

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	April 24, 2025
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CW-23-25
Title:	Joe Bauman Minor Exemption
Prepared by:	Sarah Johnson
Reviewed by:	Scott Taylor
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	Municipality of Meaford

Recommendation

1. That Report PDR-CW-23-25 be received; and
2. That the application for Minor Exemption under the County's Forest Management By-law for 023293 Holland-Sydenham Townline, Lot 1, Concession 10, in the geographic Township of Sydenham, now in the Municipality of Meaford, be approved.

Executive Summary

The County received a minor exemption application under the County's Forest Management By-law in late December 2024 to clear woodlands consisting of approximately 3.2 hectares (8 acres) of cedar and other softwoods. The purpose of the clearing is for agricultural use (pasture and croplands). County staff are recommending approval of this minor exemption application.

Background and Discussion

An application for a minor exemption was received for clear-cutting in a woodland under the County's Forest Management By-law. The proposed area to be cleared is on the east side of the parcel in an area that was previously cleared, but since grown up in softwood. The total area proposed to be cleared is 3.2 hectares (8 acres). The applicant wishes to return the lands to an agricultural use.

The subject lands are located at 023293 Holland-Sydenham Townline, geographic Township of Sydenham, now in the Municipality of Meaford. The majority of the property is wooded. The total size of the property is 40 hectares.

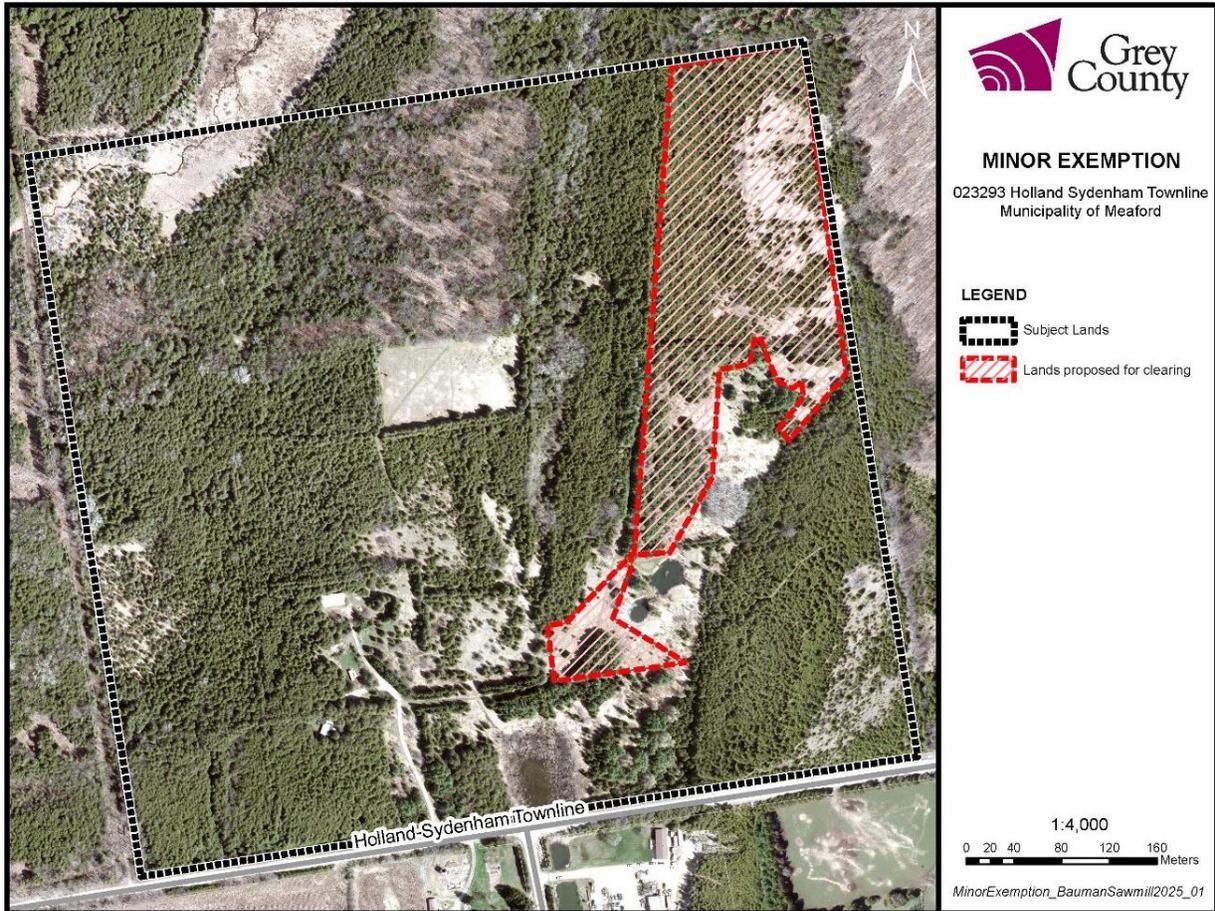
A minor exemption for another location on the same property was granted in 2023 and was cleared in 2024, it consisted of 1.6 hectares (4 acres) of cedar. A link to the staff report on this

previous minor exemption application has been included in the Attachments section of this report.

The village of Chatsworth is located approximately 3 kilometres to the southwest of the subject property. Surrounding the subject lands are a mixture of farmed and forested lands, with some non-farm residential lots.

In the County Official Plan, this property is designated as 'Hazard Lands' and 'Rural'. Appendix B to the Plan identifies some Significant Woodlands on the property. The lands proposed to be cleared are within the Rural designation and are outside the mapped Significant Woodlands. Map 1 below shows the area proposed to be cleared.

The County's Climate Change Action Plan, Going Green in Grey, promotes tree planting across the County, including setting tree planting targets. The County's Forest Management By-law pre-dates Going Green in Grey. The County's By-law is currently under review, a draft by-law has been prepared as part of this process. The draft is broadly considering the relationship to other County plans and strategies such as Recolour Grey, the County Official Plan, and Going Green in Grey. Strictly speaking, this minor exemption application is being tested against the current Forest Management By-law. Staff are however cognizant that the future updated By-law may consider woodland clearing differently, including possibly considering replanting plans or offsetting approaches.



Map 1 – Woodland Clearing Request

Under the Forest Management By-law, adjacent landowners, conservation authorities, municipalities, and County staff are to be notified and/or consulted when an application is received.

Public Comments Received

No public comments were received during the processing of this application.

Agency Comments Received

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA), the Municipality of Meaford, the County's Planning Ecologist, and the County's Forestry By-law Enforcement Officer provided comments on the application.

The Municipality does not have any concerns provided the Planning Ecologist is satisfied with the application. The Planning Ecologist indicated that the area proposed for clearing was not considered Significant Woodlands and it provides little value in terms of significant wildlife habitat, they have no concerns with regard to natural heritage. GSCA has no concerns.

The By-law Enforcement Officer is not supportive of the proposal.

No comments were received from the Township of Chatsworth, this property is on a boundary road, but not within the Township.

County Staff are recommending approval of the minor exemption application.

Financial and Resource Implications

At this time, there are no expected financial or resource considerations beyond those normally encountered in processing a Minor Exemption application. The County received the requisite application fee with the file.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Grey County By-law Enforcement Officer, Planning Ecology
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (see commentary in the staff report)
- External: GSCA, Township of Chatsworth, Municipality of Meaford, and the public

Appendices and Attachments

[PDR-CW-42-23 Joe Bauman Minor Exemption.pdf](#)