

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Land Securement Plan

2008 - 2020



September 2008

**Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
Long Term Land Securement Project: 2008- 2020**

RESOLUTION

At the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors meeting held on September 18, 2008, the following resolution was duly adopted.

MOTION #BD 101/08

Moved by Jim Ginn

Seconded by Bill Siemon

“RESOLVED, THAT Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Long Term Land Securement Plan be approved, and

FURTHER, THAT staff be directed to request the Minister of Natural Resources approval of the project as per Section 24 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, and

FURTHER, THAT the project be circulated to the watershed municipalities as the basis for funding and land securement opportunities, and

FURTHER, THAT staff be directed to seek funding for the project from the funding sources outlined in the project.”

Carried.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	History	Page 1
2.0	Project Background..	Page 2
3.0	Regional Context	Page 2
4.0	Forms of Land Securement..	Page 3
4.1	Fee Simple.	Page 3
4.2	Conservation Easements.	Page 3
4.3	Covenants	Page 3
4.4	Leases and Agreements.	Page 3
4.5	Summary.	Page 3
5.0	Alternatives to Land Securement - Stewardship Agreements.	Page 4
6.0	Methods of Land Securement.	Page 4
6.1	The Planning Process..	Page 4
6.2	Property Purchase.	Page 4
6.3	Donations.	Page 4
6.4	Partial Takings/Direct Conveyance.	Page 5
6.5	Split Receipt..	Page 5
6.6	Life Interest Agreement/ Lease Back Arrangements..	Page 5
6.7	Trade Lands.	Page 5
6.8	Exchanges.	Page 5
6.9	Project Requirements.	Page 5
6.10	Municipal Lands.	Page 5
6.11	Land Trusts, Alliances, and Non-Government Organizations..	Page 6
7.0	Land Securement Criteria.	Page 6
8.0	Land Securement Priorities	
8.1	Historical Land Acquisition Objectives.	Page 9
8.2	Land Securement Target Areas.	Page 9
9.0	Property Evaluation Procedures.	Page 13
10.0	Program Funding.	Page 14
10.1	Costs..	Page 14
10.2	Financing Alternatives..	Page 14
11.0	Land Disposition Policy.	Page 16

List of Figures

- Figure 1 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Properties
- Figure 2 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Context Map
- Figure 3 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Sub-Watersheds
- Figure 4 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Natural Heritage System
- Figure 5 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Feature Occurrence
- Figure 6 - Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Land Securement Target Areas

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Long-Term Land Securement Plan 2008-2020

1.0 History

Since 1946, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) has secured approximately 3844 hectares of land including environmentally sensitive lands (wetlands, woodlands), flood susceptible lands and day use park lands for passive recreation and outdoor education. The mandate of the Conservation Authority under Section 20 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is “to establish and undertake, in the area under which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals.” Based on this mandate the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority has defined its mission:

“To provide leadership and management, in cooperation with the community, to maintain and enhance the watershed resources now and in the future”.

This Natural Heritage System, Land Securement Project furthers the Conservation Authority’s mission by securing interests in land both through purchase and holding rights to property thereby protecting sensitive ecological areas. Where possible, the rehabilitation and restoration of land that has or is experiencing degradation will be implemented by the ABCA and other partners. As well, this document furthers the objects of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

Currently, the ABCA has three guiding documents to aid in future development and conservation throughout the watershed. The first of these documents is the *1949 Ausable River Conservation Report* which contains both recommendations for the conservation and management of the Ausable watershed as well as detailed descriptions of all components of the Ausable watershed. The second is the ABCA’s *Conservation Strategy (1993)* which generally lays out the preferred future state of the watershed. It is intended to be used by Authority staff and Directors as a guide for the development of policies and programs within the Ausable and Bayfield River watersheds. The third document is the *Watershed Management Strategy (1995)*, which results from the environmental planning process and identifies important physical and biological relationship, in conjunction with existing and changing land use, to determine necessary actions to protect and enhance the ecology of the Ausable Bayfield watershed.

The ABCA *Conservation Strategy* has set goals, objectives and action plans to assist in the securement of lands which are considered provincially, regionally or locally significant. One of the primary recommendations of the *Watershed Management Strategy* was that the Authority secure properties for environmental purpose through purchase. The goals, objectives and action plans of the *Conservation Strategy* and the *Watershed Management Strategy* will be used when defining a natural heritage system and when identifying priority areas for land securement that will further the Conservation Authority’s mission for the maintenance and enhancement of the environmental health and quality of the Ausable Bayfield watershed.

2.0 Project Background

The ABCA currently owns land in several securement areas for a total of 3,844 hectares of land, (Figure 1). Of these, the majority are in Huron County, however securement areas are found in Lambton, Middlesex and Perth Counties. These lands include wetlands, managed woodlots, day use parks, lands for passive recreation and outdoor education, and undeveloped natural and environmentally significant areas.

Three conservation areas operate under management agreements with local municipalities or interest groups. The Zurich Conservation Area is managed by the Municipality of Bluewater, the Crediton Conservation Area is managed by the Municipality of South Huron and a portion of the Clinton Conservation Area is managed by the Clinton Lions Club. Some are active conservation areas such as Rock Glen Conservation Area, while a majority of the areas operate as natural areas with no fees and minimal development. Master plans were updated in 2004 for some of the conservation areas and identified adjacent lands for acquisition.

Since the early 1990's, the ABCA has had limited funding to acquire any additional lands. However, in 2006 the ABCA acquired a 10 hectare property in the Hay Swamp Complex. Through a donation from the Fred Willert family and a bequest by the late Georgina Catherine Ross, the acquisition of this property was possible and has been named the Willert-Ross Tract. In 2007 the Authority also acquired properties in the Port Franks area adjacent to L Lake Management Area and in the Staffa area, which is the headwaters of the Ausable River. These two acquisitions were made possible through donations from the landowners.

There are many reasons for a long term land securement position/plan, however three of these are:

1. Having a well defined land securement plan with MNR approval (Section 24) will put ABCA in a better position to obtain government and agency funding when such is made available.
2. Having a well defined land securement plan provides a positive leadership position for Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation relative to encouraging the public to leave or fund natural heritage legacies.
3. This land securement plan will form the basis of a Natural Heritage Systems Plan (NHSP) to be developed by the ABCA. A NHSP will assist ABCA in achieving its long term objective of 20% forest cover and municipalities with their long term planning to ensure development takes place outside of any Natural Heritage System.

3.0 Regional Context

The ABCA is situated within southwestern Ontario and is bordered by three other Conservation Authorities: the Maitland River, the Upper Thames River and the St. Clair Region Conservation Authorities. The ABCA watershed contains a portion of the Lake Huron shoreline, Carolinian forest, Oak Savanna, and dune ecosystems, as well as wetlands, environmentally significant areas (ESA), areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI) and habitat of rare, threatened and

endangered species within 16 subwatersheds (Figure 4). ANSI's and ESA's are designed to identify and protect both biological and geological landscape features throughout the watershed.

There are many different types of land use throughout the watershed, ranging from intense agriculture to recreational use along the shoreline of Lake Huron. There is a threat that any of these activities could be detrimental to the water quality throughout the watershed, as such the ABCA will attempt to prevent detrimental activities from occurring on fragile lands and where possible these lands will be acquired.

4.0 Forms of Land Securement

Under this project there are two primary ways of protecting environmentally sensitive and significant lands; holding title (fee simple) or holding rights on the land (easements, covenants, lease agreements). The following provides a brief overview of these securement tools.

