

## Friends of South Huron Trail to hold first meeting

*"Winter, spring, summer or fall,  
All you have to do is call,  
And I'll be there,  
You've got a friend."*

**- Lyric by Carole King**

The South Huron Trail is looking for friends and you may be one.

The inaugural meeting of the Friends of the South Huron Trail takes place on Tuesday, Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) office at Morrison Dam Conservation Area, just east of Exeter.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to help your community by maintaining the trails in proper condition and also have a lot of fun by doing it," said Peter Raymond, of Exeter, a long-time trail volunteer who was involved as the first Chairman of the volunteer group Friends of the Morrison formed in 1998.

The new trail group, Friends of



the South Huron Trail, is seeking volunteers who enjoy the outdoors, like meeting new people, like creating recreation opportunities for their neighbours and making a difference.

"Friends of the South Huron Trail can make a big difference by helping at work days, and doing minor improvements and maintenance," said Tom Prout, General Manager of the ABCA. "That work is vital to ensure the future of our trail system."

The volunteer members of the new group will also help with input on trail activities and to make the trail more accessible for

people with limited mobility.

One of the group's first tasks will be to help organize a special day to allow many community members to experience the trail for the first time.

The Friends of the South Huron Trail first meeting is being hosted by The MacNaughton-Morrison Trail Committee, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation (ABCF), the Exeter Lions Club and the Municipality of South Huron.

For more information on Friends of the South Huron Trail contact Peter Raymond, at 235-0303, or Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist, at 235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610 or write to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority at 71108 Morrison Line, RR 3 Exeter, Ontario N0M 1S5. ■

## ABCA thanks people for keeping their dogs on leashes

Most pet owners keep their dogs on leashes along the MacNaughton Morrison Trail. That protects dogs from getting hurt by bicyclists or wildlife, it protects people from the dog and it protects owners from receiving a fine or being evicted from the property.

However, area residents have made new reports to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) that some pet owners continue to let their dogs off their leashes around Morrison Dam Conservation Area and other conservation areas in the watershed.

The ABCA has responded to these reports by initiating random patrols with authority to charge people under the Conservation Authorities Act or the Trespass Act.

"The MacNaughton Morrison Trail has been developed with many users in mind and keeping dogs on leashes respects the rights and safety of all others who are using the trail," said Kate Monk, Stewardship and Conservation Lands Supervisor. ■



Keeping your pet on a leash protects you, others and your dog and saves you from facing a fine or eviction.

## Stewardship Rangers learn about aquatic species

Stewardship Rangers learned about aquatic species and fish classification at Morrison Reservoir during a visit in the summer of 2005.

A crew of Stewardship Rangers from Huron and Perth Counties were exercising both their muscles and their minds on local environmental projects this past summer.

The crew is sponsored locally by the Huron Stewardship Council and Perth Stewardship Network as part of the Ontario Stewardship Program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

In a recent visit to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) head office at the Morrison Dam Conservation Area (one concession east of Exeter) the Rangers learned about fish identification, fish habitat, aquatic ecosystems and sport fish regulations.

Even though school was out for most 17-year-olds the Stewardship Rangers studied scientific concepts such as lentic and lotic aquatic systems and about habitat types such as riffles, pools and runs.

The Stewardship Rangers also learned how careful anglers must be in reading the provincial Recreational Fishing Regulation Summary fishing guide (published by the Ministry of Natural Resources) and that they must be aware of the many exceptions. Not being



aware of the exceptions could put an angler in breach of the law and facing a fine, said Davin Heinbuck, ABCA Lands and Water Technologist. "You must check the exceptions," he said. The regulations are very important for stock management, according to Heinbuck. He also provided background on the ABCA partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) where public and private projects are reviewed for impacts on fish habitat. Heinbuck also told the Stewardship Rangers how anglers can properly handle fish in a manner that promotes safe release.

Matt Redmond, ABCA Conservation Education Specialist, talked to the Rangers about the importance of municipal drains as fish habitat and how those watercourses are classified based on what fish are likely to be present, water temperature and habitat availability. The Drain

Classification initiative helps in streamlining reviews for drain maintenance, he said.

After learning how to identify different fish the crew members then enjoyed a trip to the Morrison Reservoir and adjacent watercourses to net and study minnows.

The Ontario Stewardship Rangers are youths aged 17 (or turning 17) who 'earn and learn' while helping out environmental projects for different agencies and organizations. The Stewardship Ranger crew out of the Clinton MNR office is one of about 26 across the province.

Based on the Ontario Rangers program model, the youths develop skills and build knowledge as well as working hard on many projects with different community partners.

