses, a woodlot management tour, a beach clean-up, and a Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide workshop. Planned for 2009 are an Earth Day clean-up event, summer open houses to present the draft plan to the community, and another beach clean-up. It is clear from the community concerns about water quality and protection of the natural environment that more information and assistance with projects is important to the community.

Bluewater Shoreline Watersheds

Residents in the Municipality of Bluewater are interested in the water quality of some of the ravines in the Municipality of Bluewater, as well as the water quality in Lake Huron.

In 2007 and 2008, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation

LAKESHORE COMMUNITY ACTION

Authority (ABCA) undertook a sampling regime in four ravines (Ridgeway, St. Joseph, Houston Heights and Wildwood) and in the lake at the mouths of these ravines.

Sampling occurred weekly for the months of June, July and August. It is hoped

that this sampling regime will help residents in the Municipality of Bluewater better understand the relationship between the land, ravines and lake.



Zurich Drain Water Quality Enhancement Project

The Zurich Drain Water Quality Enhancement Project continued throughout 2008. Since 2006, 19 environmental improvement projects have been completed or initiated by landowners in the Zurich Drain watershed.

In 2008, five projects were undertaken with funding from Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program, Huron County's Clean Water Project, and the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association.

The projects involved eavestrough installation, tree planting, a water well upgrade, and a wash water filtration system installation.

Benefits to the environment include protecting water quality, increasing wildlife habitat, and reducing greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. The ABCA plans to continue to monitor water quality in the Zurich Drain.

Please contact Abigail Gutteridge for more information about community efforts for Lake Huron Shoreline Watersheds. Phone **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610** or e-mail agutteridge@abca.on.ca



OAC Management Plan approach could help guide new management strategy for Port Franks area

By Kari Jean, ABCA Aquatic Biologist

Old Ausable Channel

Long-Term Management Plan

The Old Ausable River Channel (OAC) is one of the most unique ecological features in southwestern Ontario. The OAC is the isolated portion of the Ausable River that we see in Pinery Provincial Park today.

No longer part of a flowing river, the channel is characterized by clear water and dense aquatic vegetation. The OAC has been identified as an important ecosystem in the Ausable River Recovery Strategy, as it is home to three species at risk fishes, and the oak savanna forest on its shores is internationally significant.

In 2006, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and the Grand Bend community began work on the initial stages of developing a long-term management plan for the Old Ausable Channel.

This planning process was completed in 2008 and the Management Plan was unveiled.

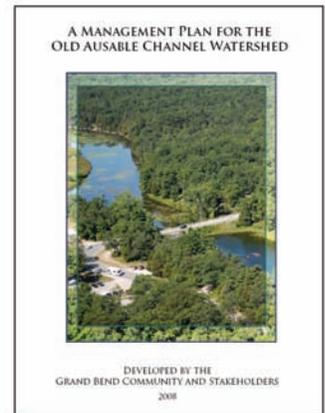
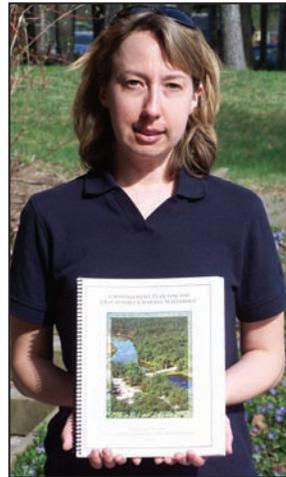
Implementation projects that occurred in 2008 included:

- A native plant guide for residents of Lambton Shores.
- Restoration of a wetland area at the northern end of the OAC.
- An OAC angler brochure.
- An angler information sign.
- Continuation of the OAC resident information lecture and workshop series.
- Continuation of water quality monitoring within the OAC.

The project was generously funded in 2006, 2007 and 2008 by the Grand Bend Community Foundation, the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and the ABCA.

The ABCA plans to continue work in the OAC watershed in 2009 with a succession management study (this will include fisheries, water quality and

AUSABLE RIVER RECOVERY STRATEGY



sediment studies) and native plant education for local residents.

The ABCA and its partners propose to use the approach taken to develop the OAC Management Plan to develop a Port Franks Management Strategy in 2009.

The Port Franks area is home to many species at risk and a community that is very interested in protecting its natural environment.

Contact Kari Jean at the ABCA if you are interested in enhancing biodiversity in Lambton Shores.

Phone **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610** or e-mail kjean@abca.on.ca

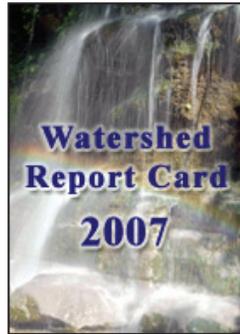


The Grand Bend Community Foundation has been a key supporter of OAC planning and implementation. The year 2008 saw the unveiling of the plan and the beginning of implementation.

Monitoring links degraded stream health with past droughts

By Mari Veliz, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Coordinator

The release of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority *Watershed Report Card (2007)* has provided local communities with summarized forest and water quality conditions on a watershed basis.



Grading the watersheds helps highlight areas we need to protect and areas that we need to improve.

Water quality monitoring continued at 18 stations from March to November 2008.

Nine stations are a part of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN). The ABCA collects the samples and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) analyzes the samples and both partners share the data.

The analysis of water quality at an MOE-endorsed laboratory from the additional nine sites is funded by the ABCA. Furthermore, in 2009, the ABCA has partnered with different agencies and organizations to conduct water quality sampling across the watershed (*See Table 1*).

To complement the water chemistry monitoring, benthic macro-invertebrates were collected in

MONITORING

October 2008 from 24 stations (some of these stations were for special projects, and not regularly monitored).

Benthic macro-invertebrates are 'bottom-living' animals (e.g., aquatic insects, crustaceans – crayfish, mollusks – mussels, and worms).

In 2008, an analysis of the benthic invertebrate communities over the ABCA jurisdiction was completed.

Benthic invertebrates from 58 stations continue to provide important stream health information. Compared to an earlier report completed in 2005 that summarized information from 2000 to 2004, invertebrates collected from 2005 to 2007 indicated more degraded stream health conditions that correspond with the drought conditions experienced in 2006 and 2007.



Benthic invertebrates provide significant stream health information to water resource managers.

Table 1: Water Quality Monitoring Partnerships in the Ausable, Bayfield and Lake Huron Tributaries

Partner	Watercourse	Number of Sites
Bayfield Ratepayer's Association, Municipality of Bluewater	Bayfield River	9
Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association, Municipality of Bluewater	Lake Huron Tributaries in the Municipality of Bluewater	5
Ontario Ministry of the Environment	Zurich Drain	16
Lake Huron Community Action Framework	Lake Huron Tributaries in the Municipality of Central Huron	5
Wee Lake Residents' Association	Old Ausable Channel – Wee Lake	3
Municipality of Lambton Shores, Pinery Provincial Park	Old Ausable Channel	5

ABCA assists watershed partners with aquatic bio-monitoring

By Kari Jean, ABCA Aquatic Biologist

Healthy Watersheds staff from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) conducted three aquatic assessment studies in the Ausable River watershed in 2008:

Joany's Woods 2008 Aquatic Assessment

In 2007, the Thames Talbot Land Trust purchased a significant property within the Ausable River Valley Area of Natural and Scientific Importance (ANSI; provincially recognized), known as Joany's Woods.

