

We appreciate your interest in the work of landowners and other partners, like you, who are creating healthier Ausable Bayfield watersheds. This newsletter is to let you know about opportunities for funding and technical support, programs, events, policies, community news, the work of Ausable Bayfield Conservation, and ways you can help safeguard your land and water.

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Your neighbours are helping safeguard land, water

People like you are helping to build healthier Ausable Bayfield watersheds. Read this newsletter to find out about some of the work that is taking place. For more news visit us online at www.abca.on.ca



Foundation to continue popular Gord Strang Golf Tourney

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation to hold Sixth Annual Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament
 Dedicated community volunteers committed themselves to hold a charitable memorial golf tournament for five consecutive years to honour the late Gordon Strang and to raise money for the accessible MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail. The volunteer committee honoured that commitment by holding a successful



Foundation offers student award

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation invites students to apply for financial award for post-secondary studies related to environment
 The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation recognized student Ryan Finnie last year with the first Student Environmental Award of \$1,000 towards post-secondary studies in a field related to the environment or conservation. The foundation has announced it is again offering the award to a student from a watershed municipality. Students must apply by Monday, May 30, 2011 at 4 p.m. local time to be eligible. Application form and complete award criteria are available online at



Conservation Dinner sets record

Conservation Dinner record success to support local efforts - Gala auction raises more than \$50,000 thanks to patrons, donors, volunteers
 A generous watershed community has made the 2011 Conservation Dinner a great success, according to the Exeter Lions Club and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation. Early estimates suggest the dinner held on Thursday, April 14, has raised

fundraiser and enjoyable community event between 2006 and 2010.

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) is now taking over the reins of this worthy venture by organizing the Sixth Annual Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament. This charitable event is to be held on Monday, June 6, 2011 at picturesque Ironwood Golf Club, at 70969 Morrison Line, just east of Exeter, Ontario, off Highway 83. Volunteers from the past organizing committee will continue to help with the event as they pass the torch to the Foundation.

For information on the golf tournament visit gordstranggolf.com. You can register for the tournament by contacting Sharon Pavkeje at spavkeje@abca.on.ca or by downloading a registration form at:

<http://www.gordstranggolf.com/docs/2011.pdf>

The Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament brings together two of Gord's great passions: golf and the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail. The tournament has raised close to \$24,000 over the past five years.

"The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation thanks the past organizers of the Gord Strang Memorial Golf Tournament for their generosity and hard work over the past five years," said Ernie Miatello, Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Directors. "We also thank them for their continued work and support as our Foundation takes on this important event benefitting the community and remembering Gord Strang."

The late Gordon Strang was one of the

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Eligible students must be between the ages of 17-25, have a permanent address in one of the 12 member municipalities of the Ausable Bayfield watershed, be currently enrolled in university or college, or graduating from secondary school and pursuing a post-secondary education in a conservation or environment related course of study (for example, biology, ecology, geography, forestry, fish and wildlife, outdoor education, etc.).

"The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation was proud to present the award for the first time last year, to a deserving young person, and we look forward this year to supporting another local student in their post-secondary studies in the conservation or environment fields," said Ernie Miatello, Chair of the ABCF Board of Directors.

Ausable Bayfield watersheds include parts of the following municipalities: Adelaide Metcalfe, Bluewater, Central Huron, Huron East, Lambton Shores, Lucan Biddulph, Perth South, Middlesex Centre, North Middlesex, South Huron, Warwick, and West Perth.

Students are asked to submit a creative two-page essay on their personal involvement, paid or volunteer work with, an environmental or conservation-based project and/or organization. Immediate families of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority staff, board of directors and Foundation members are not eligible. For more information on this award call **519-235-2610** or toll-free **1-888-286-2610**.

more than \$50,000 and is likely to set a record, thanks to the commitment of patrons, donors and volunteers.

A sell-out crowd of 410 people gave special guest Terry O'Rourke a standing ovation after he spoke poignantly about the need to support our modern-day Canadian veterans. Terry and Jean O'Rourke are parents of Afghanistan veteran Corporal Eamon O'Rourke.

Terry left the audience with a moving depiction of the impact of war during a conflict and after soldiers return home. He stressed the need to support our veterans long after troops have left the battlegrounds. "I believe it is imperative we all support our troops long after the battle is over," he said.

Eamon, 24, is stationed with the Royal Canadian Dragoons at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa. He has served four years with that Canadian armour regiment. Eamon completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan from 2008 – 2009. The crowd spontaneously applauded as the guest speaker showed a photo of his son returning home from Afghanistan.

The guest speaker recounted

people instrumental in the development of the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail and the money raised from the tournament helps to support his legacy. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation was incorporated in 1974 as a registered, charitable, non-profit organization that promotes accessible trails and other conservation projects in the Ausable Bayfield watersheds.

