

Ausable Bayfield
Conservation Strategy Development Team
Notes (Draft) from Meeting - February 2, 2011

The fifth meeting of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Strategy Development Team Meeting began at 7:00 p.m. at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom.

Attending in person were:

Stephen Boles, Jacqui Laporte, Joe Vermunt, Jim Reith, Mike Tam and Doreen McLinchey

Joining on-line:

Donna Taylor, Muriel Allingham, Jan Purvis, Stephanie Donaldson, Claire Dodds, Carol Leeming, Jennette Walker

Tom Prout, ABCA General Manager, and Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist, welcomed members and thanked them for their input in developing the new Conservation Strategy. Tim thanked Jackie Laporte for arranging the Audience Response System ('iClicker') controllers, for instant polling of members from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) for tonight's meeting.

Presentation by Alec Scott

Tom introduced Alec Scott, ABCA Water and Planning Manager, to speak on flood monitoring and flows in the ABCA watersheds.

Alec displayed a map of the Ausable Bayfield watershed and described the river and gully flows. In 1850 the Ausable River flowed through the Pinery Provincial Park and came out at Port Franks, later a human made "Cut" was developed redirecting the flow and producing the Old Ausable Channel.

The stream gauge shelters house the data loggers which enable staff to receive data at the ABCA office. The shelter may also have a rain gauge on the roof. The stream gauge network determines flow of the river and water levels, and in Parkhill provides a reservoir level. Other sensors, such as air and water temperature, wind speed and direction, and solar radiation may also be included at the gauge shelters.

The ABCA has a volunteer rain gauge network that logs information into the ABCA password protected Intranet portal site. This additional rainfall information helps to determine low and high water levels. Jim Reith noted that Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) also have dedicated rain gauge volunteers. ABCA volunteers are also able to see a map published monthly to show data in the watershed. Joe Vermunt asked if the ABCA volunteer rain gauge network is publically known. Alec said that we are always looking for new volunteers who will be dedicated to taking observations, but we have not opened it to the general public because it is difficult to maintain the system if people sign up and then lose interest in

collecting data. Doreen McLinchey wondered if urban data is needed and Alec stated it is, as flooding has occurred in urban settings. Carol Leeming asked who benefits from the rain gauge data and would there be value to put funding towards the program. Alec replied that there are a number of uses for the data. When we get intense rainfalls covering a narrow area, widely spaced rain gauges may miss the whole rain. Paul Buttery stated the Huron County Health Unit use a volunteer rain gauge system for West Nile Virus.

Alec said there are eight locations for snow surveying. Ten stakes are placed 100 feet apart and the core sampler measures depth and analyzes weight to show the water equivalent in the snow. This data is reported to MNR and is used for ABCA flood forecasting. Streamers can be missed from these surveys.

Carol Leeming asked if the data is online or is there a monthly map so it can be shared with others. Alec replied not at present. The water level data is graphed as flow and time in hours, and is used for predicting flooding and ice jams.

The ABCA is part of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network, which is funded by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. ABCA pays for the annual maintenance costs. There are 14 locations in the watershed, and MOE gets the information from the data loggers by phone. This group will soon have 10 years of data to compare. The ABCA also monitors the Lake Huron water levels to determine impacts of flooding and erosion along the shoreline. Alec showed a graph with water levels of Lake Huron and noted a six-foot change from 1964 record low and 1986 record high.

The province created the Ontario Low Water Response Program to respond to drought. The conservation authority created a Water Response Team (WRT), including representatives from municipalities, greenhouse growers, aggregate producers, vegetable growers, golf courses, Federation of Agriculture and Anglers & Hunters. Based on precipitation and water levels, the WRT can declare Low Water Response levels. Level 1 is 10 per cent voluntary reduction in water use, Level 2 is 20 per cent voluntary reduction. At Level 3 the WRT may recommend restrictions for Permit to Take Water users. The vegetable growers (e.g., Hay Swamp, Klondike) may be asked to have discussions in a Level 3 Low Water Response to see how we are going to share the water resources. Water use of more than 50,000 litre / day requires a Permit to Take Water (livestock are excluded).