With a chance discovery of a juvenile northern riffleshell (endangered fresh-water mussel) in 2003 in this area, there was a need to further assess the aquatic community.

In September, an aquatic species inventory (fish and mussels) was conducted within and adjacent to the Joany's Woods property. There was a very limited abundance of fish and mussels in this survey area. However, a snuffbox (an endangered fresh water mussel) was found in the Ausable River adjacent to Joany's Woods as part of this assessment. This project was funded by the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk.

Bio-monitoring of Aquatic Community Healthy in Dunn Drain

Dunn Drain is a cold-water tributary of the Ausable River, near Hensall, Ontario. On behalf of the Municipality of Bluewater, the ABCA conducted an aquatic community assessment of Dunn Drain. The assessment included fish community and benthic invertebrate studies.

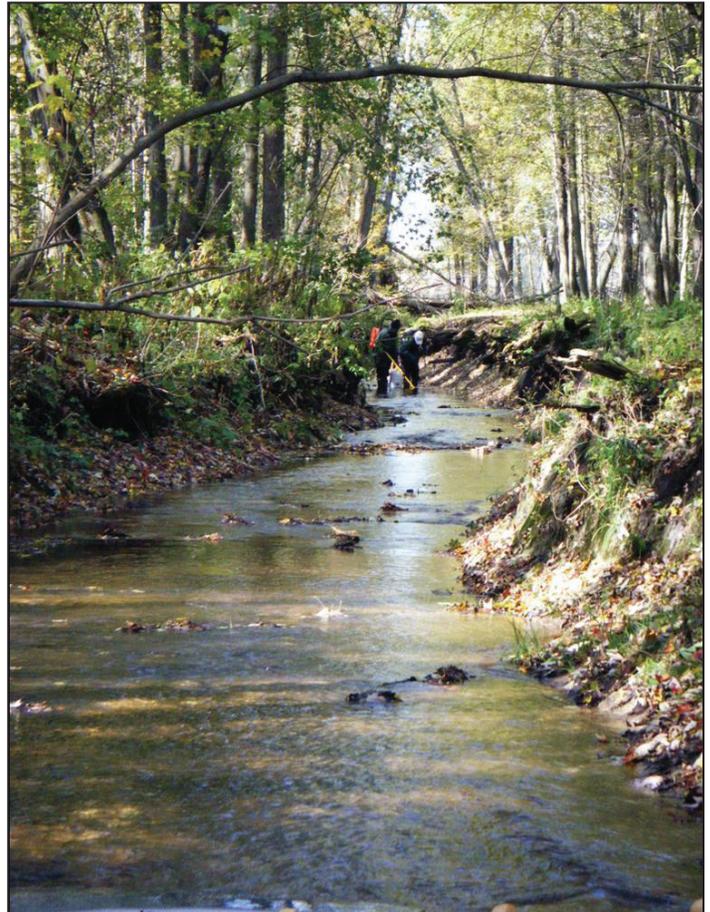
Nairn Creek Watershed

Cold Water Habitat Assessment

The Ausable River tributary Nairn Creek has historically provided habitat for brook, brown and rainbow trout, fish species indicative of cold, clear, running waters.

Past examination of this system has suggested that warm-water temperatures and the introduction of fine sediment may limit available cold water habitat.

MONITORING



Joany's Woods Assessment electrofishing is shown in photo above.

In 2008, ABCA staff conducted a fisheries community survey at two locations to evaluate the success of previous stewardship projects completed in Nairn Creek. Brook trout numbers have decreased, but rainbow trout presence has increased. The reduction of brook trout may reflect the reduction of cold-water habitat in this watershed. This project was funded by the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk.

Brook trout decrease may result from less cold-water habitat ...

Families donate two important properties in year 2008

By Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor

Conservation Land Management

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) is the largest single owner of forests in the watershed.

While the primary purpose of acquisition was to protect valleylands, wetlands and woodlots, these properties have important secondary benefits of wildlife habitat, recreation, education and scientific research.

Two important properties were acquired through donation in 2008. Linda Linfield donated a 95-acre portion of her family farm at Lot 11, Concession 15 in the Stanley East Ward of the Municipality of Bluewater. The property had been in the Linfield family for two generations and managed in an environmentally-conscious manner by Linda and her late husband Bill who had been a loyal member of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation for many years.

The donation ensures Bill's legacy, and his family's legacy, will continue. The ABCA will plant trees on the erosion-prone slopes along the watercourses and continue to rent the 70 acres of agricultural land. The farmland rent will provide a source of revenue to offset property taxes and allow further stewardship work on the property.

The Oswald family donated a six-acre island (Concession LRW, Island Two, Lambton Shores) along Mud Creek at Port Franks. It is adjacent to a Nature Conservancy of Canada property and is part of the Port Franks Forested Dunes and Wetlands Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

Agreements are in place with three community organizations for the special use of ABCA lands: Strathroy Snow Blizzards, Pineridge Snowmobile Club and the Ausable River Riders Club. In all cases, the groups undertake trail maintenance and the Ausable River Riders Club also provides financial compensation.

In late 2007, the ABCA and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters conducted a survey of people



Kate Monk is Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor.

CONSERVATION LAND MANAGEMENT

with Conservation Passes to hunt on ABCA lands. Participation in the survey was voluntary with 112 of 245 surveys returned (46 per cent). OFAH analyzed the results with the following key findings:

- ABCA hunters appear well-distributed by hunting activity and seasons.
- 77 per cent of hunters rated their overall experience as "good" and no one rated their experience as "poor."
- 70 per cent used Hay Swamp for some or all of their ABCA hunting (accounting for a minimum of 641 hunter-days among those surveyed).
- 53 per cent of ABCA hunters travel more than 30 kilometres for their hunting.

ABCA staff provided technical advice and hazard tree removal for the Bayfield River Valley Trail development project.

Enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers created a five-kilometre nature trail that extends in an easterly direction from the Clan Gregor Square in the Village of Bayfield through woodlands.



Funding supports new Rock Glen CA playground equipment

By Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor

We need nature. Each year, more people realize spending time in nature is a good fit for human beings.

Nature is calming in our hectic, stress-filled lives, leaving us feeling refreshed and restored while giving us an important sense of perspective.

Physically, it helps to reduce blood pressure levels and muscle tension, making those who get outside regularly less prone to cardiovascular problems or stress-related illnesses. In a largely developed landscape, people rely on Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) lands to spend time in nature.

Funding from the Arkona Lions Club, Arkona Lioness Club, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) and ABCA allowed the installation of new playground equipment at Rock Glen Conservation Area.

The former equipment, which was more than 30 years old, was removed two years ago because of safety standards. The Conservation Authority opted for simple, well-built swings, slides and small play system in the hopes the equipment will last for a considerable period of time.

