



February

Hello from the Other Side

An Update from our Michigan Based Coast Watchers



Huron Pines, in partnership with Lake Huron Coastal Centre and the **Lake Huron Forever** initiative, concluded their second year with the Coast Watchers program in 2023. They doubled their number of volunteers who monitor sections of shoreline along the 168-mile stretch from Tawas City, MI to Rogers City, MI. This year they added in the option of monitoring for the endangered piping plover. Michigan Coast

Watchers were asked to keep an eye out for courting and nesting pairs. Two nesting pairs were identified along the Northwest coast of Lake Huron - one in Oscoda and one near East Tawas. Once the pair at Tawas Point State Park exhibited signs of courtship and breeding behavior, the pair was observed by volunteers to ensure their protection. An area was fenced off where a nest was possible, and once eggs were found an enclosure was erected by the **Great Lakes Piping Plover Conservation team**. A Coast Watcher volunteer monitored the nest almost daily, noting any predators nearby, human disturbance, or tracks around the enclosure. These observations were made

throughout the breeding, nesting, and brooding phases until the chicks are fledged.



One of our volunteers recounts her favorite parts of the summer,

"It's been fun to learn the continuous ups and downs of our little bit of shoreline. To see how the atmospheric elements change from week to week, month to month. I appreciate our shoreline more. I became a Coast Watcher and a regular piping plover monitor at Tawas Point State Park. I haven't had so much fun in years. I loved my volunteer hours on the dunes, observing the summer breeding season of one pair of endangered birds. I learned so much about these birds and about the delicate environment they require to thrive. Plus, I came to know other people who care just as much as I do about piping plovers."



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Lake Huron Coastal Centre would like to offer a huge thank you to the Huron Pines team and our Michigan based Coast Watchers for an incredible season monitoring 600 meters of the Lake Huron shoreline! Learn more about the impactful conservation work happening at Huron Pines [HERE](#).

Our Coast Watchers Need You!

As a small charity, we rely on donations to help fund our conservation programs. Donate now to help us continue the important work of our Coast Watchers community

scientists.

Donate now to support our
Coast Watchers



Conservation Authorities Issue Notice to Advise Public to use Caution Near Shoreline Bluff Areas

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) are cautioning that shoreline bluffs continue to be at a high risk of collapse. They advise the public to continue to be cautious near these shoreline areas.

Erosion hazards are always present along shoreline bluffs but the conservation authorities want to remind the public the current risk of collapse remains higher than normal. This is because there can be a delay between erosion at the toe (bottom) of the bluff and subsequent bluff failure.

Lake Huron water levels reached an all-time high in 1986 and lake levels were near that record high in 2020. Those high lake levels and associated wave action resulted in extensive toe erosion. Although the Lake Huron water level has declined since then, many portions of the bluffs were left over-steepened and may still be unstable as a result.



The high risk of bluff failure will continue as the slope adjusts to the recent impacts of toe erosion and bluff over steepening. This makes some areas along Lake Huron's shoreline prone to collapse. This is a risk that can be further heightened due to seasonal rainfall and snowmelt that can saturate the ground and soften the bluffs. In this area, these are seasonal conditions that we typically experience during autumn and winter thaws and in the spring.

ABCA and MVCA continue to encourage landowners, the public, and municipal employees to stay away from the top of the lake bluff, especially where there have been signs of over-steepening or slope movement. Areas along the beach below these bluffs should also be avoided. Injury or loss of life could occur if a bluff collapses and beach users are caught in the deposition zone. The ABCA and MVCA continue to encourage landowners to monitor their property for signs of movement.

Unlike flood messages and low water advisories, that are issued and then expire as circumstances change, caution around shoreline bluff areas should always be practised as the risk of failure and collapse is inherent in a shoreline bluff system.

ABCA has created a fact sheet to help shoreline residents recognize signs of erosion. It also offers best management practices.

Fact
sheet

ABCA
website

This article was written by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. Please reach out directly to them if you have any questions related to this article. Staff contact information is available on the conservation authority websites at abca.ca and mvca.on.ca.

The Lake Huron Coastal Centre is a registered charity founded in 1998 with the goals of protecting and restoring Lake Huron's coastal environment. We are the voice for Lake Huron.

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