



Lower Ausable WATERSHED REPORT CARD

Forest Conditions



Grade:



Wetland Cover



Grade:



Surface Water Quality



Grade:



Grading

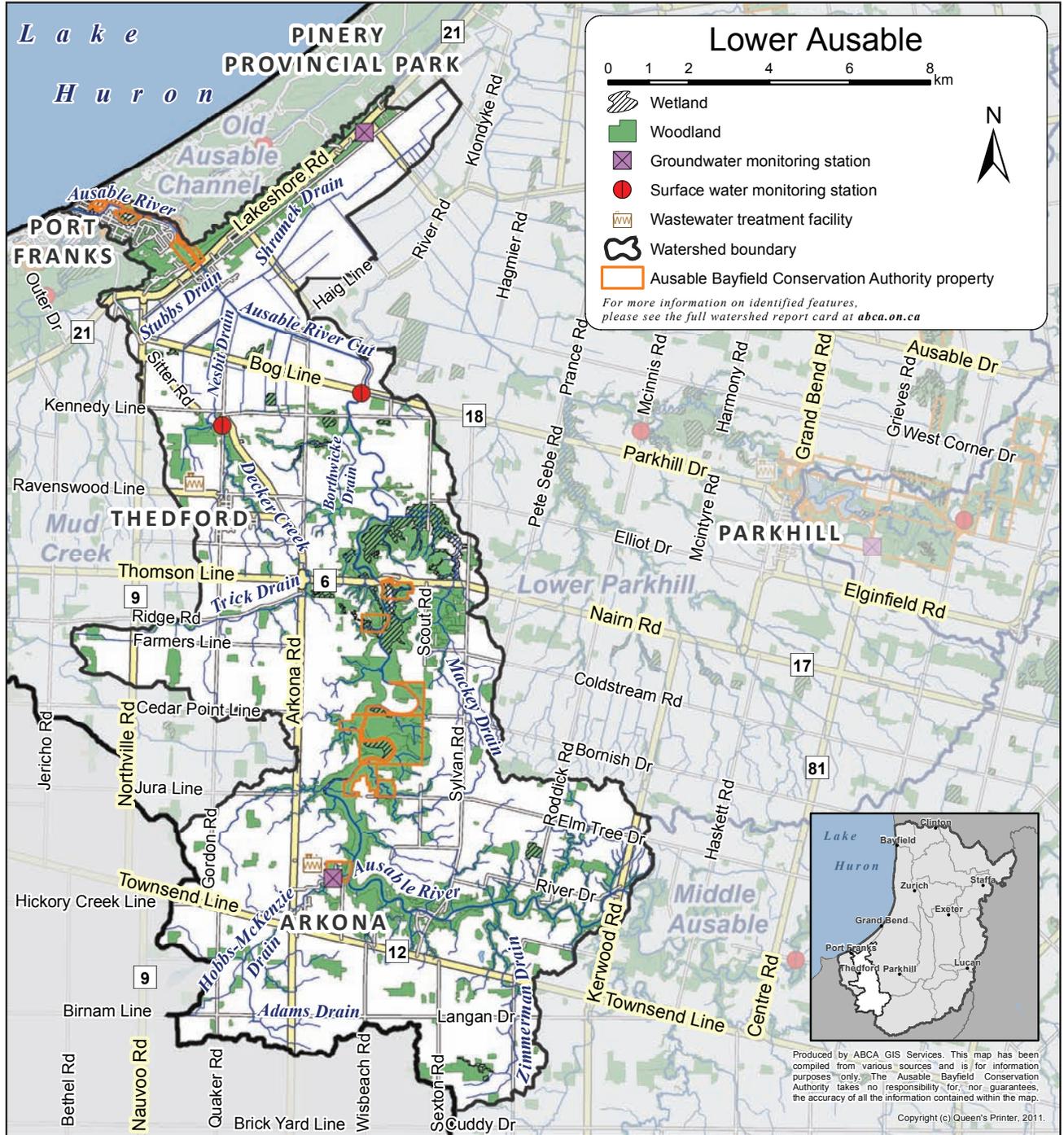
A Excellent

B Good

C Fair

D Poor

F Very Poor



Top action needed to enhance this watershed:

Create wetlands in areas that would naturally support a wetland environment.

For other recommended actions, see back page.

The standards used in this report card were developed by conservation authorities to ensure consistent reporting across the province of Ontario and are intended to provide watershed residents with information to protect, enhance, and improve the precious resources that surround us.



Watershed Features

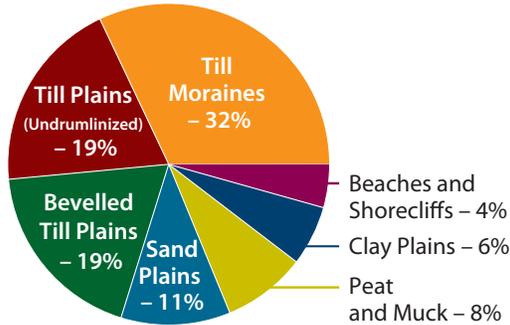
Area: 172 km²

Municipalities: Adelaide Metcalfe, Lambton Shores, North Middlesex, Warwick

Watershed features, such as geology, soil type, and land use, help explain forest conditions and the quality of groundwater and surface water.*