The Arkona Lions Club, ABCA and ABCF also partnered to replaced the 20-year-old carpet in the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre at Rock Glen Conservation Area (RGCA).

The majority of granular-surfaced trails at Morrison Dam Conservation Area received a new layer of stone dust. These barrier-free trails are well-used throughout the year.

CONSERVATION AREA DEVELOPMENT



New playground equipment, meeting a higher safety standard, has been installed thanks to funding support from the Arkona Lions Club, Arkona Lioness Club, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

A restoration plan for the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area (formerly known as the Thedford Conservation Area) was initiated and fences repaired to prevent off-road vehicles from entering the property.

These unauthorized users have had a negative impact on the sensitive forested dunes. The overall goal of the plan is to restore the ecosystem as closely as possible to the oak savanna ecosystem. Actions will include the removal of introduced black locust and thinning many white pines. Only the human-made Ausable River Cut separates the Conservation Area from Pinery Provincial Park which has 50 per cent of the world's oak savanna.

Trail Mobile brings nature to those who might otherwise miss out

The South Huron Trail Mobile is a one-of-a-kind experience for people with limited mobility to experience nature. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) held an official launch of the third year of this unique and successful local program on Wednesday, June 4, 2008 at the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail, which runs through Exeter and through Morrison Dam Conservation Area. The Trail Mobile was created in the memory of conservationist Gord

Strang thanks to a donation from his family. The battery-operated vehicle seats five passengers and a volunteer driver, and allows people who can't easily walk the trail to connect with nature. Hundreds of people with limited mobility have experienced nature first-hand since the South Huron Trail Mobile was created in 2006. Eligible individuals book a time for a ride on the trail by calling ABCA Administration Centre office 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. Contact is then made with a volunteer driver.



ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist Ian Jean at Roy Ratz Tract harvesting site.

ABCA conducts thinning at various properties

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

Forest Management on ABCA Lands

2008 was a very active year for both forest management activities and forest inventory work on Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) properties.

In March 2008, timber was marked for harvest at Roy Ratz Tract in Stephen Ward, South Huron. A total of 525 trees were marked for harvest on the back 60 acres of mature upland and lowland forest, with ash making up most of the timber volume. Tree marking was by the single tree selection system following a prescription prepared by Donald Craig, Registered Professional Forester (RPF) for St. Clair Region Conservation Authority.

Morley Logging had the winning timber bid. Wet weather presented a challenge for the logging crew, postponing the start of the harvest until the fall, and then preventing completion of the harvest this year. Timber harvest will resume at Roy Ratz Tract in 2009 when the ground is frozen, or dry, to prevent damage to the site.

A swamp comprising a section of Parkhill Conservation Area, downstream of Parkhill dam was marked for harvest in June, 2008. A total of 203 trees were marked with cottonwood making up over half the total at 112 trees.

Marking followed a prescription prepared by Donald Craig using the shelterwood system to release soft maple. Morley Logging had the winning timber bid. Timber harvest at Parkhill Conservation Area was completed in August, 2008.

Resumption of conifer plantation thinning operations

FORESTRY

on Conservation Authority property occurred in 2008. Inventory work was completed for sections of Hay Swamp Tract Number 4 and trees were marked at ABCA Coleman Tract and two sections of Hay Swamp Tract Number 4. Marking followed prescriptions prepared by Donald Craig.

After the tender process did not produce a successful bid, a timber harvest contract was negotiated with Ontario Thinning Specialists (OTS) of Princeton, Ontario. OTS was recommended by Grand River Conservation Authority and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority for whom they continue to do plantation thinning work.

Mechanical harvest of approximately 40 acres of spruce and pine began at Coleman Tract in September and was completed by mid-October. 333 cords of sawlogs were harvested, with spruce making up 87 cords and pine 246 cords. 95 cords of pulp material was harvested which was sold to a company that put the wood through a shaving mill to make animal bedding. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority received \$15/cord for sawlogs and no revenue for the pulp-sized material.



Ian Jean is
Forestry and
Land Stewardship
Specialist.

Destructive Emerald Ash Borer found in watershed

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

Emerald Ash Borer

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced on October 23, 2008 that Emerald Ash Borer had been confirmed at a private campground near the community of Bayfield in the Municipality of Bluewater. This is the first confirmed occurrence of Emerald Ash Borer in the Ausable Bayfield watershed.

The borer is known in Lambton and Middlesex counties but known occurrences in those counties are south of the Ausable watershed.



Emerald Ash Borer is native to eastern Asia and was introduced to North America, where it is a highly destructive insect pest of all species of ash.

In Canada, it is suspected that movement of firewood is one of the main vectors of migration for the Emerald Ash Borer, which is known to fly only a few kilometres during the course of its life cycle.

A public information meeting was organized by the Huron-Perth Woodlot Owners' Association and Huron Stewardship Council on December 16.

Representatives from the CFIA, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and a local sawmill operator presented information on the ash borer and its potential impacts. Conservation authority staff attended the meeting.

CFIA staff indicated that they expect that an announcement will be made some time in early 2009



This photo shows the Emerald Ash Borer larva with its distinctive 'S'-shaped larval gallery. This photo was from the infestation near Bayfield.

with regard to regulations on the movement of ash products in Huron County. Within the Ausable watershed, currently Middlesex and Lambton Counties are under ministerial orders prohibiting the movement of ash materials and firewood of all species.

The ministerial orders are aimed at slowing the spread of the insect to hopefully provide time for elements in the native ecosystem (parasitic insects, bacteria, viruses) to bring populations of Emerald Ash Borer down to levels that can be sustained by healthy ash trees.

Stewardship Specialist Mark Funk assists with a terrestrial species at risk inventory in 2008. ABCA properties in the Ausable Gorge were studied. Mark's position was funded through the Carolinian Canada Coalition, the University of Waterloo and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.





This photo is of a green dragon plant from Rock Glen Conservation Area, encountered during the terrestrial species-at-risk inventory. The fruits are similar to jack-in-the-pulpit, but the leaves are different in that they are arranged in a semicircle around the top of the plant. Green Dragon is known from several Conservation Authority properties and occurs in floodplain habitat on both the Ausable River and Parkhill Creek. Green Dragon is listed at a 'special concern' species.



The pawpaw is not an at-risk species, but this small tree is rare in Canada, and occurs only in the Carolinian Zone of southern Ontario. It was encountered during the terrestrial species-at-risk inventory along the banks of the Ausable River at Sadler Tract.

Terrestrial species at risk present on ABCA lands

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

The Ausable River watershed provides habitat for several terrestrial species at risk.

One watershed 'hotspot' where a number of rare and at risk species are known to occur is along the Ausable River Valley, between Thedford and Arkona. This area is a provincial Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) due to the high quality of natural habitat and unique species and communities that the valley supports.

During 2008, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) partnered with Carolinian Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation to conduct field inventories on Conservation Authority owned properties within the Ausable River Valley ANSI.

This area was selected because:

- Although the area is known to support several species at risk, the area has not been formally surveyed since the ANSI report in the early 1980s.
- Several authorized and unauthorized ATV and hiking trails traverse these properties and their proximity to and impact on species at risk populations

are not known.

