

1. Ausable River Cut Conservation Area

This group of properties along the Ausable River Cut in Lambton Shores has been managed as separate parcels (Thedford Conservation Area, the Ausable River Cut and riparian area, Sherwood Fox Plant Preserve and Chicken Island). This master plan update proposes uniting these properties as the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area.

Thedford Conservation Area is a little-use day-use area that provides public access to the Ausable Cut. The University of Western Ontario used the Sherwood Fox Plant Preserve for scientific purposes in the mid-20th century and has expressed an interest in updating the research. The Sarnia District Scouts lease the property on the north side of the river between Hwy. 21 and the Old Ausable River and have requested help with environmental issues. The strip of land on the south side of the river has informal hiking trails and the dunes are threatened by illegal dirt bike and ATV use. The ABCA still owns some land on Chicken Island.

The Cut subwatershed is identified as a high priority subwatershed in the Watershed Management Strategy because of the high stress ratings in water, soil, natural area loss and other factors. The strategy states the subwatershed should be enhanced. Current management techniques may need to be modified in order to achieve the conservation area's goal of enhancing the Ausable River Cut and protect the sensitive ecosystem.

B. Goal

To enhance the Ausable River Cut and protect the sensitive ecosystem

C. Objectives

1. To protect and enhance the Ausable River watershed
2. To protect and enhance water quality in the Ausable River and Lake Huron
3. To restore the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area ecosystem
4. To provide habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species
5. To provide an area for research and scientific study
6. To provide an area for recreation and nature appreciation
7. To provide public access to the Ausable River

The following action plans will help restore the ecosystems while providing recreational opportunities.

1. Manage aquatic and terrestrial resources to provide habitat for species, including Species At Risk.
2. Update the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems inventory and assessment.
3. Control unauthorized vehicle use that is eroding the dunes.
4. Encourage research and scientific use of the property.

5. Cut down invasive exotic tree species.
6. Establish a tall grass prairie demonstration site.
7. Improve the trail system by creating a guide and directional signs. Link the trails with Lambton County and Lambton Wildlife Inc. properties in Port Franks.
8. Install signs to encourage boaters to leave a minimal wake in order to reduce river bank erosion.
9. Provide technical advice to the Sarnia District Scouts to help them address the environmental issues at their camp.