The golf tournament has a 'shotgun' start at 1 p.m. and a Texas Scramble format. The cost is \$30 for dinner only, or \$90 per person for golf, cart, and meal. Single players are welcome and will be placed on a team. For more information phone 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.



Students write about watersheds in student writing contest

ABCA recognizes winning entries from students

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has announced the winners of its first Watershed Tales student environmental writing competition. A panel of judges included people from the literary sphere, the



Community learns about frogs

Community learns about frogs at Frogwatch Monitoring Night

Interested members of the community found out about frogs at a Frogwatch Monitoring evening held at the Old Ausable Channel (OAC) Origin in Grand Bend, on Thursday, April 28.

The event was an opportunity to showcase projects recently completed on Alberta Street at the OAC Origin. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) partnered with the Grand Bend Community Foundation, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation and the Municipality of Lambton Shores to build a viewing platform overlooking the wetland and install an educational sign showing local frog species. The viewing platform and the sign will be used for future nature talks and enjoyment of local residents and visitors.

About 14 people from the community attended the evening. The evening featured local expert Tom Purdy as the guest speaker, talking about interesting frog facts. Participants had an opportunity to and learn about local frogs and their calls. Those taking part also learned about the Frogwatch Ontario program of the Toronto Zoo and

how much Eamon enjoyed working as a co-op student at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and made some entertaining comparisons of the work Eamon did in conservation with the work he did as a Canadian soldier. The Conservation Dinner is a community effort by the Exeter Lions Club, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, the ABCA, donors, patrons, and volunteers. The gala charitable auction of original art and memorabilia featured a live auction, silent auction, Super Silent Auction, special raffles, general raffles, wonderful meal, honoured feature artist Catherine Weber, and honoured special guests Terry and Jean O'Rourke. The event supports accessible trails and conservation area improvements, conservation education, stocking the reservoir with fish for the family fishing derby, commemorative woods to improve forest conditions and remember loved ones, and other conservation projects that would not happen without the community's support. This year's auction included amazing auction items such as unique travel and

environmental sector, and the watershed community's Conservation Strategy Development Team.

Submissions for next year's contest are being received until November 30, 2011. All watershed schools are eligible. For map of watershed boundaries, contest rules, submission form, and more information, visit abca.on.ca. Winning entries from students have been published online at watershedtales.ca

The award winners are:

Mikaela Gibbs, Saving Me, First Place (Short Story, Ages 11-14)

Lara Nauwelaerts, Our Trip to the Wetlands, Second Place (Short Story, Ages 11-14)

Jet vanEsveld, Watershed, Honourable Mention (Story Short, Ages 11-14)

Kate Smith, Watershed Poem, First Place (Poetry, Ages 11-14)

Alexis Merner, A Tree with the Name Hope, Second Place (Poetry, Ages 11-14)

Amy Meier, A Watershed Poem, Honourable Mention (Poetry, Ages 11-14)

Tiffany Towns, The Watershed, First Place (Essay, Ages 11-14)

Kris Huber, Watershed Story, Second Place (Essay, Ages 11-14)

Dana Wilson, Ashley Whelan and Fiona Brands, A Lesson Learned by Moonlight, First Place (Short Story, Ages 5-10)

Julie Chun, Melanie Wilson, and Raven Blyde, From Trash to Tadpoles, Second Place (Short Story, Ages 5-10)

ABCA presented the inaugural Watershed Tales student environmental writing awards at the Conservation Awards evening on

how to submit data to that program. Shown in photo, left to right, at Frogwatch Monitoring evening, at the Old Ausable Channel Grand Bend, are:

Dave McClure, of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF); Angela Van Niekerk, Wetlands Specialist, with Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA); Frieda Dobson, Office Coordinator, Grand Bend Community Foundation; Kari Jean, Aquatic Biologist with ABCA



Students from local schools join to restore wetland by planting trees

Students from a Clinton school continued their ongoing work to restore their school's wetland by planting trees on Friday, May 13. The students from St. Joseph's Catholic School also invited students from the other Clinton schools to participate in the tree planting and students from St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School and Clinton Public School were able to take part on Friday morning as well as those from St. Joseph's.

The students set out to plant 80 large-stock potted trees (such as sugar maple, soft maple, bur

culinary experiences, paintings and wood carvings, a quilt, one-of-a-kind celebrity memorabilia from the worlds of sports and entertainment, two return Economy/Sleeper Class tickets for train travel between London and Halifax, courtesy VIA Rail Canada Inc., and more.