- ABCA staff desire updated and more detailed information on terrestrial species at risk found on Ausable River Valley properties in order to make more informed property management decisions.

ABCA staff conducted field surveys at Sadler Tract, Dennis Tract, Waun Tract and Rock Glen Conservation Area during a short field season in September.

Vegetation communities were mapped following the Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario protocol. Several rare species and species at risk were documented on Conservation Authority property including goldenseal, butternut, flowering dogwood, and green dragon.

A preliminary report summarizing these species at risk occurrences, assessing their vulnerability due to current property uses and management and outlining recommendations for protecting these rare species populations will be completed in 2009.

Additional field work will be required in the spring and summer seasons to capture areas, and species that were not part of the fall 2008 inventory.

Landowners' projects have important secondary benefits

By Kate Monk, ABCA Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor

Stewardship staff work with private landowners to implement on-the-ground projects to protect and improve ground water and surface water quality.

Important secondary benefits of these projects include soil conservation, increased biodiversity, carbon sequestration, making the watershed more resilient to climate change and improving the long-term economic outlook of farming operations.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) provided on-site technical assistance and accessed funding for 105 projects in 2008.

Projects near municipal wells were also funded through the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program (ODWSP) fund. Federal, provincial and county governments and foundations financially helped citizens complete water quality improvement projects.

In its fourth year, the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan Program and associated grant programs encouraged many farmers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). In many cases, these grants were combined with other funding.

Programs funded a variety of BMPs depending on specific program goals: clean water diversion, septic system upgrades, wellhead protection and decommissioning, watercourse livestock access restriction, erosion control measures, fragile land retirement, buffers and afforestation. Unfortunately, there were no municipally-funded programs in the Perth and Lambton county portions of the ABCA watershed in 2008 and this lessens the capacity to improve water quality.

The ABCA participated in the County of Huron Payment for Ecological Goods and Services Pilot Project through a livestock access restriction/stream restoration project at the Stewart Steckle farm in Bluewater.

Through the project, 17 acres of valleyland pasture have been retired from pasture and planted in trees and shrubs. The landowner will receive annual payments for five years to compensate for lost agricultural production. The goals of the pilot project

Stewardship Projects Receiving Grants Through Programs Delivered By ABCA		
Municipality	Number of Projects	Grants
Bluewater	26	\$31,003
Central Huron	9	\$13,804
Huron East	7	\$8,745
South Huron	16	\$18,760
Lucan Biddulph	10	\$14,758
Adelaide Metcalfe	4	\$3,505
Middlesex Centre	4	\$8,472
North Middlesex	27	\$51,118
Lambton Shores	1	\$385
Warwick	0	\$0
South Perth	0	\$0
West Perth	1	\$535
TOTAL:	105	\$151,085
Note: Totals do not include funding from Environmental Farm Plan Program.		

PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

are to introduce the concept of PEGS (Payment for Ecological Goods and Services) to the community and determine if on-going payments will result in increased adoption of BMPs.

In June, the ABCA and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority hosted staff from Ontario's Conservation Authorities on a two-day watershed tour. Highlights included the Murray Scott Farm Greencover Demonstration Project, Steenstra Drain Project, Wawanosh Park and Creek Restoration Project, Soer Farm Shelterbelt Project, Steckle Farm Payment for Ecological Goods and Services Pilot Project, Hay Swamp Wetland Complex, and the West Perth and Huron East Sinkholes.

For list of some of these private land stewardship programs delivered by the ABCA see break-out box on bottom of next page.

ABCA staff plant 56,000 trees at 48 different planting sites

By Ian Jean, ABCA Forestry and Land Stewardship Specialist

A number of available cost-share grant programs helped lower costs for landowners and sustain demand for tree planting in 2008.

For the spring program a total of 56,000 trees were planted by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff for 45 landowners at 48 separate planting sites.

Most of these were new projects with some minor infilling of Ontario Power Generation Afforestation Program sites contributing to the overall total. Planting of large stock began on April 7th with planting of seedlings beginning on April 14th. The planting season wrapped up on May 16th.

Landowners were also busy planting trees throughout the watershed. A total of 170 landowners participated in the spring tree 'pick-up' program planting a total of 20,700 trees.

In the autumn, the ABCA offers balled and burlap, two-foot evergreen stock (cedar, spruce and pine), mainly

TREE PLANTING PROGRAM REPORT

for windbreak planting. Although much smaller in scale than the spring planting program, the fall remains a good time to plant larger stock that is not prone to frost heave.

ABCA staff planted seven windbreak projects on private land and one municipal project totalling 1,007 trees. Including pick-up orders, a total of 1,544 balled and burlap evergreens were distributed through the fall program this year.

This year was ideal for planting trees, with a good drying period in early spring allowing access to planting sites followed by more than adequate rainfall in late spring, summer and fall.



Tree planting crews in 2008.

Private Land Stewardship Supporters

From previous page

The ABCA thanks the following for contributing funding to watershed stewardship:

- Clean Water Project
 - Huron and Middlesex Counties
- Canada-Ontario Agreement
 - Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources,
Clinton District and Middlesex Stewardship Committee
- Ausable River Recovery Strategy Implementation
 - Environment Canada
Habitat Stewardship Program
- Afforestation and Biodiversity Project
 - Ontario Power Generation
- Trees Ontario Foundation
- Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program.

Take Individual Action

Local people may be more interested than ever in protecting the health of their local environment but they might also wonder "What can I do to help?" Rural, non-farm residents now have an answer in a new publication and environmental property self-assessment program created to assist their efforts. *The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide for the Lake Huron Watershed* was released in 2007 as an environmental self-assessment program for rural non-farm residents (i.e., people who own rural properties but are not farmers).

The new initiative follows on the heels of the highly-successful *Stewardship Guide for the Lake Huron Coastline*. Environmental self-assessments are now available for farmers, cottagers and the rural non-farm landowner with the release of this inland counterpart. Contact Mari Veliz, ABCA, Healthy Watersheds Specialist, for information about upcoming individual environmental plan workshops. Phone **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610** or e-mail **mveliz@abca.on.ca**

Grand Bend Community Foundation named Conservationist of the Year

Foundation has prioritized community planning, implementation around Old Ausable Channel

The Grand Bend Community Foundation was honoured as the Conservationist of the Year award winner at a ceremony held Thursday, March 20, 2008 at Ironwood Golf Club near Exeter.

The Foundation was recognized for its ongoing leadership and support of the creation of the Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan and support of the implementation of the plan.

The Foundation was also honoured for its creation of an Environmental Legacy Fund to support community actions protective of the environment in the area in the future. The Old Ausable Channel, south of Grand Bend, is one of the most unique ecological features in southwestern Ontario.

This waterway, isolated from the Ausable River at the end of the 19th century, provides habitat to three rare species-at-risk fishes and is adjacent to the globally-rare Oak Savanna forest.



Lawrence McLachlan, Chair of the ABCA Board of Directors, presents a framed print to the Grand Bend Community Foundation, accepted by the GBCF Vice Chair and Environmental Committee Chair Pat Morden and the GBCF Chair, David Bannister.