Alec said there may be funding from the Ministry of the Environment for adaptation and monitoring of climate change. Parkhill Creek received a high score as a climate change sensitive watershed and MOE may add more sensors in the area.

Jennette said there are lake water gauges at Goderich and Sarnia. Carol Leeming asked how much water is used in the ABCA watershed. Alec said the Drinking Water Source Protection water budget exercise showed that there is very little of the total groundwater resource being used. Jim Reith asked if any students use the data that is collected, which Alec stated the ABCA has a connection with the University of Guelph. Jennette mentioned that municipalities test the water quality at landfill sites. Carol Leeming asked if farmers are taking advantage of the Conservation Authority staff's expertise related to Environmental Farm Plans and Best Management Practices. Alec said there was a lot of interest in the Landowner Stewardship Guides for rural non-farm and lakeshore landowners. Tom added ABCA staff assists watershed

landowners with funding grants and sometimes able obtain 100 per cent funding with additional grants. There are fewer grants for non-farm landowners and none for septic (except near municipal wellheads). Stephen Boles said there could be increased participation if the carbon offset market increases (e.g., Afforestation programs). Tom noted there is marginal farm land to be used for trees, but it should be encouraged. Stephen adds the details are not determined yet but are to be delivered in 2012. Tim thanked Alec for his informative presentation.

Presentation by Jacqui Laporte

Tim thanked Jacqui Laporte for organizing the OMAFRA audience response instant polling technology for tonight’s meeting. Questions will be displayed on the screen with numbered answers, which the members choose the number on their clicker that portrays their answer. The data is instantly shown on the screen for the members to briefly discuss. Members online were able to participate in this activity from home.

Questions	Replies
<p>When referring to the local agency it should be referred to as ... A) Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority B) Ausable Bayfield Conservation C) ABCA D) CA E) Other</p>	<p>4 2 4 0 1</p>
<p>Have you ever been to a provincial park or conservation area? A) Yes B) No</p>	<p>11 0</p>
<p>ABCA’s logo should maintain the three ‘A, B, C’ building blocks A) Yes B) No – it should be revised C) I need more information D) I want to discuss E) Other ... Comments: boring; organizations don’t usually keep their logo that long; yes, don’t want to spend time on this; can the CA look after changing it; NOTE: The members decided this question needs to be revisited, but is was also expressed that a lot of the team’s time should not be diverted to this question.</p>	<p>4 4 1 3 0</p>
<p>I agree the ABCA’s vision should be one of “clean and useable watersheds where human needs and the needs of the natural environment are balanced to ensure quality of life and biological diversity today in the future.” A) Yes B) No C) I need more information D) I want to discuss E) Other ... Comments: too long; should be shorter and more concise; are residents taking the words as we intended; it needs a wordsmith; question the word useable</p>	<p>10 0 0 2 0</p>

<p>“Our mission is to provide leadership and management, in cooperation with the community ...” Cooperation should be changed to “collaboration.”</p> <p>A) Yes B) No C) I need more information D) I want to discuss E) Other ...</p> <p>Comments: like collaboration & partnership</p>	<p>3 6 1 2 0</p>
<p>I agree ABCA’s mission is “to maintain and enhance the watershed resources now and the future ...”</p> <p>A) Yes B) No C) I need more information D) I want to discuss this further E) Other</p> <p>Comment: Joe likes environment rather than watershed / watershed makes people think of water and creeks</p>	<p>10 1 0 1 0</p>
<p>ABCA can play an important role in fostering partnerships between stakeholders, such as agricultural landowners, lakeshore residents, rural residents, and tourists?</p> <p>A) Yes B) No C) I need more information D) I want to discuss this further E) Other ...</p>	<p>11 0 0 1 0</p>

Members enjoyed the audience response system clickers and we will revisit this activity at another meeting. Thanks Jacqui for organizing the clickers for this meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday March 10th at 7 p.m., and it was decided by consensus the location would be the ABCA boardroom. Tim will organize an optional social media workshop at 6:30 p.m. prior to the meeting for anyone who would like to attend.

Eight members joined online and six members were present in person for tonight’s meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Meeting notes recorded by Sharon Pavkeje