4.1 Fee Simple

This method is the purchase or donation of the total interest in a property and is the most effective way for the protection of green space.

4.2 Conservation Easements

Easements are the acquisition of specific or limited rights of use from an owner. Easements can provide for the protection of a resource, trail construction, and construction and maintenance of rehabilitation works.

In 1994 the provincial government passed Bill 175 amending the Statutes of Ontario including the *Conservation Land Act*. This amendment allows landowners to grant easements or enter into covenants for the protection and conservation of land. The owners may grant easements or enter into covenants with "conservation bodies" (such as the Crown, conservation authorities, municipal councils, bands, or registered charities) which may be registered on title and a binding on future purchasers.

4.3 Covenants

Traditionally, covenants have been used to restrict an owner from undertaking specific activities on all or a portion of his or her property. Typically, these covenants would restrict the destruction of a resource, filling, or the building of structures.

4.4 Leases and Agreements

Leases and agreements, depending on their terms, can range from more than a right to occupy to almost an equivalent of fee simple interest. The benefits and costs associated with the interests obtained varies accordingly.

4.5 Summary

There are benefits and limitations associated with each method of securement. A case by case assessment will be undertaken to determine the quality and significance of the resources or function of each property. Based on the individual property assessment and resources available, the Conservation Authority would determine the most appropriate type of securement to ensure the protection of the features and functions of the land.

5.0 Alternatives to Land Securement - Stewardship Agreements

Where the securement of a parcel of land or an interest in land is unable to be negotiated between the Conservation Authority and an individual property owner(s), staff would continue to work with interested landowners to foster land stewardship as an alternative approach to natural heritage protection. This could be achieved through a Stewardship Agreement with the landowner.

A Stewardship Agreement does not confer any rights to the Conservation Authority. In this instance, the owner would agree to protect the significant lands within their property or undertake rehabilitation initiatives (i.e. tree planting, livestock fencing). This usually involves consultation and technical assistance from the Conservation Authority. The agreement usually includes a request of the owner to contact the Conservation Authority prior to a change of use or proposed sale of the property in an attempt to continue protecting a specific resource. This method has been used to some extent over a long period of time to cultivate relationships with landowners and protect lands that are under pressure. While this does not confer any rights to the Conservation Authority, it is an important tool for resource protection.

6.0 Methods of Land Securement

The following outlines various methods which could be employed in the securement of environmentally sensitive or significant lands.

6.1 The Planning Process

As part of the Conservation Authority's involvement in the Plan Review process under the *Planning Act*, (i.e., Official Plan Amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision, re-zoning and land severance applications) environmentally significant areas may be identified through supporting studies and where appropriate designated open space, environmental protection or other designation that would restrict future development. The opportunity to acquire some of these lands may arise from time to time, Conservation Authority staff will review these opportunities when they present themselves.

6.2 Property Purchase

Purchase of full title and rights to a property, these are typically situations with a willing buyer and a willing seller.

6.3 Donations

The Conservation Authority encourages donations of land or property rights. These gifts, at appraised value, may qualify as charitable donations under the federal *Income Tax Act* through the EcoGifts Program. The Conservation Authority, in pursuing donations of land or property rights, will work with municipalities, environmental organizations and the ABC Foundation and other potential funding partners in order to secure environmentally significant/sensitive lands.

The 1995 federal budget provided for amendments to the *Income Tax Act* to increase the 20% limitation in respect of charitable donations to 100% for donation made after February 27, 1995, to Canadian Municipalities and registered charities designated by the Minister of the Environment, of land certified by the Minister to be important to the preservation of

Canada's environmental heritage. The ABCA has been designated by the Minister of the Environment to accept these donations.

6.4 Partial Takings/Direct Conveyance

This is an acquisition of part of a property in either a fee simple purchase or donation scenario. For example, if a landowner has a residence he/she may be willing to dispose of the majority of the property while retaining the residence and amenity area.

6.5 Split Receipt

This can be viewed as either a donation of land or easement with cash consideration back to the donor or a purchase of land with a donation of land value in cash back to the purchaser. Once the land value is determined by a qualified appraiser the percentage of the fair market value of the land to be donated versus accepted in cash will be negotiated.

6.6 Life Interest Agreement/ Lease Back Arrangements

When the vendor/donor wishes to retain an interest in the property he/she can enter into either a life interest agreement or lease back arrangement. The value of the retained interest would be determined by a qualified appraiser. The agreement would specify a set term or would continue as long as the vendor resides on the subject property.

6.7 Trade Lands

Trade lands are similar to donations where a landowner wishes to donate their property to the Conservation Authority or to bequeath the property to the Conservation Authority. However, in these instances the property does not contain any significant environmental features. Where the Conservation Authority accepts these donation these properties would be sold with the proceeds being directed into and securement or other program areas as directed by the donor. Lands disposed of by the Conservation Authority will follow the procedures outlined in Section 11.0.

6.8 Exchanges

Landowners who own property within a valley system, floodplain or environmentally sensitive feature may exchange their parcels for table land owned by the Conservation Authority. These arrangements may bring to the Conservation Authority funds which can be used to acquire additional conservation lands. While these transactions traditionally consist of the exchange of fee simple interests, they can consist of any combination of property interests. Note that land exchanges are not necessarily hectare for hectare, any exchange would be based on appraised value as valley lands may not be valued the same as table lands.

6.9 Project Requirements

When lands become part of an approved project, they may be purchased outright or a limited interest obtained directly from the owner at market value. Where the project is mutually beneficial, i.e., erosion work on all or part of which is on private land, landowners may be required to deed property rights to the Conservation Authority for a nominal amount to insure access for future maintenance.

6.10 Municipal Lands

The Conservation Authority may acquire property interest in municipal lands, at a nominal cost, when they are located within the boundaries of approved Conservation Authority acquisition projects. An alternative approach would be to join our land and by a management agreement or memorandum of understanding one partner would manage the project.

6.11 Land Trusts, Alliances, and Non-Government Organizations

A number of Land Trusts, Alliances, and Non-Government Organizations have been formed to secure natural heritage lands (i.e., Thames Talbot Land Trust, Ontario Land Trust Alliance, Ontario Heritage Foundation) and to protect significant ecological features. It is important to work with these organizations to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure all natural heritage lands are provided with the maximum sustainable protection. Specific properties or groups of properties may be more appropriately held by one of these organizations. Conservation Authority staff will develop and expand on partnerships with these and other organizations involved in holding title to or providing funding for the acquisition of ecologically sensitive and significant lands.

7.0 Land Securement Criteria

The ABCA has mapped many components of the Natural Heritage System within its jurisdiction. This includes provincially significant wetlands, environmentally significant areas, areas of scientific and natural interest, areas with species at risk present, regionally significant areas, wetland, headwater areas, groundwater recharge areas and forest lands suitable for restoration as well as watercourses and shoreline features (Figure 4). Based on these mapped features, potential securement areas have been identified. These have been divided into two categories, first priority lands which contain features which would be eligible for the Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (Table 2). For lands where full title to a property is acquired, this program will allow Conservation Authority owned properties to significantly reduce or eliminate the tax burden associated with the long term management costs associated with the property.

