



Buffers and Livestock Fencing



Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

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Farmers and rural landowners in the Ausable River and Parkhill Creek watersheds are improving water quality and protecting wildlife habitat through voluntary projects on their properties.

Many property owners in the Ausable River Watershed are protecting and improving water quality and restoring habitat for wildlife through positive stewardship actions.

The Ausable River is home to 14 species at risk, including seven fish, four freshwater mussels and three reptiles. Freshwater mussels are disappearing across North America. The fact that they are in the Ausable River Watershed reflects the positive stewardship actions landowners have taken. That's one of many reasons it's so important stewardship efforts continue and increase.

There are two main threats to the Ausable's aquatic species at risk – nutrient enrichment and sediment loading in local streams, creeks and rivers. The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and area landowners are working to reduce nutrient and sediment loading through some simple best, but effective management practices. These Best Management Practices will ultimately improve the stream environment and ensure long-term survival of aquatic species.

Best Management Practices such as establishing vegetative buffers and fencing cattle out of streams greatly improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment runoff and reducing erosion. They are also fairly simple tasks to do! Stewardship projects that reduce the high concentrations of nutrients and sediments in the river system include:

- Establishing grassed waterways through plantings of native trees and shrubs to reduce sediment and nutrients reaching the river.
- Fencing cattle out of watercourses.

- Planting vegetative buffer strips to provide shade to watercourse.
- Improve water and aquatic habitat quality through actions that mitigate identified threats to species at risk.

There have been 78 on-the-ground stewardship projects funded in the Ausable River and Parkhill Creek watersheds through the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program since 2003, improving 5,450 hectares of land. This includes 44 tree planting projects, 14 livestock fencing projects and 20 manure or conservation tillage equipment modifications.



It's not just the big projects, it's also the little things that people do that can really make a difference.

Bill Thirlwall, Denfield-area landowner who has been planting trees for more than 25 years



For more information:

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