The 22nd Ausable Bayfield Conservation Dinner took place Thursday, April 14, 2011 at South Huron Recreation Centre in Exeter. For more information on the dinner phone 519-235-2610 or toll-free 1-888-286-2610 or visit

www.conservationdinner.com or www.abca.on.ca



Trail Association hosts Waterlife

Thursday, March 17, 2011.

This is just one way young people are involved in shaping the watershed future. Close to 30 citizens of Ausable Bayfield watersheds have been meeting for the past six months to develop a Conservation Strategy to guide conservation efforts over the next decade or two. The community development team is about half the way through its work, and expects to complete the guiding document in 2011.

Community volunteers on the team have said it's important to involve young people in the job of mapping a healthier watershed future. Young people are involved through membership on the community group, brainstorming sessions at the high school level, participation through a youth-based social media group, and through creative writing about the future of their local environment.

Young people who would like to be part of the Conservation Strategy are encouraged to join the youth page (if they're Facebook users), or submit an entry for the 2011 student environmental writing competition. Visit abca.on.ca for submission form.

PHOTO: Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has announced the winners of the first Watershed Tales Student Environmental Writing Competition. Writing about the watershed future is one way young people can be involved in the community's development of a Conservation Strategy document to guide local conservation efforts in the future. Winners of the student environmental writing competition include

oak, and red oak) and shrubs. The trees will help to provide a buffer and protect the school's wetland.

Last year, students from St. Joseph's School took a snowshoe visit to a local wetland and the experience motivated them to restore the wetland on their school property by planting five acres of trees. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff members showed students how wetlands can absorb and filter some pollutants and sediment before water reaches rivers, lakes and drinking water. Students learned how wetlands can store water, recharge groundwater, reduce extremes of flooding and drought, and help us adapt to climate change. They also learned that wetlands can slow down surface water flow and limit soil erosion. After last year's field trip, the students decided to have a tree planting event in the spring of 2011.

"Students are learning about the environment, and improving their local environment, by restoring the valuable wetland on the school property," said Nancy Barrett, Principal of St. Joseph's Catholic School.

A total of 2,580 trees are being planted by the students and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). They include 500 ball and burlap stock, 2,000 seedlings, and 80 student-planted trees and shrubs. "The trees will protect and filter the water in the wetland, filter air pollution, improve our drinking water quality, and provide habitat for wildlife," said Steve Bowers, Huron Stewardship Coordinator, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, a partner of the Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative, a local project working with landowners in Huron and Middlesex counties to restore and enhance wetlands.

Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative is a

film in Bayfield

The Bayfield River Valley Trail Association is hosting the award-winning film *Waterlife* on Thursday, June 2, 2011, at 7 p.m. at the Bayfield Town Hall, in partnership with the Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

There is no charge but freewill donations are welcome to the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association.

The film features narration by Gord Downie, of hit musical group *The Tragically Hip*. There are also views from scientists, First Nations people, anglers, and other people who have an interest in the future of "the last great supply of fresh drinking water on Earth."

The film has been praised by Jason Anderson, of *The Toronto Star*. "(The) film's revelations are plenty disturbing," Anderson writes.

"Yet, with its gorgeous imagery and ethereal soundtrack, *Waterlife* also emphasizes the beauty of what's at risk."

After viewing the film's lyrical look at the beauty of the Great Lakes, and the ecological problems they face, there will

(left to right); Amy Meier, Kris Huber, Tiffany Towns, Alexis Merner, and Mikaela Gibbs. Presenting the awards to the students is Jim Ginn, Chairman, ABCA Board of Directors, during the annual Conservation Awards ceremony which was held on March 17, 2011. Other winners of the contest were Kate Smith, Lara Nauwelaerts, Jet vanEsveld, Julie Chun, Melanie Wilson, Raven Blyde, Dana Wilson, Ashley Whelan and Fiona Brands. Winning students came from schools including St. Joseph's School (Clinton), Seaforth Public School, Huron Centennial School (Brucefield), and Zurich Public School and from First Bayfield Girl Guides.



ABCA protects people, animals

Dogs must be on leashes; five dog owners fined

ABCA protects people and animals on its trails and lands by requiring dogs to be on leashes. Any individual who engages in prohibited uses of trails or conservation lands faces fines and could lose permission to access the trail or properties in the future. The legislation applies to all land owned or managed by the ABCA.

partnership formed by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, Middlesex Stewardship Council (MSC), Huron Stewardship Council (HSC), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), other funding partners, and the ABCA, to provide property owners with the technical advice and assistance needed to complete wetland restoration projects.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada, provided through the Department of the Environment (EcoAction). It has also been made possible by funding partners including Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA), County of Huron Clean Water Project, and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP), as well as other funding partners.

New projects not only benefit the environment – they can also benefit a landowner's property or farm operation. Damage from snowmelt and spring flooding may be reduced with an increase in wetlands and trees in the watershed. There are a variety of stewardship projects available to landowners and include financial assistance.