They earned their wages this past summer.

But they also 'learned.'

Shown in photo are Lands and Water Technologist Davin Heinbuck and Conservation Education Specialist Matt Redmond with the Stewardship Rangers.

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## Low Water Advisories in effect in subwatersheds

Level 1 Low Water Advisories remain in effect for Ausable and Parkhill Creek Subwatersheds.

Monthly water levels remain low despite normal or above-normal rain in previous three months.

The Ausable Bayfield Water Response Team (WRT) has announced that Low Water Advisories remain in effect for the Upper and Lower Ausable River and the Parkhill Creek Subwatersheds based on monthly stream flows that are approximately half of the lowest average summer monthly flow.

No advisories are in effect for the Bayfield River Watershed, according to the WRT.

As of the end of September, monthly water levels remain low despite normal or above-normal precipitation amounts for the previous three months.

Flows in the Lower Ausable and Parkhill Creek Subwatersheds are characteristic of a Level 2 Low Water condition,

with 47 per cent of the lowest average summer-month flow despite slightly above-average precipitation over three months. While stream flows in the Upper Ausable River subwatershed have improved, only 72 per cent of the normal September precipitation was recorded for this subwatershed.

The WRT recommends that these subwatersheds remain in a Level 1 Low Water Advisory based on a mix of low streamflows and slightly above-normal precipitation amounts.

If normal October precipitation amounts occur during October and streamflows increase, the Level 1 Low Water Advisory the Upper and Lower Ausable and Parkhill Creeks may be lifted. Conversely if very little rainfall occurs, it is possible that these subwatersheds may enter into a Level 2 condition based on low monthly streamflows.

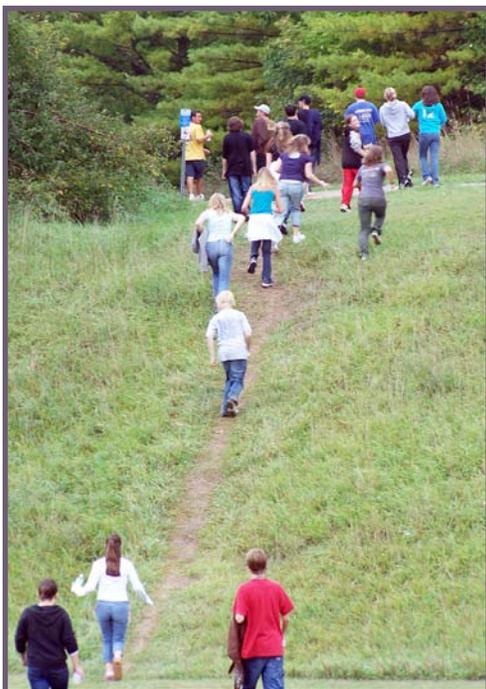
The Chair of the Water Response Team, Bill Dowson, said

conservation of water use is important to prevent further reduction in water levels.

"Based on existing conditions, we continue to encourage a voluntary reduction in water use by everyone," Dowson said. "Business people, farmers, municipalities, homeowners and other residents all have an important part to play in preserving our water supply."

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) staff will continue to monitor rainfall and streamflow data and keep the public informed of any changes in watershed conditions.

For further information on what you can do to help reduce water use, contact the ABCA at 235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610 for a factsheet with water conservation tips or visit [www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/p774.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/p774.html); [www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3780-e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3780-e.pdf); [www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3781-e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3781-e.pdf); [www.gov.on.ca/omafra](http://www.gov.on.ca/omafra).



Students from South Huron District High School walked the MacNaughton Morrison section of the South Huron Trail to raise money for cancer research during the Terry Fox Run.

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## Nairn Creek residents surpass goal, keep planting

Nairn Creek landowners surpass goal years ahead of schedule and keep on planting

The residents of the Nairn Creek area aren't afraid of a challenge, it seems.

The landowners of the Denfield-area subwatershed were offered a challenge in 2002 to plant five kilometres of buffer along the creeks over 10 years to help preserve the creek's stream health and water quality. Instead, the people of that area proceeded to plant eight kilometres of vegetated buffer in three years and they show no signs of slowing down.

"The Ausable Bayfield Watershed has many groups of people working hard for conservation but I think the landowners around Nairn Creek deserve special mention," said Mari Veliz, Healthy Watershed Specialist with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). "They have planted the most trees of any subwatershed for the past three years or more and they keep on going."