Speaker says community can actively protect lake water quality

Community groups have an important role to play protecting lake water quality, a guest speaker said at the annual partner appreciation evening held by the ABCA.

Local community groups can help protect and improve lake water quality by supporting a new Lake Huron Charter pledge and taking community action to implement lakewide management initiatives, according to Ted Briggs, Great Lakes Advisor with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

Briggs was the keynote speaker at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's annual awards evening, held in 2008 with a lakeshore theme.

"In our vision we see clean air and clean water," Briggs told the Conservationist of the Year Award event, held at Ironwood Golf Club near Exeter.

Actions must change, he said, to restore and protect the natural environment. Millions of people get their drinking water from Great Lakes sources, Briggs said. The quality of that water is

threatened, however, from contaminants including mercury and from ecosystem changes such as invasive species brought over in ship ballasts.

The speaker applauded the work of community groups that have already begun undertaking work to protect the important Lake Huron-Georgian Bay watershed. It's a big area with many subwatersheds, he said, and that's why it's important individual community groups take local action.

The framework to improve the local lake watershed has included a youth symposium to educate youth ambassadors who will hopefully create present and future action to protect and improve the ecosystem.

The ABCA Board of Directors has been one of the early supporters of the Great Lakes Charter. For information on The Lake Huron – Georgian Bay Watershed Canadian Framework for Community Action, and to assist this lakewide effort visit lakehuroncommunityaction.ca



The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority presented a special certificate of recognition to eight community groups taking action to protect lakeshore water quality at a partners' awards dinner on Thursday, March 20, 2008. Shown during the presentation are (front row, left to right) Betty Siddall, of The Nairn Creek Project; John Gillespie, Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association; Gayle Detenbeck, Bayfield Area Watersheds Community Action Plan and Bayfield Ratepayers' Association; Mari Veliz, ABCA Healthy Watersheds Coordinator, presenting the award of recognition; Ray Letheren, Friends of the Bayfield River; (back row) Tom Purdy, Friends of the Old Ausable Channel and the Old Ausable Channel Long-Term Management Plan Steering Committee; Ross Hayter, Lake Smith Conservationists; Stewart Brown, Lake Smith Conservationists. Also recognized was Lambton Wildlife Inc.

Special award honours landowners' work protecting lake water quality

Inland projects help protect lakeshore water quality

A special recognition award was presented in 2008 to several community groups helping to take action to protect lake water quality.

They were:
 • The Bayfield Area Watersheds Community

Action Plan (North Gullies Project)

- The Bayfield Ratepayers' Association
- The Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association
- The Friends of the Bayfield River
- The Lake Smith Conservationists
- Lambton Wildlife Inc
- The Friends of the Old Ausable Channel
- OAC Long-Term Management Plan Steering Committee
- The Nairn Creek Project

Years of dedicated staff service recognized at annual evening

25-Year Service Awards presented

The ABCA presented Years of Service Awards in 2008 to staff members who have helped protect life, property and the natural environment

for many years.

Recipients were Water and Planning Manager Alec Scott, 25 years; Wayne Ford, Field Services, 25 years; and five-year awards to Andrew Bicknell, Davin Heinbuck, Sharon Pavkeje and Tony Drinkwalter.



The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority recognized employees who have been helping to protect life, property and the natural environment for many years at an awards ceremony held Thursday, March 20, 2008 at Ironwood Golf Club. Years of Service awards were presented to (front row, left to right) Andrew Bicknell, Regulations Coordinator, five years; Davin Heinbuck, Lands and Water Technologist, five years; Wayne Ford, Field Services, 25 years; Alec Scott, Manager of Water and Planning, 25 years; and Tony Drinkwalter, Field Services, five years. Presenting the recognition were, back row, Kate Monk, Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor; Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer; Lawrence McLachlan, Chair, Board of Directors; Jim Ginn, Vice Chair. Also recognized was Sharon Pavkeje, Office Services Assistant, five years.

Conservationist of the Year annual award

Each year the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority recognizes the Conservationist of the Year for their stewardship efforts in the watershed. Consider nominating someone in 2010 for this award. Nomination forms are available online at abca.on.ca

Student becomes teacher, returns to Camp Sylvan to create new generation of memories for his class

By Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist

A teenaged boy stayed overnight in a pioneer-style, covered chuck wagon, in a frontier-style setting, at Camp Sylvan back when he was a Grade 8 student. The experience was so memorable he brought his own students back to that recreated pioneer outpost when he became a teacher.

“I had a good time at Camp Sylvan,” remembers Mr. Dusko Cvetkovic, a teacher at Caradoc North Public School near Strathroy, Ontario. “It was one of my good memories from public school so I thought I would bring my own students here to share the same positive experience.”

The Sylvan Conservation Program outdoor education experience was created in 1964 and is now Ontario’s longest continually running overnight program of its kind.

More than 20,000 students, teachers, parents and visitors have taken part in the Camp Sylvan residential conservation education opportunity, which is delivered by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

The camp is owned by Scouts



Denise Biega, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Conservation Technician, and student leader Rachel Mungar, supervise students at Camp Sylvan.



More than 20,000 children, teachers and others have enjoyed the nature experience of Ontario’s longest continuously running outdoor residential conservation education opportunity, Sylvan Conservation Program at Camp Sylvan. Part of the unique experience for students is sleeping overnight in covered chuck wagons.

Canada and is located southwest of Parkhill. The 350-acre pristine nature area offers diverse forests, ponds, streams, fields and meadows.



Teacher Dusko Cvetkovic went to Camp Sylvan in Grade 8 and returned as a teacher with his students.

Students attending the Sylvan Conservation Program take active part in an ecology-based outdoor experience where they sleep overnight in chuck wagons and learn how to build covered shelters out of natural sources and to filter water. They play and eat together and they attend educational programs on topics such as water quality, orienteering, forest conditions and the positive roles of trees and survival activities.

ABCA Conservation Education Specialist Julie Hicks is a teacher who attended Camp Sylvan in Grade 8 and liked it so much she volunteered there right from high school through university and now runs the program.

“Learning in an outdoor environment gives students the opportunity to make connections with nature and experience lessons first-hand through the use of props, demonstrations, hands-on and interpersonal activities,” she said. “These connections encourage lifelong learning and respect for nature and the

environment.”
 “For some it has changed the way they look at a snake, bird, tree or stream,” says one teacher. “For some it has changed the way they relate to their peers and teachers and for others it has literally been a turning point in their lives.”



Watershed success only possible with partner support

Protecting life and property and building resilient watersheds and environmental conscience can only happen with many partners.

This is the second year the ABCA is attempting to recognize the majority of those partners through a partner list. We hope we have not missed any of the valuable supporters of our programming but we would like to thank those who are making positive environmental change possible.

This list will be posted to our web site at abca.on.ca and updated. If you have been missed please let us know and we will add you to the list on the web site.