Lands suitable for restoration will also be considered a priority for land securement. Possible target areas include the restoration of wetland areas and of the reforestation of marginal agricultural lands. This will ultimately help maintain the overall percent of both forest and wetland cover in the Ausable Bayfield watershed. Wetlands and forests have been identified as being the two most valuable natural capital land cover types. Any attempt to increase the presence of either wetlands or forests will assist in improving the overall function of the watershed through improved water regulation and filtration, recreation and wildlife habitat (Wilson, 2008).

Lands which fall into the secondary priority areas for acquisition include other ecological and strategic lands that meet the federal Ecological Gift Program requirements. Typically, these lands would require greater long term funding or funding from other partners to address the higher maintenance costs associated with land ownership to elevate specific projects to a securement priority. Other tax incentive programs such as the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program may also be considered if the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program or the Ecological Gifts

Program criteria cannot be met. Once identified and evaluated, these potential securement opportunities would be discussed with various funding sources in attempt to find the resources to acquire full or partial rights to lands which provide an ecological benefit for the protection of natural heritage features.

Not all of these natural heritage feature criteria have been identified and mapped at this time. As technical studies are undertaken within the Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction, additional significant natural heritage features will be identified. These features, once identified, will be considered as part of future land securement priorities.

Acquisition of land for the purpose of drinking water source protection is the responsibility of the municipalities. However if the ABCA is requested by a member municipality to assist in land acquisition for the purpose of drinking water source protection the request would be evaluated against the criteria set out in this report.

The Conservation Authority will work with municipalities and counties to develop a natural heritage plan, where one does not exist. As this process identifies additional features and provides recommendations for priority acquisition areas, they will be considered along with the above land acquisition priorities.

Table 1: Land Securement Criteria

Criteria	Tax Exempt (i.e., CLTIP)	Meets EcoGift Requirements	ABCA Potential Securement
Priority Areas:			
Provincially Significant Wetlands	Yes	Yes	Yes
Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (Earth Science - Provincial)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (Life Science - Provincial)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Habitat of Endangered Species (Ontario Endangered Species Act)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Community Conservation Lands:			
Natural Heritage Features or Areas identified in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)	Yes	Yes, If appropriately designated in municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.	Yes
Regionally Significant ANSI’s	Yes	Yes	Yes
Habitats of species of special concern designated by NR (species at risk)	Yes	Yes	Yes
NHIC species occurrences or ecological communities (S1, S2, S3)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Criteria	Tax Exempt (i.e., CLTIP)	Meets EcoGift Requirements	ABCA Potential Securement
Natural heritage areas identified within a regional or watershed plan or strategy by a CA under the CAA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lands designated environmental protection or equivalent in municipal Official Plans	Yes	Yes	Yes
Areas within or adjacent to protected areas (i.e., provincial park) that contribute to the natural heritage objectives of the protected area.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other criteria as may apply under the Canada Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) program requirements	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Lands adjacent to existing ABCA holdings	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Previously identified ABCA property acquisitions	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Secondary Priority Areas:			
Lake Huron Waterfront	Subject to Certification	Subject to Certification	No
Wetlands (Not of Provincial Significance)	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Significant water bodies, rivers, streams, shorelines and valleys	Subject to Certification	Yes (PPS)	Yes
Groundwater recharge and discharge areas	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Significant wildlife or fish habitats	Subject to Certification	Subject to Certification	Yes
Regional Flood Plain (flood and erosion risk)	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Significant Woodlands	Subject to Certification	Yes (PPS)	Yes
Areas with enhanced ecological values through restoration and/or remediation (i.e., forest, stream, wetland)	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Natural buffers adjacent to lands that contribute to other ecologically sensitive lands	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes

Criteria	Tax Exempt (i.e., CLTIP)	Meets EcoGift Requirements	ABCA Potential Securement
Connections/Corridors/Features identified by Natural Heritage Programs or Watershed Plans that contribute to conservation or biodiversity	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Lands under Forest Management Plans (designated areas of concern for biodiversity)	Subject to Certification	Yes	Yes
Potential Restoration Sites (i.e.: wetlands, forest lands)	No	Yes	Yes

8.0 Land Securement Priorities

Governments at various levels have recognized the importance of protecting the natural heritage system. The Official Plans for the Counties of Huron, Lambton, Middlesex and Perth have all recognized the important role the environment plays in the quality of life within the watershed and have adopted various policies that identify and protect the natural heritage/open space system. The following sections outline the ABCA’s historic land acquisition priorities and the target areas for this project.

8.1 Historical Land Acquisition Objectives

Of the properties currently owned by the ABCA, several have Master or Management Plans which have identified properties adjacent to these existing lands that would be suitable for acquisition. The Ausable River Conservation Report also identifies target acquisition areas. These historically identified lands are included within the target areas in the strategy, however, they also must be evaluated as any other securement potential would be. The lands identified for acquisition within the Master or Management Plans and the Ausable River Conservation Report include the following:

1. *Bannockburn Wildlife Area*: acquisition of any lands adjacent to current ABCA holdings that would further protect the Bannockburn River Valley.
2. *Clinton Conservation Area*: acquisition of lands between Clinton CA West and Clinton CA East so that the two parcels are connected.
3. *Morrison Dam Conservation Area*: acquisition or easement of land for the purpose of continued trail development. Specific lands for acquisition include the area defined by: Lots 18 and 19, Concession 1, Lot 18 Concession 2, and Lots 1 and 2 South Side Thames Road Concession in Usborne Township.
4. *Lucan Conservation Area*: acquisition of a small parcel of land to the south of the current CA property for the development of a new parking area if land became available.
5. *The Ausable Forest*: a forest of about 15 181 hectares, comprising 13 areas of marginal and sub-marginal land, be established by the Authority to protect the

natural water storage areas of the watershed and form the basis of a sound forestry policy of the watershed.

6. *Ausable River Gorge*: That 150 hectares of the Ausable River Gorge be acquired by the Conservation Authority for a park to be known as the Ausable Gorge Park.
7. *Bosanquet Township*: Three areas of beach and forest in Bosanquet Township, totaling 800 hectares, be acquired and administered by the Conservation Authority for public use.
8. *Picnic Sites*: That six small areas from one to five acres be acquired for the public as picnic sites.

8.2 Land Securement Target Areas

Feature 4 identifies the significant natural heritage features within the Ausable Bayfield watershed, specifically provincially significant wetlands, areas of natural and scientific interest and environmentally significant areas (biological and hydrological). See Figure 5 Feature Occurrence for multiple occurrences of these important environmental features. Based on this analysis and historically identified acquisitions, the following Land Securement Target Areas (Figure 6) have been identified. These areas generally contain large parcels and relatively less expensive lands.

