

Sustainability in our Region and how you can be a part of the solution

Trying to keep beavers from damming your culverts - try trapezoidal fencing

Algoma wetlands and their impact on local species at risk birds

IN THIS ISSUE

The Freshwater Connection

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SUSTAINABLE CENTRAL ALGOMA

By Chuck Miller, CAFC President

In the spring I hope you received a copy of A Guide to Sustainable Living in Algoma – if you did not receive a copy a [pdf version](#) is available on our website or request a hard copy via emailing cafreshwatercoalition@gmail.com.

CAFC has also launched a new poster series on Nutrient Pollution.

As the guide mentions, “*Algoma isn't immune to the threats that have compromised the environment elsewhere. Invasive species, climate change, algal blooms, and extreme weather events are all taking their toll and challenging environmental, economic and social values, now and for generations to come. These challenges are a new normal and require flexible responses that adhere to sustainable principles.*”

The current world invites future ecological catastrophes and the key to resilience is being proactively adaptive. Many current practices exceed the thresholds for sustainability.

The guide was designed to encourage discussion within the community about what individuals and the community as a whole may or may not want to do regarding environmental issues.

We as groups of individuals have a role to play in how things get done in our communities. We want to engage our local communities in ecological resilience and create local empowerment. Ultimately we want to effect social change.

We are optimistic about the future. We believe our communities and local environments are dynamic, complex, resilient and sustainable but they need to be continuously adapted.

CAFC's is currently planning to celebrate the work, both completed and underway, that contributes to the sustainability of Central Algoma Region. I hope you will join us in these celebrations. If you wish to help out please become a CAFC member by [following this link](#) or consider joining our Board of volunteers.

A GUIDE TO Sustainable Living in Algoma



WE PASS THIS WAY BUT ONCE

A Publication of the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition

PREVENTING BEAVER ACTIVITY AT CULVERTS WITH TRAPEZOIDAL FENCES

By Peggy Wilson

Earlier this year in August, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry installed trapezoidal fences on two ministry-maintained culverts located on the road leading into the Ranger Lake fire base. Beavers repeatedly attempt to block the culverts, resulting in damage to the road and inefficient use of human resources to address the ongoing issue.

The ministry followed [Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition's Beaver Management Toolkit](#) to design the fences and referred to the ['Beaver Institutes website](#) for advice on installation.

The following materials were used for the project:

- six gauge 6" x 6" wire mesh in 8' x 12' sheets (three to four per fence) – not able to source galvanized or plastic coated wire mesh locally
- 1.5" hog rings and hog ring pliers (pictured right)



- Steel T-posts (appropriately sized for water depth)

The fences were built on dry land before being placed in the water.

Ministry staff had put the posts in during the winter through the ice thinking they might be easier to install since the depth of the water was 6'. When they installed the fence in the summer, the fencing did not quite line up with the posts. The posts had to be removed, with the exception of a few, as they were secured deep into the gravel substrate and could not be easily removed. Plans are to return to the site to remove remaining posts and

cut down the T-posts to the top of the fence.

The fences look great and are already successfully deterring beavers' efforts to plug the culverts. The beavers now attempt to build up along the sides of the fence near the culvert, but activity has no impact on the flow of the water through the culvert. This project appears to be an effective and inexpensive solution to prevent beaver activity at culverts, costing approximately \$300 to \$350 per fence.

Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition is interested in using the site as a demonstration site for municipalities, cottage associations and other groups dealing with similar beaver issues. Please contact us if you are interested in visiting the site and hearing more about the projects from ministry staff.



SPECIES AT RISK BIRDS IN CENTRAL ALGOMA WETLANDS

By Carter Dorscht

As many of you know, wetlands play a very important role in the ecosystem. They help improve water quality, reduce the impacts of flooding, and provide habitat for a wide range of plants and wildlife.

There are a number of bird species found in the Central Algoma area that rely on wetlands: Bald Eagle, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black Tern, Chimney Swift, Horned Grebe, Least Bittern, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Rusty Blackbird and Yellow Rail. Some of these species only use wetlands for a portion of their year, or some use them just as a food source, but a few of them use them almost exclusively.

Least Bitterns mostly prefer cattail marshes that contain

some open pools and channels. The biggest threat to them is habitat loss. They are typically only found around here in the wetlands of Echo Bay and Pumpkin Point, but they are very secretive birds and their presence is hard to detect. Black Terns use similar habitats as Least Bitterns. They can be found nesting in Echo Bay, Pumpkin Point, and the Hay Marsh on St. Joseph Island, but the number of nesting pairs seems to be declining every year. Historically, there were big numbers of them in Gibboney Lake in Desbarats, but they have not been seen there in years.

Habitat loss is a major issue for these two species, but humans are affecting them in more ways than that. Least Bitterns do not do well with human disturbances. They will



leave a wetland if there is too much light from buildings, too much boat activity, or loud noises. Black Terns nest on floating masses, which are easily flooded by waves from boat traffic.

So next time you are in or around a wetland, take a minute to think about how your actions might be impacting the wildlife in the wetland. Even if you are not destroying their habitat, you still might be having a negative impact.

BE A PART OF THE
SOLUTION.
BECOME A
MEMBER OF OUR
COALITION TODAY!

Your annual membership fee will provide a base budget for the work of CAFC and demonstrate the commitment of local partners working towards a common goal. A strong diverse group is an essential component in meeting the goals of the Central Algoma Region. [Click here](#) to become a member.

The logo for the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition. It features a stylized blue 'C' shape above the words "Central Algoma" and "Freshwater Coalition" in a serif font. Below the "Freshwater Coalition" text is a graphic of three wavy lines in blue and white.