Federal Government

- Government of Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
- Environment Canada, EcoAction
- Habitat Stewardship Program
- Greencover Canada (GC), a program of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative
- Other ministries

Provincial Government

- Greencover Canada (GC), a program of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)
- Pinery Provincial Park
- Other ministries, programs

County Governments

- Huron
- Lambton
- Middlesex
- Perth
- Other counties (including Bruce and Wellington through Source Protection Planning), and

PARTNERS' PAGE

planners

Municipal Governments

ABCA Member Municipalities:

- Adelaide Metcalfe
- Bluewater
- Central Huron
- Huron East
- Lambton Shores
- Lucan Biddulph
- Middlesex Centre
- North Middlesex
- Perth South
- South Huron
- Warwick
- West Perth
- Other municipalities

Foundations

- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation
- Grand Bend Community Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Trees Ontario Foundation
- Thames Talbot Land Trust
- Other foundations

Service Organizations

- Arkona Lions Club
- Clinton Lions Club
- Exeter Lions Club
- Probus Club
- Rotary Club of Grand Bend
- Sylvan
- Many other service organizations

Volunteer Committees

- Ausable River Recovery Team
- Conservation Dinner Committee
- Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament
- The Old Ausable River Channel Long-Term Management Plan Steering Committee
- South Huron Trail Run Committee
- SWPGMN Working Group
- Water Response Team

Volunteer Community Groups

- Bayfield Ratepayers' Association
- Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association
- Friends of the Bayfield River

- Friends of Old Ausable Channel
- Friends of Pinery Provincial Park
- Friends of the South Huron Trail
- Lake Smith Conservationists
- Lambton Wildlife Inc.
- The Nairn Creek Project
- Bayfield North Watersheds Committee
- Ausable Anglers
- Pineridge Snowmobile Club
- Ausable River Riders
- Huron Fish and Game Club
- Sarnia Lambton Environmental Alliance
- Huron Fringe Field Naturalists
- McIlwraith Field Naturalists
- Stratford Field Naturalists
- Huron Tourism Association
- Many other community groups

Agricultural Organizations

- AGCare
- Commodity Groups
- General Farm Organizations (OFA, CFFO, NFU, etc.)
- Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition
- Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
- Many others

Stewardship Councils and Networks

- Huron Stewardship Council
- Middlesex Stewardship Council
- Perth Stewardship Network
- Lambton Stewardship Network
- Many others

Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations

- Ausable Bird Observatory
- Carolinian Canada
- Ducks Unlimited
- Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation
- Conservation Ontario
- Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Ontario Nature
- Ontario Rural Council
- World Wildlife Fund

Education

- Watershed Schools
- University of Guelph

- University of Waterloo
- Many other educational institutions

Businesses

- Donors
- Engineers and Lawyers
- Consultants
- Commemorative Woods funeral homes
- Private nurseries
- Printers, web and graphic designers and other suppliers
- Ontario Power Generation
- Many other businesses too numerous to mention here

Media

- Broadcast and web media
- Farm media
- Print media

Individuals

- It's not possible to list all the individuals who partner with the ABCA – they range from staff of other organizations to teachers to students to volunteers, to peer reviewers to landowners, donors and other volunteers. Although you may not 'see your name in lights' here please know your contributions are indispensable.

Volunteers

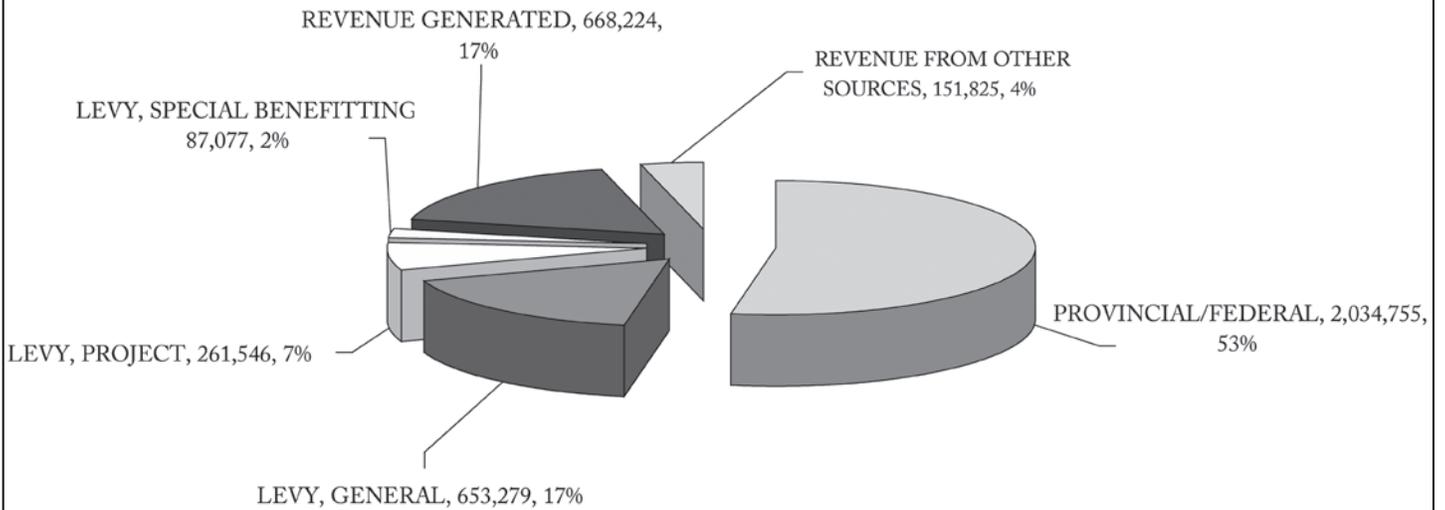
- Landowners
- Donors
- Patrons
- South Huron Trail Mobile drivers
- Committee and working group members
- Others

To those whom we have inadvertently missed we apologize – and extend our thanks. Let us know at info@abca.on.ca if you have been omitted and we will try to correct our error in next year's annual report and on our web-based list. Partnership is sometimes one of those 'buzzwords' that gets bandied about until much of its meaning is lost. However, when the ABCA talks about partnerships it is because we truly cannot accomplish our important conservation goals without your partnership with us. Thank you.