1. *Hibbert Source Area, ESA(HIB-7-C)*:
This area consists of 33.3ha of land which has been identified as significant wetlands and an environmentally sensitive area. The area contains both wooded and wetland sites with species such as red and silver maple, elm, aspen, cattails, bur-reeds and bulrushes. The ABCA has encouraged waterfowl usage of the site through the creation of a pond.
2. *Bayfield South ANSI and Bluewater ESA(STA-2-A)*:
This area consists of lands containing areas of natural and scientific interest as well as environmentally significant areas. The area contains a series of upland woodlots running parallel to Lake Huron and a series of gullies cut into cliffs along the shore of Lake Huron. The gullies are composed of boulder clay with very few boulders remaining in it. The clay is easily erodible and the lack of vegetation in some gullies increases the rates at which erosion occurs. The 129.23ha of woodlots situated inland from the gullies varies from young sugar maple with ash to mature ash-beech with hemlock.
3. *Lake Smith Area*:
This area consists of lands that used to form an inland lake. Lake Smith formed when dunes that are now part of the Pinery Provincial Park developed along the shore of Lake Huron. The lake was favoured by migratory birds as a flyway during their migration periods. Lake Smith was drained in the 1950's for agricultural use. There has been an increased interest in reclaiming some of the old Lake Smith area with the intention of recreating a marsh lake ecosystem. The lands of current interest are located to the east of the Lambton Heritage Museum. (Lake Smith Marsh Project, <http://www.lakesmithmarsh.ca/about.htm>)

4. *The Ausable River Valley Life ANSI, Ausable Gorge, ESA(WILLW-6-C):*
This area consists of lands containing areas of natural and scientific interests, an environmentally significant area as well as regionally significant wetlands. The 90.49ha ESA contains a lowland swamp and gently rolling upland areas. This area is noted as a good waterfowl nesting area. The Ausable River Valley ANSI consists of the forested corridor which follows the winding river valley for about 15km. The area is one of the largest river valley corridors left in a natural condition. A wide range of vegetation is present including deciduous woods, hawthorn scrub and young successional woods, coniferous reforestation, floodplain forests, and small prairie remnants. The river valley is also home to the butternut tree which is listed as a species at risk. The Ausable River itself is home to endangered and threatened species. Threatened and endangered fish species include the Pugnose Shiner, Black Redhorse, and the Eastern Sand Darter. The endangered Northern Riffleshell and Snuffbox mussels are also present in the Ausable River.

5. *Bannockburn Wildlife Management Area, Bayfield River ANSI, Bannockburn Wetland Complex, Bayfield North ANSI, ESA(GOD-3-A):*
The Bannockburn ESA, approximately 262.16ha in size, is the site of the confluence of the Bayfield and Bannockburn Rivers, while the ANSI consists of the long narrow river valley corridor through which the Bayfield River runs. The area is a provincially significant Class 4 wetland. There is a high degree of diversity within community types including wet meadows, upland sugar maple-beech, lowland cedar, soft maple swamp, yellow birch-cedar swamp and a variety of marsh communities. The rich mesic to wet-mesic floodplain forests and wetlands in the valley comprise the most significant complex of communities in the ANSI. The Bayfield North ANSI contains the best representation of upland woodlot on sandplain and bevelled till plain in the MNR district. There are three major forest communities including upland deciduous forest, hardwood swamp and upland deciduous-evergreen successional forest.

6. *Clinton Conservation Area, ESA(TUCK-1-B):*
There are two parcels of land that make up this 98.06ha ESA. The first parcel is composed of ravine marshes which are present along the river channel as well as several small ponds which lie adjacent to the watercourse as a result of spring flooding. The second parcel of land contains an extensive ravine wetland along the floodplain of the Bayfield River its tributaries floodplains. There have been cedars planted beside a large cattail marsh bordering this area. The wetlands in this ESA are significant because of their erosion reduction and bank stabilization qualities.

7. *Parkhill Creek Headwater Area, Parkhill Creek, ESA(McGILL-7-C):*
This area is a headwater for the Parkhill Creek. It is intensely farmed with little forest cover. Most woodlots in the area have been identified as Middlesex Natural Heritage features and run alongside the Parkhill Creek tributaries. This land adjacent to the Parkhill Creek consists of environmentally significant areas as well as wetlands. The ESA, 61.95ha in size, is a lowland forest swamp that contains several small pools and maple-cottonwood forested areas. There is a variety of vegetation that ranges in maturity and composition. There is a mature maple stand as well as younger, scrubrier vegetation present in the area. The area wetlands area is 99% swamp and

1% marsh. Provincially significant species found in the area include Virginia Water Horehound, Muskingum Sedge and Stiff Yellow Flax.

8. *Staffa Kame Complex, ESA(HIB-4-C):*
This area consists of land which contains a regulated wetland, an area of natural and scientific interest and an environmentally significant area. This ESA, which is 32.58ha, contains a silver maple swamp which is inundated most of the year. An upland community of mature beech and maple also exists. The area identified as an Earth Science ANSI contains Lake Wisconsinan, Port Bruce Stadial, Dublin Moraine, Rannoch Till, eskers, outwash fans and kames. The ANSI consists of two irregular masses of sand and gravel deposited at the ice-margin in a small re-entrant in the ice front.
9. *Lower Ausable Headwaters, ESA(ADE-2-A):*
This area consists of land which contains an environmentally significant area. The three main branches of the Adelaide Creek meet within the boundaries of this ESA, which is 132.93ha. The Adelaide Creek has been identified as a cold water fishery. There is a wide variety of vegetation present at the site and ranges from hawthorn willow thicket to a maple-birch woodland. There are many meander scars and remnant oxbow lakes, which contain a sedge, bulrush and cattail marsh.
10. *Port Franks, ESA(BOS-2-A), adjacent to ANSI areas:*
This land consists of provincially significant wetlands, areas of natural and scientific interest as well as environmentally significant areas. This is a large, topographically diverse area of oak-pine forested dune ridges. The dunes also support prairie vegetation. There are many variable wetland systems interspersed amongst the sand, including coastal wetlands, Mud Creek, Bio and Moon Lakes, wet meadows, bog and swamp forest. Rare plants, such as the lupine are in abundance in the wet meadows. This site contains a large deer population and plays host to at least 55 species of rare plants and wildlife. Some prominent species include: the spotted turtle, the blandings turtle and the hairy woodpecker.
11. *Hay Swamp Complex, Hay Swamp ANSI:*
This area consists of lands containing areas of natural and scientific interests as well as provincially significant wetlands. A 1,500 ha. lowland swamp and a spillway supporting small sections of sugar maple bush with associated low land forests and wetland. The area has been identified as important for natural water storage. The area consists of 15 individual wetlands – approximately 97.7% swamp and 2.3% marsh.
12. *Morrison Dam Conservation Area, ESA(USB-3-B):*
This land consists of an excellent representative woodland along the south side of the Morrison Dam reservoir. Lacustrinal and riverine wetlands occur along the reservoir edge. The area is 64.93ha in area and consists of a large cattail marsh at the east end of the reservoir, several other cattail marshes occupy the indentations along the edges. The river flats in this area consist of poorly drained clay covered with shrubs, willow and bulrushes. The area immediately downstream from the dam has been reforested in white pine, cedar and silver maple. Further downstream, the forest exhibits different successional stages.

13. *Stephen Tracts, ESA(STE-10-A, STE-11-A):*
This securement site consists of land containing several environmentally significant areas. The ESAs were formally agreement forests between the ABCA and the MNR and total 607.58ha in area. There is a mix of natural forests as well as some plantation which consists of pine, cedar and spruce. The natural forest community consists of red and burr oak, sugar maple, American beech, hemlock and birch. There are several small wetlands throughout the areas which consist of soft maples, dogwood, willow and larch.
14. *Other lands* that are adjacent to and in close proximity of existing ABCA land holdings (i.e.:Parkhill Creek farmlands, Hay Swamp Tracts, Stephen Tracts, Morrison Dam, Clinton CA.).
15. *Opportunity Sites:* properties within the priority areas but outside of these target areas that contain important ecological features that come to the attention of the ABCA through a willing owner or funding support: (i.e.: Camp Sylvan)

The list of target areas represents lands that need to be secured to maintain current levels of forest cover in ABCA watersheds. Initially, the Hay Swamp Complex and the Bayfield Gullies headwater areas will be the focus of this land securement project. The ongoing focus of land securement initiatives will be based on the priority areas identified by the Authority's Property Management Committee and potential funding sources.