The ABCA studied the Nairn Creek watershed in 2002. The Conservation Authority found the creek had a population of brook trout, which require a habitat of constant, cold, clear water. In order to protect the good stream health and water quality found in Nairn Creek the ABCA issued a challenge to the property own-

ers to create five kilometres of vegetated buffer over ten years but the residents met their goal years ahead of schedule and are continuing their planting efforts today.

The landowners, in partnership with the ABCA, planted 22,385 trees in the spring of 2005 and 22,510 trees in the spring of 2004.

"The Nairn Creek area landowners really set an amazing pace and we thank them for continuing to plant even after the initial target has been reached," said Veliz. "I think the residents understand they have good water quality and they are working hard to protect the resource that they have."

ABCA Land Stewardship Specialist Kathy Hodgins said she is looking forward to continued work with the residents of the area. "Let's see if we can continue to work together and buffer another ten kilometres in the next five years," she said. ■



Sunday, October 2 was another successful annual hike at the Bannockburn Wildlife Area. Hundreds of people come each year to experience the splendour of the rich native habitat.

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# ECO Crew, Lucan Biddulph team clean up area

The Township of Lucan Biddulph is now a little bit cleaner thanks to efforts by the municipality and the hard work of the ECO Crew of the Boys' and Girls' Club of London.

The Environmental Community Opportunities Program (ECO) Crew members and municipal staff removed a large amount of illegally-disposed garbage from a steep riverbank located on Fallon Drive, north of Lucan, over three days from Sept. 19 to Sept. 21.

The garbage was not only unsightly in the natural area where it had been dumped but it also posed serious risks of contamination to the water sources down below at the base of the ravine, according to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

The clean-up was coordinated by the ABCA after the problem was identified by the Township of Lucan Biddulph this past summer.

"The municipality contacted us and we coordinated the ECO Crew," said Kelly Vader, former ABCA Supervisor of Water and Planning. "The township deserves a lot of credit for taking the initiative and wanting to clean the site up."

Lucan Biddulph Public Works Manager Barry Mills said "the partnership and commitment of the township, the ABCA and the ECO Crew allowed the municipality to address the garbage problem swiftly."

Two public works staff from the Township of Lucan Biddulph



worked side-by-side with the ECO Crew team for three days cleaning the site. The workers walked up and down the steep incline on hot and muggy days to remove large amounts of garbage by hand. The municipality also used a backhoe with pulley to remove larger pieces of garbage. During the three-day cleanup the municipality transported four truckloads of illegally-dumped garbage to the landfill site.

The municipal council is considering a 'No Dumping' bylaw that could set the maximum fine for illegal dumping at \$5,000. A 'No Dumping' sign with the fine listed will be located at the site to

discourage future illegal dumping. Council will also evaluate the idea of fencing at the top of the bank.

The ECO Crew has been involved with several environmental projects of the ABCA, ranging from tree planting to wetland habitat improvement to the Ausable Walk Restoration Project in North Middlesex.

"The ECO Crew members work extremely hard and they offer us the ability to address environmental concerns to an extent that might not otherwise be possible," said Alison Thomson, Environmental Planner with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

Shown in photo a member of the Boys' and Girls' Club of London ECO Crew helped, along with municipal staff of the The Township of Lucan Biddulph, to clean up a site where garbage was illegally dumped north of Lucan.

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## ABCA staff to help farmers with Greencover projects

Conservation Authority staff will offer technical expertise to farmers to help implement Greencover projects.

Staff from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and other Conservation Authorities will be working closely with Ontario farmers and agribusiness operators as they help the environment through Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) as part of \$15 million in Greencover Canada funding announced at the International Plowing Match (IPM) near Listowel on Sept. 20.

"We have the environmental expertise to help farmers and we are excited that Conservation Authorities have been chosen to have a front-line role in the delivery of this important program," said Tom Prout, General Manager of the ABCA.

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) selected Conservation Ontario, which represents 36 watershed-based Conservation Authorities across the province, to help deliver the Greencover Canada program to producers.

OSCIA has been chosen by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to deliver the Ontario portion of the Greencover Canada program which offers technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers wishing to adopt Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs). Conservation Authority staff will offer producers some of the technical help they need to improve water quality in streams,

rivers and lakes, adopt sustainable land use practices or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

"We have a solid team of professional and technical staff that are eager to complement the delivery expertise that OSCIA is known for," said Peter Krause, Chair of Conservation Ontario.

OSCIA President Kevin Ferguson says the arrangement with Conservation Ontario will result in more BMPs being implemented on the ground where they are needed.