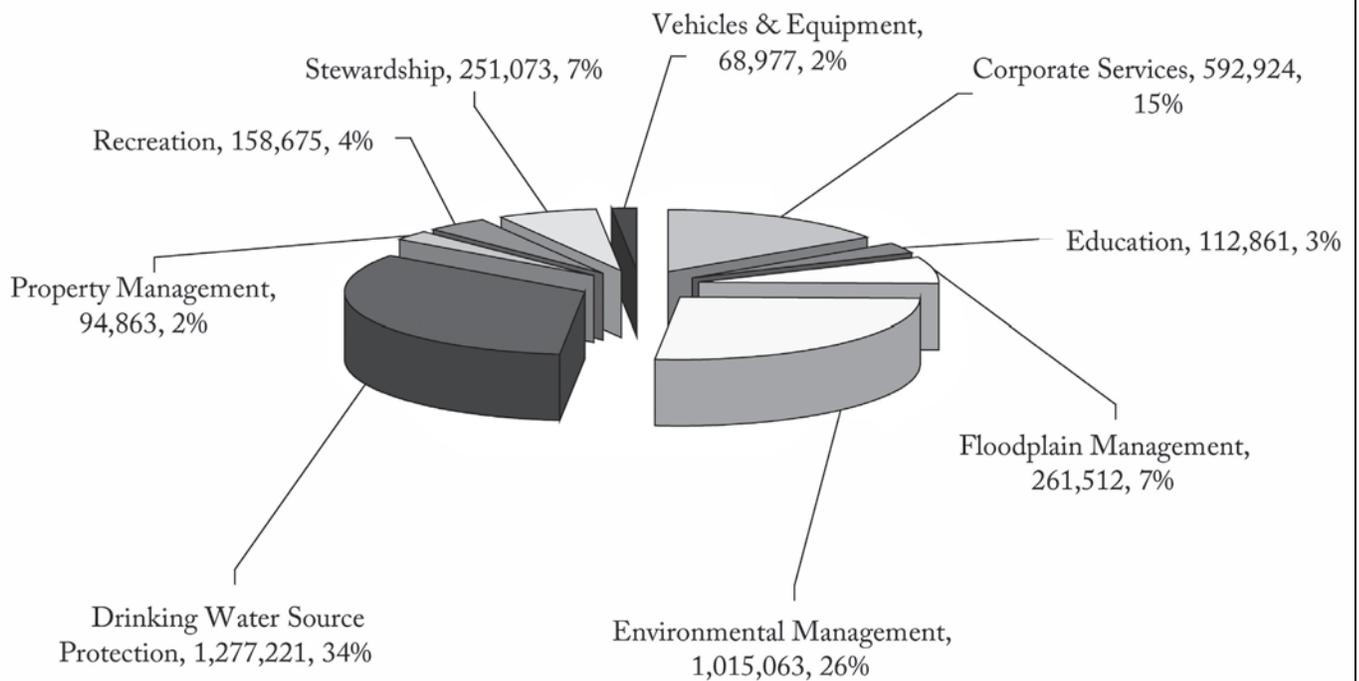
. . . and to all our other partners who are not on this list but whose support is appreciated . . .

2008 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2008 SOURCES OF REVENUE - TOTAL REVENUE \$3,856,705 (UNAUDITED FIGURES)



2008 EXPENSES - TOTAL EXPENSES \$3,833,169 (UNAUDITED FIGURES)



ABCA, partners combine to better watershed landscape

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority is able to achieve success on the watershed landscape by efficiently delivering multiple programs at the local level and working with many supportive funding partners.

The ABCA works cooperatively with municipalities and with governments at the national, provincial and regional scale. Our staff also successfully deliver programs with other partners as well – from private landowners and other individuals, to Foundations, agencies, businesses and other organizations.

Conservation Authority expertise benefits municipalities, farmers, planners and the public at large.

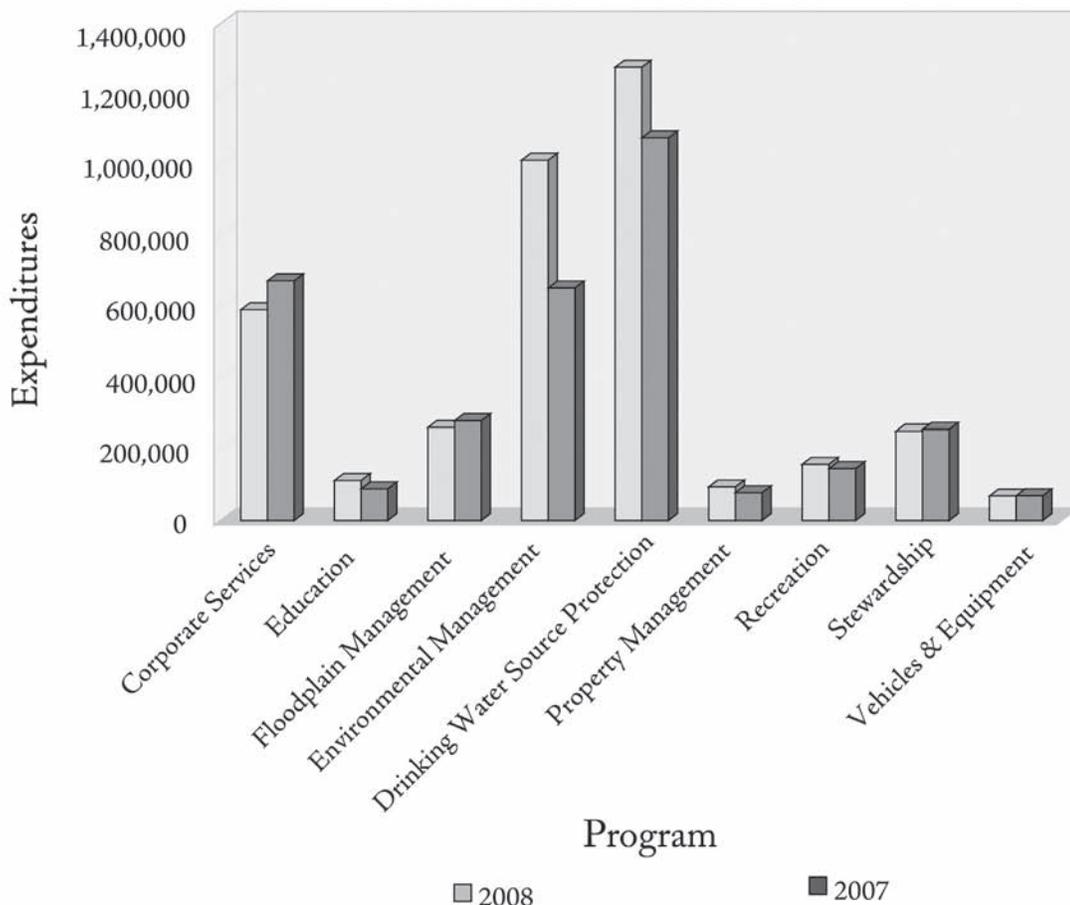
People who rely on the work of the ABCA

range from members of the public who want to know about flooding or how to improve water quality, to teachers and students who want active outdoor learning experiences, to watershed residents who want to connect with nature or take advantage of low-cost or no-cost outdoor fitness opportunities, to landowners wanting expertise on how to navigate multiple funding programs.

The ABCA balances fiscal responsibility with achieving watershed improvement and delivering program success for its partners and for watershed residents.

A future community review of the agency's *Conservation Strategy* may provide public input on how to best ensure the ABCA continues to head in the right direction.

EXPENDITURES - 2008 TOTAL \$3,833,169, 2007 TOTAL \$3,327,332



Conservation Dinner raises \$50,000 for first time

The Conservation Dinner raised more than \$50,000 in 2008 for conservation projects.

That was the first year the dinner had been so successful and that is thanks to the patrons, donors and volunteers behind the 19th Annual Conservation Dinner. They surpassed themselves yet again.

The dinner, which was held on April 17 in Exeter, is organized by a volunteer committee of the Exeter Lions Club, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and other volunteers.