9.0 Property Evaluation Procedures

Given the vast area of ecological features identified in Figure 6, it is doubtful that all of these lands would be secured by public agencies or land trusts. With existing funding levels, only the most suitable lands which may be available in any given year will be considered by the ABCA for securement.

Properties that have been moved to the active list will then be pursued for securement upon review and recommendation by the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer and approval of the Board of Directors. This will involve identifying the funding source or program to secure the property (i.e., purchase, easement, donation). Once the funding is determined, the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer will proceed to secure the property (i.e., obtain appraisal, negotiate agreement, commission survey, etc.).

When assessing the suitability of land for securement, consideration will be given to the cost of taxes and long-term maintenance of the property. Where it is desirable to have a municipality help manage a property, arrangements would be made in advance with the respective municipality to have an agreement in principle to include the land under a management agreement.

10.0 Program Funding

The ABCA has not had a pro-active land securement program for more than 10 years. However, the CA land securement program has been re-activated through private sector donations and support from the ABC Foundation. The following sections outline the costs associated with acquisitions in the past few years and the projected costs over the multi-year program.

10.1 Costs

As the ABCA has had limited activity in land securement for many years, there has not been a specific land securement budget. In 2006 the Conservation Authority acquired a forested property in Hay Swamp through a donation from the Fred Willert family and a bequest from the late Georgina Catherine Ross. In 2007 the ABCA received by donation, the Puzзара Tract in the Port Franks area and from the Daynard family near Staffa. The landowners interest in the environment and generous donations made these acquisitions possible.

Based on the actual land securement funding for the past five years and the Natural Heritage System Land Securement Project goal of not just maintaining 100% of existing forest cover, but to increase it from 13 to 20 percent, it is anticipated that a budget allocation of between \$100,000.00 to \$200,000.00 per year would be required to achieve this goal. The costs associated with the land securement program include; land costs, legal, appraisal, survey, environmental audits, demolition and property clean up, G.S.T., land transfer tax, interest charges, fencing, administration, and other related costs. These expenditures will be based on the funding provided to date and the opportunities for various programs and partnerships outlined below.

10.2 Financing Alternatives

The following outlines a variety of potential funding sources for land securement. Table 2 lists some agencies and project parameters.

10.2.1 Municipal Funding

The conservation of lands benefits all municipalities within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Authority by maintaining their ability to accommodate the natural functions of the ecosystem and providing open space for the enjoyment, health and well being of all residents. The conservation of the natural heritage system including issues related to the quantity and quality of water is of benefit to the people of the entire region and will continue to contribute positively to the quality of life for future generations.

The Conservation Authority proposes that the multi year Natural Heritage System Land Securement Project 2008-2020 will generally be a benefitting project with our member municipalities and will also benefit the Counties of Huron, Lambton, Middlesex and Perth relative to their Natural Heritage Planning. Where appropriate, as land securement opportunities present themselves, each upper and lower tier municipality would be consulted to determine if there is any funding available to support the securement initiative.

10.2.2 Provincial Funding

One of the goals of this project is to obtain support from the Province to embrace the importance of, and need for, the protection of all natural heritage lands. In August 2005, the provincial government announced the Natural Spaces Program. This new program included a \$6-million allocation to the Ontario Heritage Trust for the acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands in southern Ontario. This program provides up to 50% funding for acquisition and stewardship programs.

10.2.3 Land Sale Funding

Generally, the Conservation Authority does not endorse selling off conservation lands. Where revenues are realized through the sale of any surplus lands, and where the Conservation Authority receives the necessary approvals to allocate funds to acquisition, these monies will be applied to properties identified as suitable for acquisition by this project. In the case of trade lands, properties that do not contain environmental features would typically be sold with the proceeds being directed to the land securement program.

10.2.4 Federal Funding

In the 1960's under the Plan for Flood Control the Conservation Authority received funding from the Federal Government for the acquisition of flood control structures. This project was funded 37.5% by the federal government, 37.5% by the Province and 25% by the Municipality. It is proposed that the Conservation Authority approach the Federal Government for support and funding of this project.

10.2.5 Funding Support

In 2007 the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF) provided \$25,000.00 towards land securement within the Hay Swamp. As securement opportunities arise the Conservation Foundation will be solicited to provide funding for individual and specific opportunities for the securement of natural heritage lands.

In addition to the ABCF, other potential funding agencies include the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Thames Talbot Land Trust, Ontario Nature (formerly the Federation of Ontario Naturalists), Ontario Heritage Foundation, our municipal partners and the MNR (Table 2). With the assistance of the ABC Foundation and other potential funding partners it is anticipated that the solicitation of donations of money and land can be significantly increased.

Protection of these lands is the priority not ownership. Partnerships that protect environmental lands are essential. Recently the ABCA and ABCF assisted the Thames Talbot Land Trust in the securement of Joany's Woods, a 120 hectare tract of land located at the bottom end of the Ausable Gorge.

Table 2: Potential Funding Partnerships

Organization	Project Parameters
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation	Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis.
Nature Conservancy of Canada - Greenland Funding	Based on projects that support biodiversity and species at risk Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis.
Thames Talbot Land Trust	Potential support in fund raising efforts for specific projects . Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis.
Upper Tier Municipalities (Counties of Huron, Lambton, Middlesex and Perth)	Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis
Local Municipalities	Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis (i.e., focus public access, community related projects).
Ontario Land Trust Alliance	Funding for appraisal costs on a case by case basis.
Ministry of Natural Resources - Environmental Land Acquisition Program	Potential funding for specific projects on a case by case basis - focus: provincially significant feature protection.
Private Sector Funding	TD Canada Trust: Friends of the Environment; Industry (i.e., Aggregate Producers)

11.0 Land Disposition Policy

Through the process of securing ownership of lands through purchase, donation or bequest, the Conservation Authority may receive lands that contain no or only portions of ecologically significant features. Generally, the Conservation Authority does not endorse the sale of lands containing provincially significant features. Through the refinement of the natural heritage system to be undertaken by the Authority and updated master plans for the ABCA’s existing land holdings (where funding permits), lands may be identified as surplus due to limited or no ecological significance. In the event that lands are recommended for disposition, the following requirements would apply:

- That all surplus lands be offered “as is”.
- That land proposed for use for transportation, infrastructure, utilities or other routine public purposes identified by a municipality or lands identified through an individual Environmental Assessment or Class Environmental Assessment be disposed of at fair

market value. Where a municipality or public agency requests the disposition of Conservation Authority lands, all costs associated with the transfer or title or easement (i.e., legal, appraisal, survey costs) will be the responsibility of the requesting agency. If a property appraisal is required, it will be commissioned by the Conservation Authority and paid for by the requesting agency.