"Environmental work along watercourses has been a tough sell to many Ontario producers as compared to in-field practices that offer the farmer a promise of return on investment," Ferguson said. "Having skilled specialists from the watershed authorities available to offer ideas and advice on-site, at no direct charge to the farmer, will result in more producers taking advantage of what Greencover Canada offers."

Projects under Greencover must be undertaken in one of five specific Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) categories:

- 1) Riparian area management
- 2) Erosion control structures (riparian)
- 3) Shelterbelt establishment
- 4) Consultative services for grazing management planning
- 5) Consultative services for riparian health assessment

The Greencover Canada Objectives are a perfect fit with the

Conservation Authority's mandate and expertise, according to the ABCA.

Producers who have completed an Environmental Farm Plan and identified an eligible project under one of Greencover's Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) may qualify for up to \$20,000 in cost-shared funding to help implement their project. This can often be combined with other Conservation Authority programs to cover a larger percentage of project costs.

Eligible projects include: buffer strips and livestock fencing projects alongside watercourses, structural erosion control work next to creeks, and tree shelterbelt plantings.

Greencover Canada is a five-year, \$110-million dollar Government of Canada program which provides producers with technical and financial assistance to implement land-use-related farming practices that offer both environmental and economic benefits. Farmers can contact their local Conservation Authority to apply for funding for Greencover and to receive technical assistance.

Information on the Nutrient Management Financial Assistance Program and application forms for the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship and the Environmental Farm Plan programs will soon be available from OSCIA at 1 800 265-9751 or visit [www.ontariosoilcrop.org/EFP/EFP.htm](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/EFP/EFP.htm)

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# Back to school for former ABCA summer staff

It's 'back to school' for Centralia's Dan Mosurinjohn.

The Centralia man's two summers spent as a Watershed Planning Technician at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) will provide valuable skills as he returns to university this month to begin his studies to be a teacher.

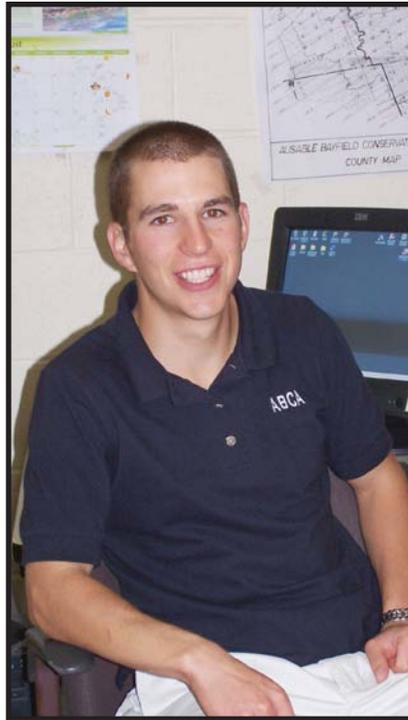
Dan, son of Jody and Donna Mosurinjohn, said he enjoyed his years in high school and he looks forward to making high school a positive experience for his students.

He now plans to take his love of geography into his Bachelor of Education studies at Althouse College at the University of Western Ontario (UWO).

Mosurinjohn, who holds an honours degree in Geography, hopes to one day teach high-school students some of the things he learned on the job at the ABCA.

Over the past two summers he has had a chance to see the Conservation Authority's research, monitoring, education, regulation and protection of habitat, life and property first-hand.

"The Conservation Authority provides a very valuable service that's sometimes not known or fully appreciated," he said. "There are so many things we do here that are important to every aspect of the watershed."



While working in the watershed planning area he has worked closely with residents of the watershed.

"I've enjoyed working with the public, government agencies and with private businesses," he said. "You learn a lot through hands-on and practical experience."

Kelly Vader, former ABCA Water and Planning Supervisor, was Mosurinjohn's supervisor during the past two summers and had the following to say about his work ethic.

"Dan was great to have around," she said. "He was always smiling and eager to do whatever we asked of him. Whether it was canoeing the Ausable while look-

ing for species at risk, tree planting or assisting with water sampling, Dan was always ready and willing to do any task assigned to him. He will be missed when he heads to Western this fall."

Skills Mosurinjohn has learned that will have direct applications in teaching include work on multiple planning projects as well as increasing his knowledge of biological species and tree identification.

"I've learned so much during my experience I hope I'll be able to pass it all on to my students," he said. "Hopefully one day I can take my class around the MacNaughton – Morrison trail and teach them about the importance of our natural environment."

His work at the ABCA will likely also be fodder for classroom anecdotes about "what I did for my summer job."

His B. Ed. Studies begin in London this month. He brings his specialties in Geography and Individual and Society to his studies of Intermediate/Senior teaching.