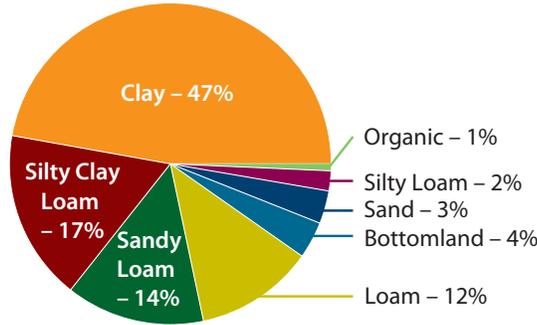
Geology

Chapman and Putnam
1984



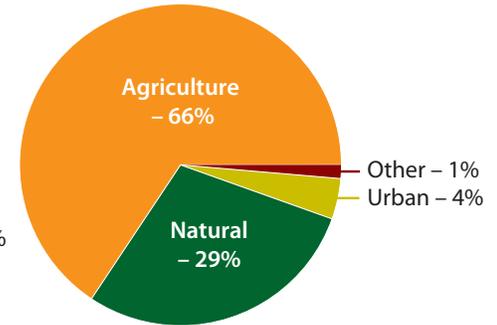
Soils

County Soils Maps
1951-1991



Land Use

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs 2010



Fish:

- There is a warm-water fishery in the main channel.
- The tributaries have baitfish.
- This watershed contains potential habitat for fish species at risk.

Species at Risk:

- Three bird, 11 reptile, three mussel, and 11 plant species at risk in this watershed.*

Other Watershed Residents

It is important to have many types of species for the health of water and ecosystems. The presence of many types of freshwater mussels within the Ausable River has made it a nationally significant watershed.



Watershed Monitoring

Ausable Bayfield Conservation monitors watershed conditions. Look for a dial graphic like this one at abca.on.ca for low-water advisories and flood messages.



For some data collection needs, especially rainfall amounts, local residents are encouraged to help monitor the watershed.

Other monitoring opportunities may exist. Call us if you're interested at **519-235-2610** or toll-free at **1-888-286-2610**.

Groundwater Quality



- Concentrations of nitrate and chloride are better than the drinking water standard for nitrate and guideline for chloride; however, chloride concentrations at the shallow monitoring well near Arkona are typically higher than what is observed at the other provincial monitoring wells.
- No grade was assigned at the watershed level because groundwater boundaries differ from surface water boundaries.
- Different types of aquifers exist throughout the region and the quality of your well water may vary from that of the provincial monitoring wells.*

* See the complete *Watershed Report Card* at abca.on.ca for more information.

Forest Conditions and Water Quality



Forest Conditions



Indicator	Description	Result		2012 Grade	
		2007	2012	Lower Ausable	Entire ABCA Area
Forest cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest cover is the percentage of a watershed that is forested. An A grade is forest covering more than 35% of a watershed. 	18%	20.5%	C	D (14.1%)
Forest interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest interior is the percentage of a watershed with forest cover that is at least 100 metres from the forest's edge. Some birds need this area to nest and breed. An A grade is forest interior covering more than 11.5% of a watershed. 	3.3%	3.8%	D	D (3.2%)
Streamside cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamside cover is the percentage of the 30-metre area on both sides of open streams that is forested. An A grade is forest covering more than 57.5% of this streamside area. 	N/A	47.5%	B	C (32.7%)



Wetland Cover



Indicator	Description	Result		2012 Grade	
		2007	2012	Lower Ausable	Entire ABCA Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland cover is the percentage of a watershed that is covered by wetlands.* An A grade is wetlands covering over 11.5% of a watershed. 	N/A	2.4%	F	F (2.4%)	



Surface Water Quality



Indicator	Description	Result		2012 Grade	
		2007	2012	Lower Ausable	Entire ABCA Area
Total phosphorus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total phosphorus is a nutrient that enhances plant growth and contributes to excess algae and low oxygen in streams. An A grade is a 75th-percentile* total phosphorus concentration of less than 0.020 mg/L. 	0.098 mg/L	0.067 mg/L	D	D (0.073)
E. coli (Escherichia coli)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. coli are bacteria found in human and animal waste. Their presence indicates water may contain other disease-causing organisms. An A grade is a geometric-mean* E. coli concentration of no more than 30 colony forming units (cfu) per 100 mL. 	136 cfu/100 mL	42 cfu/100 mL	B	C (113)
Benthic invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benthic invertebrates are small animals, without backbones, that live in stream sediments. A Family Biotic Index (FBI) summarizes the numbers and types of these animals in a sediment sample. Values reflect stream health, ranging from 1 (healthy) to 10 (degraded). An A grade is an average FBI value of no more than 4.25. 	4.79	5.71	C	C (5.51)

* See the complete *Watershed Report Card* at abca.on.ca for definitions of wetlands, 75th percentile, and geometric mean.



Next Steps



Thumbs up!

The Lambton Shores Nature Trails community group has led restoration efforts at the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area and planted dune grass on exposed dunes.

This is just one example in the watershed. Let us know about projects you and your community are doing.

Grants

Funding may be available to help you plant trees, control erosion, and improve water quality.



How can you help between now and the next Watershed Report Card?

You can ...

- Plant windbreaks and cover crops, and maintain residue cover, to protect soil.
- Plant buffers along drains and watercourses.
- Protect and enhance wetlands.



Your community can ...

- Link the natural areas of the Ausable Gorge with Pinery Provincial Park and Port Franks.
- Operate your boat, when travelling up the Ausable Cut, at a speed that limits wake sizes, as wakes from boats contribute to shoreline erosion.
- Use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) only on trails designated for this use – with permissions.

Local agencies can ...

- Work with local community groups to enhance the uptake of rural best management practices.
- Encourage the creation of a financial incentive stewardship program for Lambton County landowners.

Take Action! Develop an individual action plan for your property – call us to find out how.

Links to the Great Lakes

No matter where you live in the watershed, you are linked to the Great Lakes.

The local actions you take make a difference for Lake Huron.

Visit lakehuroncommunityaction.ca



Visit abca.on.ca for the complete **Watershed Report Card** for all Ausable Bayfield watersheds.

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