- That a staff report be prepared detailing the technical concerns of the disposition, the environmental significance of the lands, potential impacts of the disposition, and mitigation requirements associated with the lands and remaining Conservation Authority land holdings. The proponent may be required to prepare an environmental review documenting the above-noted matters. The scope of this assessment will be determined in consultation with ABCA staff, agency staff and/or their consultants prior to any work being undertaken.
- That the proposed disposition of land first be offered to the local municipality and the region or county within which the lands are located for either purchase or lease. Where lands have been acquired through a donation or bequest of lands that do not contain environmentally significant lands and the owner has given permission for the Conservation Authority to use or dispose of the lands as the Conservation Authority desires, the staff report as outlined above may not be required. This will be determined at the discretion of the Board.
- When the disposition involves any lands where the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) provided funding for the acquisition of the subject lands, that the proposed disposition be circulated to the Ministry for approval as outlined in MNR's Policies and Procedures for the Disposition of Conservation Authority Lands.
- That all land sales generally be appraised at market value by an AACI qualified appraiser (Accredited Appraiser Canadian Institute). The sale may be subject to conditions to ensure that the Conservation Authority's objectives are met. Where an appraisal of land value is required, the appraisal will be commissioned by the Conservation Authority. Lands with an anticipated value of less than \$25,00.00 may not require a full appraisal at the discretion of the Board.
- Generally, where lands are donated to the Conservation Authority, the family who donated the property will be given first right of refusal or requested to consent to sell unless otherwise stated in the terms of the donation or bequest.

Summary

ABCA has as part of its healthy watersheds conservation strategy, set a target to increase its wetlands and forest cover from 13% to 20%. One of the key strategies in obtaining this target is to protect existing wetlands and forest cover. A strategy for acquiring properties and encouraging private landowners to leave natural heritage legacies will contribute to this long term 20% goal.

To assist ABCA in the securement of the lands identified in this document it will prepare a Natural Heritage Systems Plan.

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Properties



1. Clinton C.A.
2. Bannockburn C.A.
3. Zurich
4. Morrison Dam C.A.
5. Stephen WMA
6. Crediton C.A.
7. Thedford C.A.
8. Parkhill C.A.
9. Lucan C.A.
10. Rock Glen C.A.
11. Dinsmore M.A.
12. Adams-Klopp Tract
13. Hibbert Source M.A.
14. Hay Swamp Properties
15. Johnson M.A.
16. Devil's Elbow M.A.
17. L Lake M.A.
18. Doherty Tract
19. Mystery Falls
20. Sadler/Brebner Tracts
21. Chapman Tract
22. Daynard Forest

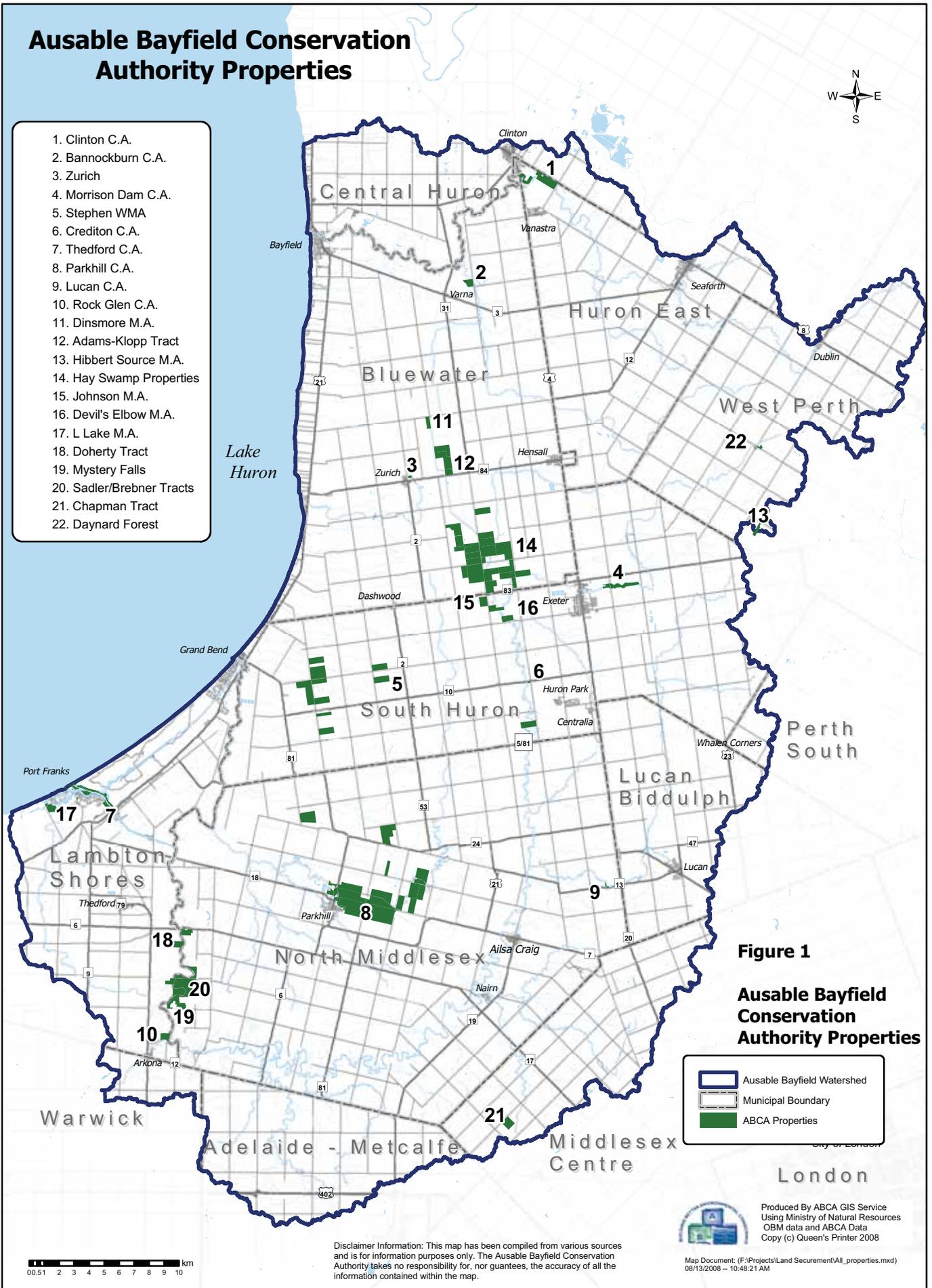


Figure 1
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Properties

- Ausable Bayfield Watershed
- Municipal Boundary
- ABCA Properties



Disclaimer Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

Produced By ABCA GIS Service
 Using Ministry of Natural Resources
 OBM data and ABCA Data
 Copy (c) Queen's Printer 2008

Map Document: (F:\Projects\Land Securement\All_properties.mxd)
 08/13/2008 - 10:48:21 AM

Conservation Authority Context Map

-  Conservation Authority
-  Major river
-  Major road
-  Road
-  County Boundary