Mosurinjohn expressed thanks to the ABCA and fellow staff for their guidance during his tenure as a summer employee.

"I am most appreciative of the experience and responsibility I have been given in this job as well as the freedom to work independently on multiple projects," he said. ■

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# What protection do we have from flooding?

## Flooding tragedy in U.S. underlines importance of regulation in Canada

**First column in a series by Alec Scott, Water and Planning Manager, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority**

The unthinkable horror of American citizens helplessly standing on roofs in New Orleans and the images of cadavers floating in toxic flood waters along the Gulf Coast cannot be erased from the minds of thinking people or the hearts of caring people.

The devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, followed closely behind by Hurricane Rita, has brought into focus the awesome power of nature.

Staff at Conservation Authorities in Ontario work with floodplain management, planning and watershed stewardship issues every day but the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina (in and around Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Georgia) and the more recent tragedy of Hurricane Rita along the Texas-Louisiana coast remind us of the human cost of disasters in a way that no regulations in a binder, or no dusty legal wording, ever could.

It's understandable that people are frightened after seeing the images from the United States over the past two months. It's also understandable that they would ask, "What measures are in place to protect me from flooding?"



This column, the first in a three-part series, is in response to that question.

When it comes to floodplain regulation in Ontario one could say that Hurricane Hazel in 1954 was our wake-up call. As a result of the devastation and massive loss of life in the Humber River Watershed the Province of Ontario embarked on a program to keep new development away from natural hazards such as flooding.

We at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority are vividly aware of the importance of floodplain regulation. The former Ausable River Conservation Authority was the first such agency formed under the Conservation Authorities Act of 1946 and our origin almost sixty years ago grew out of the need for protection against floods.

There is no single way to protect property and human life from flooding. That's why today, in Ontario, we have a multi-faceted water management program of flood forecasting, flood warning, information, education, flood control works and preventative environmental land-use planning. The new Ontario Regulation 97/04: Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation will maintain the protection already in place under the existing regulation (Fill, Construction and Alteration to Waterways) but also ensure the regulation is consistent across the province and is applied to development which could affect (or be affected by) wetlands, shorelines and watercourses and – in the case of the ABCA – sinkholes.

A Conservation Authority's mandate is to prevent the loss of life and property due to flooding and erosion and to conserve and enhance natural resources. Protection from flooding is accomplished in two main ways:

- 1) New Development Regulations govern new development in flood-prone areas and effective storm water management is aimed at ensuring that new development doesn't create extra potential for flooding. The ABCA works closely with municipalities and consulting engineers on local storm water management projects.

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# What protection do we have from flooding?

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2) Existing Development Programs are in place to protect areas where development already exists. This may include maintenance of historic remedial flood and erosion control projects and monitoring watershed conditions.

One of the ways we reduce risk to life and property, reduce potential social disruption and protect the environment from naturally occurring flooding and erosion is through Floodplain Management.

That includes the maintenance of existing flood and erosion control infrastructure, monitoring of watershed conditions for flood forecasting purposes, providing emergency planning advice, warning watershed municipalities of impending flooding conditions, and providing technical advice in relation to lakeshore erosion and

agricultural land.

We operate a network of water level and climate stations throughout the watershed to respond to precipitation and snow melt events and forecast stream flows and water levels which may affect watershed residents.

Conservation Authorities have historically undertaken remedial flood and erosion control projects to deal with riverine flooding and riverine or valley erosion.

The ABCA, in partnership with watershed municipalities and the Province of Ontario, inspects flood and erosion control structures to ensure these structures can continue to do their job of protecting existing development from the hazards of flooding and erosion.

These are just some of the activities Conservation Authorities undertake to protect you. There are no guarantees that Ontario

residents can be protected from all natural disasters in all cases. We can, however, do our best to preserve wetlands, be mindful stewards of the land, use progressive environmental planning practices and have proactive regulations and prevention to protect property – and human life.

We cannot predict the impact of a flooding disaster like the ones we have seen in the past two months but Conservation Authorities are working closely with the Province of Ontario to apply preventative planning to mitigate the potential impact of any natural disaster here.

**Next week:** How can we plan to avoid disaster in Ontario?

For more information on flooding and erosion issues contact the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority at (519) 235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610.



Chris Hutt (Ontario Ministry of the Environment), ABCA Lands and Water Technologist Davin Heinbuck and Aquatic Biologist Kari Killins (Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority) were sampling for fish in Elliot Park in Exeter on October 5. Fish sampling occurred to determine effects of April chemical spill in the Ausable River. (photo by Mari Veliz/ABCA).

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