The dinners in 2006 and 2007 had set the previous fundraising records when the \$40,000 mark was surpassed for the first time.

Over the 19-year history of the gala charitable event the community and volunteer committee have raised more than half a million dollars in support of accessible trails, fish stocking and docking, commemorative woods, conservation education and other benefits for human and natural health.

The event's success was only possible with the generous support of a watershed community that is committed to the betterment of the natural environment for future generations.

The live auction items included a special round trip getaway from London to Halifax, courtesy VIA Rail; a Trip for Four to Dover (Delaware) International Speedway, courtesy Cathy and Tom Seip; autographed sports jerseys; beautiful, one-of-a-kind pieces of art include feature artist David Bannister's painting 'Morning, Ausable,' and many more items.

Prominent area television journalist Scott Miller,



Unique craftsmanship and artistry was demonstrated in the auction items available at the 2008 Conservation Dinner.



Television journalist Scott Miller (above left, shown with feature artist David Bannister and Dinner Committee Chair Bob Gehan) was the Emcee for the 2008 Conservation Dinner. Auctioneers included Ben Lobb (below), who auctioned off coveted items including a dream getaway from London to Halifax, courtesy of VIA Rail.



of A Channel, was emcee.

The event had a live auction, silent auction, special raffles, general raffles and a wonderful sit-down dinner.

The dinner supports projects such as the Foundation's funding of \$1 for each student attending a conservation education program, accessible trails, support for the MacNaughton Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail, accessible fishing docks, boardwalks, and commemorative woods.

The year 2008 was also the beginning of planning for the next year's dinner (2009), which will be the 20th Anniversary of the Dinner.

Visit conservationdinner.com or abca.on.ca for more information on the dinner. The support of donors, patrons and volunteers is appreciated.

Volunteer directors help Foundation support watershed health

By Norman MacPherson, Chairman, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation

The work of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) is to raise money for conservation projects within the watersheds of the Ausable and Bayfield River systems.



The nine volunteer directors are committed to the conservation, preservation and protection of the unique natural landscapes of the Ausable River, Bayfield River and Parkhill Creek watersheds.

In 2008, the ABCF assisted the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and watershed community groups with funding support towards the following project areas:

Conservation Education

- Subsidizing \$1 for each participant attending an education program offered by the ABCA.
- Funding partner for the Old Ausable Channel Management Implementation Plan.
- Ongoing sponsorship of the Species-at-Risk Bussing Program.
- Support for a funding application to TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for \$1,000 to update material and purchase new equipment for the Huron-Perth Agriculture and Water Festival.

Protection of Wetlands and Natural Heritage

- The Foundation received a grant from the London Community Foundation to restore grassland habitat at the Sylvan Scout property.
- EcoAction Community Funding application was approved to support five (5) beneficial management practices projects for the Pergel Gully watershed draining into the South Gullies Watershed.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation accepted the Healthy Headwaters Initiative Wetland Project application and will provide \$225,000 over three (3) years to construct four (4) wetland restoration projects.
- Continued financial support for the Old Ausable Channel Management Implementation Plan.

The project was launched in Grand Bend with public meeting, creation of information signs and angler brochures, among other community-guided actions.

Accessible Trails and Facilities

- Partnering with the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association as they receive donations towards a phased development of a trail system along the Bayfield River between Bayfield and Clinton.
- A donation was given towards new carpet in the Arkona Lions Museum and Information Centre at Rock Glen Conservation Area.
- Thanks to the steering committee, the Third Annual Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament, raised \$5,050 towards the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail.



Leave a Local Legacy

The *Leave a Local Legacy* campaign continues to grow. In 2008, Linda Linfield and family donated 95 acres (25 acres of woodlot and steams and 70 acres tillable) in memory of her husband, the late Bill Linfield, Past Chairman of the ABCF.

In Lambton Shores, Gwendolyn Oswald donated a six-acre island property within the Port Franks Wetland Complex.

The ABCA and ABCF welcome this new direction in its history, where society is proactive in ensuring protection of their environmentally significant lands through the *Leave a Local Legacy* campaign. The ABCA created a Long Term Land Securement Plan with provision for a Stewardship Endowment Fund to address the ongoing costs, as a landowner of these donated lands.

Continued on next page

Community support helps Foundation improve watershed health

Continued from previous page

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) thanks donors for their continued support of the projects just mentioned as well as others, such as Commemorative Woods:

Commemorative Woods

- Commitment towards expanding the Morrison Dam Commemorative Woods with \$20,000 towards construction of the new parking lot in the spring of 2009.
- Co-hosted the Seventh Annual Klopp Commemorative Woods tree dedication service with J.M. McBeath Funeral Home on June 1st with 120 guests in attendance.
- Co-hosted the annual commemorative woods dedication service with Haskett Funeral Home on September 21st with 275 guests in attendance.

Conservation Dinner

The Foundation's major fundraising event is the annual Conservation Dinner in cooperation with the Exeter Lions Club (as well as dinner committee, volunteers, donors, patrons and the ABCA). This popular event has raised more than \$550,000 for trail projects and conservation education in the last 19 years.



Canoe Raffle

A cedar-strip tandem canoe was donated from Barb Richman, of Grand Bend, as a prize for a Canoe Raffle in partnership with the Ailsa Craig and District Lions Club. The canoe has a retail value of \$7,000 and was hand-built by Master Builder Skip Izon. The

ABCF Board of Directors for 2008

- Norman MacPherson**, Arkona
– *Chairman*
- Ernie Miatello**, Ilderton
– *Vice Chairman*
- Peter Darbishire**, Exeter
- Ted Jones**, Exeter
- Dave McClure**, Grand Bend
- Bob Norris**, Staffa
- Teresa Ondrejicka**, Exeter
- John Walsh**, London
- Bev Brown**
– *Treasurer*
- Judith Parker**
– *Secretary*
- Sharon Pavkeje**
– *Assistant*
- Tom Prout**
– *Staff Advisor*

draw date was scheduled to be held February 14, 2009 with proceeds benefiting community and watershed conservation projects of both organizations.



Morrison Dam Fishing Derby

In cooperation with the Exeter Lions Club, the Annual Morrison Dam Fishing Derby was held the first Saturday of May. Thanks to donations from the Lions Club and ABCF, 1000 rainbow trout are stocked in the Morrison Dam reservoir prior to the derby for the enjoyment of young anglers or those young at heart.

Junior Conservationist

Katie Anderson was the 2008 Junior Conservationist – a summer position with the ABCA – offered to a student who is interested in pursuing a career in the environmental field. This position is funded by the ABCF.



New Member

In May, the ABCF accepted, with regret, the resignation of Cliff Ryan as a volunteer director.

Cliff was from the southern portion of the watershed in Arkona. His enthusiasm was always welcomed by everyone. In September, Teresa Ondrejicka was appointed to the Foundation.

Teresa is a former director and Chair of the ABCA as well as Chair of the Conservation Dinner in 2004.

Thank you to both Cliff and Teresa for volunteering on our board.

We are indeed fortunate to have wonderful representation from the whole watershed area.



AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ABCA.ON.CA

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