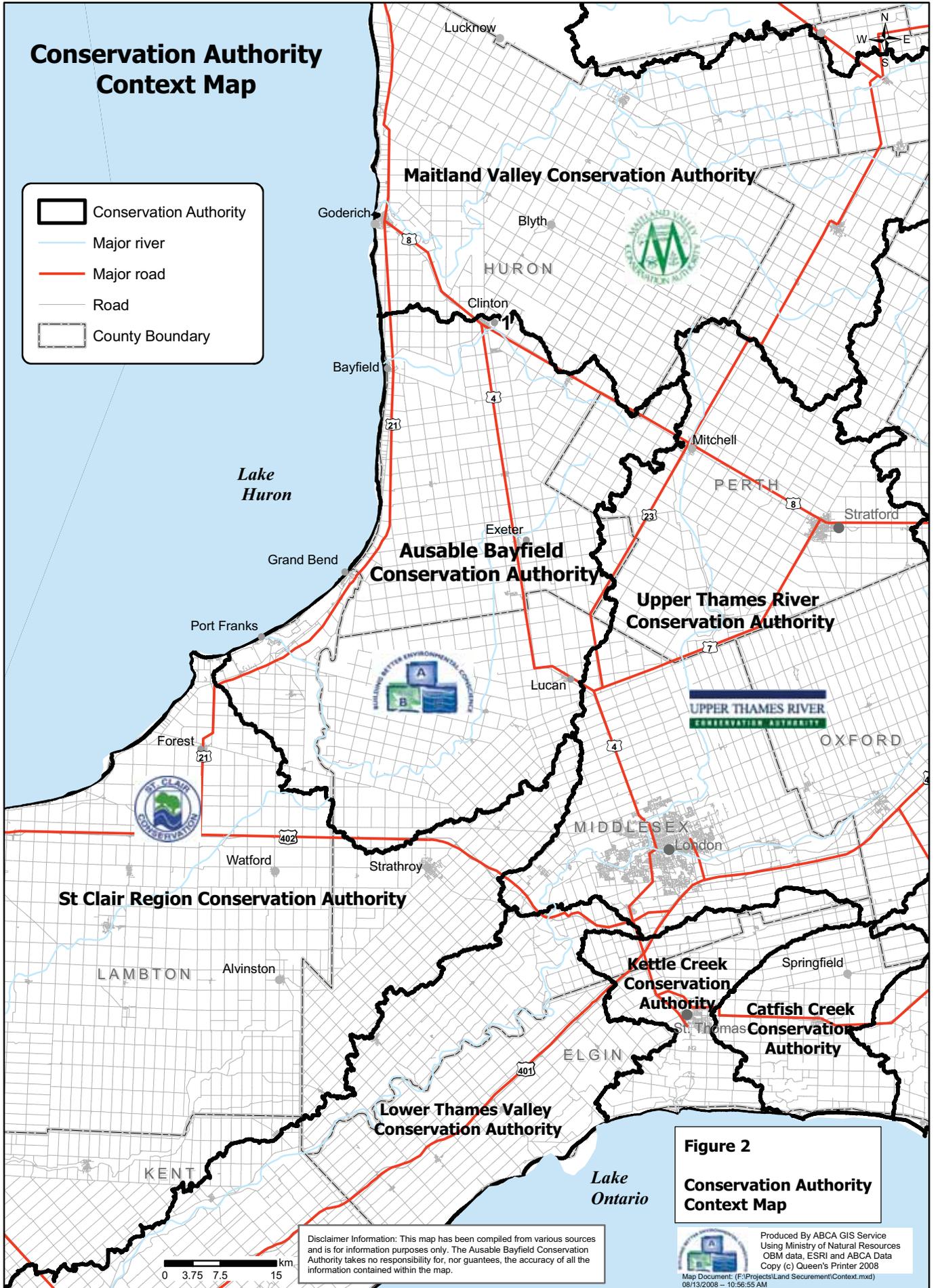


Figure 2
Conservation Authority Context Map

Disclaimer Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

Produced By ABCA GIS Service
Using Ministry of Natural Resources
OBM data, ESRI and ABCA Data
Copy (c) Queen's Printer 2008
Map Document: (F:\Projects\Land Securement\Context.mxd)
08/13/2008 -- 10:56:55 AM

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Sub-Watersheds



1. Clinton C.A.
2. Bannockburn W.M.A.
3. Zurich
4. Morrison Dam C.A.
5. Stephen WMA
6. Crediton C.A.
7. Thedford C.A.
8. Parkhill C.A.
9. Lucan C.A.
10. Rock Glen C.A.
11. Dinsmore M.A.
12. Adams-Klopp Tract
13. Hibbert Source M.A.
14. Hay Swamp Properties
15. Johnson M.A.
16. Devil's Elbow M.A.
17. L Lake M.A.
18. Doherty Tract
19. Mystery Falls
20. Sadler/Brebner Tracts
21. Chapman Tract
22. Daynard Forest

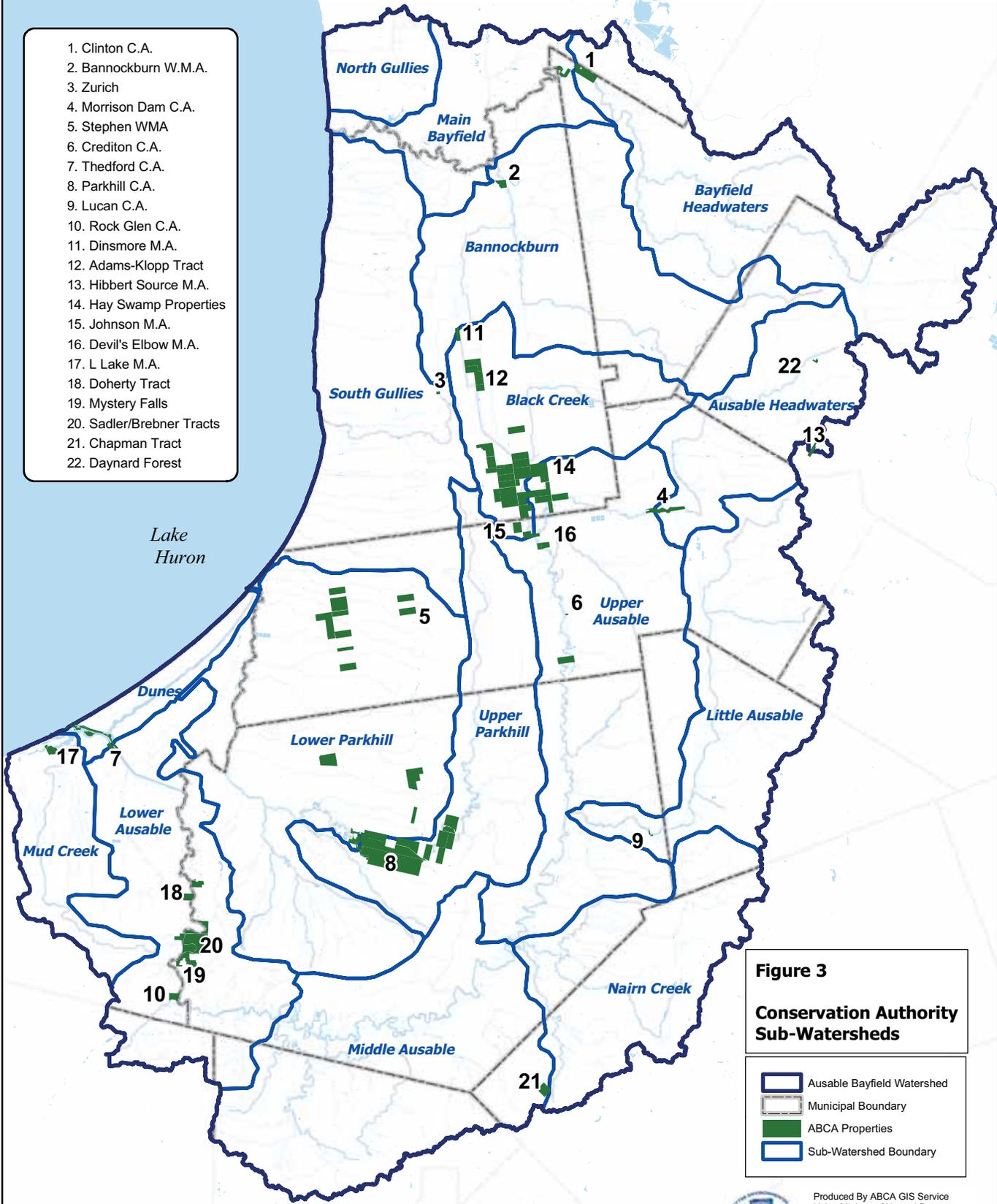


Figure 3
Conservation Authority Sub-Watersheds

- Ausable Bayfield Watershed
- Municipal Boundary
- ABCA Properties
- Sub-Watershed Boundary