If you are interested in the learning more about the wetland program, you are encouraged to contact Angela at the ABCA. For information on this, and other programs, phone the ABCA at 519-235-2610 or toll-free 1-888-286-2610, visit abca.on.ca, or e-mail avanniekerk@abca.on.ca

be brief presentations and discussions of some of the ways local residents can protect and improve the quality of the water.

The Globe and Mail's Rick Groen describes *Waterlife* as “a dire warning in the vessel of a tone poem, simultaneously a lyrical paean to the lakes’ lingering beauty and a relentless documentation of their rising toxicity.” For more information visit brvt.huronstewardship.on.ca or abca.on.ca



Family of local conservationist remembers Frank Wight through memorial donation to foundation for Camp Sylvan student visits

Frank Wight was very involved at Camp Sylvan, where he

Trail patrol officers with the conservation authority laid five Trespass to Property Act charges during the month for five dog owners charged with engaging in the prohibited activity of having a dog off their leash at Morrison Dam Conservation Area. The five people facing fines are all residents of the watershed or live in areas adjacent to the watershed.

Most users of ABCA lands and trails are responsibly keeping their dogs on leashes, according to Kate Monk, Supervisor of Stewardship and Conservation Lands. There are a few, however, who have not followed the rules and charges were required to keep the trail safe for users.

“Regardless of the size or personality of a dog, it has to be on a leash, according to provincial and local legislation,” Monk said.

“Requiring leashes ensures the safety of people on the trail, protects the dogs from other dogs and other animals, and protects wildlife from dogs.”

The Friends of the South Huron Trail volunteer committee agreed, at its late 2010 meeting, that dogs running off leash is the biggest problem on the popular trail.

“Signs are posted at each entrance to the trails advising that dogs must be on leashes.

This applies regardless of whether other people are present at the time,” said Monk.

“We have also educated trail users over the past six years about the permitted and prohibited uses of the trail.”

Keeping a dog on a leash may be a small inconvenience for a pet owner and their dog but this courteous act respects the safety

volunteered his time for many years. He brought artifacts to life for the children, shared his knowledge and appreciation of nature, and answered all their questions patiently.

Frank Wight has passed away but his name will continue to be linked with nature and Camp Sylvan. The family of Frank Wight has honoured his memory through a memorial donation to Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF). The donation will help reduce the costs for classes of Grade 6-8 students from several schools to attend the Sylvan Conservation Program over the next three years. Elementary schools located in the Municipality of North Middlesex, Township of Warwick, or Municipality of Lambton Shores, are eligible. “We thank the family of Frank Wight for this generous donation which will help the next generation to learn at Camp Sylvan and connect with their natural surroundings through active outdoor experiences,” said Ernie Miatello, Chairman of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF). “It is a fitting tribute to the memory of

and enjoyment of the people and animals on the multi-use lands – and can save the pet owner from a fine. “Keeping your dog on a leash can also save you from a charge, a costly fine, or from losing the privilege to use the beautiful conservation lands,” Monk said. She also thanked the majority of dog owners who are respecting the safety and enjoyment of other conservation land and trail users by keeping their dogs on leashes.

Frank Wight for students to develop an appreciation for nature, just as Frank had.” Frank Wight farmed his whole life in the former Bosanquet Township. He lived on the family farm near Thedford, a short distance across the Ausable River from Camp Sylvan. One of his special interests was a collection of indigenous artifacts, the stone tools and points left thousands of years ago, that turned up in the fields above the Ausable Valley. He was a lifelong student of nature who subscribed to National Geographic magazine for 30 years and he knew a great deal about the Carolinian Forest of this region. Much of his knowledge came from careful observation and exploration, from listening to others, and from reading on his own. He shared his respect and love of the outdoors with others, especially Scouts and students at Camp Sylvan. A new generation of students will now have the opportunity to experience outdoor learning themselves at Camp Sylvan, thanks to the donation in Frank’s memory. Educators at elementary schools in Township

of Warwick, or municipalities of North Middlesex and Lambton Shores, are encouraged to contact Julie Stellingwerff, Conservation Education Specialist, at 519-235-2610 or toll-free 1-888-286-2610 to find out about this new and rare opportunity. A downloadable teacher's guide about the Sylvan Conservation Program is available at abca.on.ca. The Camp Sylvan Conservation Program is the longest-running outdoor education program of its kind. Educators can choose from three field trip durations: one day, one-night, or two-night visits. Educators have a local opportunity to help their students attain environmental education expectations of the Ontario curriculum and to bring students to an acclaimed outdoor education site. Students will gain knowledge of local ecosystems and obtain tangible skills through active outdoor learning experiences, while also acquiring lifelong memories.

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