Disclaimer Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

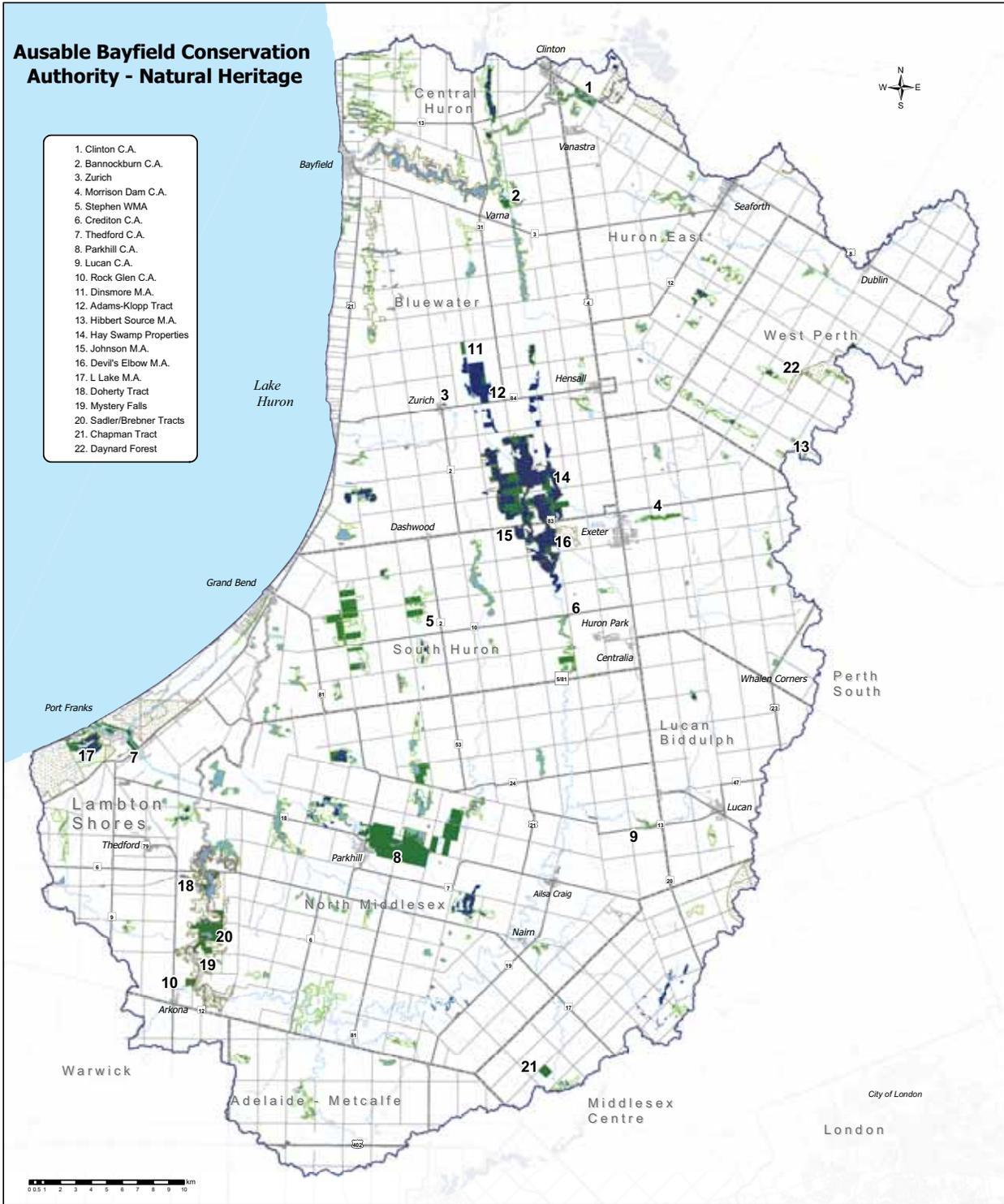


Produced By ABCA GIS Service
 Using Ministry of Natural Resources
 OBM data and ABCA Data
 Copy (c) Queen's Printer 2008

Map Document: (F:\Projects\Land Securement\Subwatersheds.mxd)
 08/15/2008 - 11:14:14 AM

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority - Natural Heritage

1. Clinton C.A.
2. Bannockburn C.A.
3. Zurich
4. Morrison Dam C.A.
5. Stephen WMA
6. Crediton C.A.
7. Thedford C.A.
8. Parkhill C.A.
9. Lucan C.A.
10. Rock Glen C.A.
11. Dinsmore M.A.
12. Adams-Klopp Tract
13. Hibbert Source M.A.
14. Hay Swamp Properties
15. Johnson M.A.
16. Devil's Elbow M.A.
17. L Lake M.A.
18. Doherty Tract
19. Mystery Falls
20. Sadler/Brebner Tracts
21. Chapman Tract
22. Daynard Forest



Legend

- Ausable Bayfield Watershed
- Municipal Boundary
- ABCA Properties
- Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) *
- Local and Provincial Wetlands (LSW & PSW)**
- Other wetlands***
- Environmentally Significant Area (ESA)****

Mapping Notes:

- * ANSI mapping provided by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR)
- Land Information Ontario (LIO) warehouse
- ** Evaluated Wetlands from OMNR LIO warehouse
- *** Other wetlands are unevaluated wetlands from ABCA and OMNR mapping
- **** ESA's from from ABCA Study

Disclaimer Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

Figure 4

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Natural Heritage System



Produced By ABCA GIS Service
Using Ministry of Natural Resources
OBM data and ABCA Data
Copy (c) Queen's Printer 2008

Map Document: (F:\Project\Land and Seouement\NaturalHeritage_11x17.mxd)
08/15/2008 - 11:17:23 AM



Legend

-  Ausable Bayfield Watershed
-  Municipal Boundary
- Feature Occurrence***
-  Single Feature
-  Two Features
-  Three Features

Mapping Notes:

- * 3 criteria used:
- Wetlands (All wetlands)
 - Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)
 - Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA)

Disclaimer: Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

Figure 5

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Feature Occurrence

Produced By ABCA GIS Service
Using Ministry of Natural Resources
OBM data and ABCA Data
Copy (c) Queen's Printer 2008
Map Document: (F:\Projects\Land Securement\Feature_Occurrence11x17.mxd)
11/12/2008 - 4:14:30 PM



Legend

- Ausable Bayfield Watershed
- Municipal Boundary
- ABCA Properties
- Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) *
- Local and Provincial Wetlands (LSW & PSW)**
- Other wetlands***
- Environmentally Significant Area (ESA)****

Mapping Notes:

* ANSI mapping provided by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR)
 Land Information Ontario (LIO) warehouse
 ** Evaluated Wetlands from OMNR LIO warehouse
 *** Other wetlands are unevaluated wetlands from ABCA and OMNR mapping
 **** ESA's from from ABCA Study

Disclaimer Information: This map has been compiled from various sources and is for information purposes only. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority takes no responsibility for, nor guarantees, the accuracy of all the information contained within the map.

Figure 6

ABCA Land Securement Target Areas