



2008 Update

2008 was the third full-year of operation of the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council. The maturity of our council is reflected in the increasing complexity of projects as well as continued advancements in partnerships and collaboration with various community groups. The success of our Council achievements in 2008 is directly attributable to the many partners and volunteers who are the true worker-bees of stewardship. To them we say 'thank-you' for a job well done. Here's what we, our partners and volunteers accomplished in 2008:

1. 3rd Annual Lake Stewardship Workshop: This year's workshop theme was the *State of Our Fisheries* and how fisheries act as indicators of ecosystem health – or canaries in our lakes. An excellent cadre of speakers enthralled over fifty representatives from more than 20 community groups in attendance. See our website (www.helpourfisheries.com) for topics and a complete rendition of presentations given.



2. Invasive Species Awareness Project: This public outreach and education project was conducted in partnership with the Ont. Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH), Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR) and the Ministry of Natural Resources. We were delighted to have Erin Hamlyn as the returning project coordinator. Approximately 30 public presentations were delivered by Erin throughout the summer as well as dissemination of pamphlets, brochures and information packages.



3. Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project: The project comprised the importation and strategic deposition of over 1,100 metric tons of spawning rubble on or adjacent to traditional walleye spawning sites below Moon Falls on the Moon River of Eastern Georgian Bay. The enhanced spawning site addresses the issue of a highly variable flow regime during the walleye spawning and incubation periods. For a complete listing of numerous supporting partners check out the summary report on our website.



4. Moon River Walleye Egg Collection and Rehabilitative Stocking Project: This Community Fisheries Involvement Project commenced in 1998 in cooperation with the Moon River Walleye Association and Ministry of Natural Resources has been a long-term project to assist in rehabilitating the Moon River population. Due to sustained high flows on the Moon River throughout the entire duration of the 2008 walleye spawning and incubation period, an egg collection was not conducted for safety reasons. We look forward to getting back to this project in 2009, especially in light of spawning habitat enhancement work conducted in 2008.

5. Spring Littoral Index Netting (SLIN) Survey – Five-Mile Bay: This survey conducted in partnership with the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit assessed the status natural and planted lake trout present in Five-Mile Bay. Preliminary analysis indicates a 'medium' abundance of lake trout – equivalent to the Provincial dataset average. Twenty-four of twenty-six lake trout captured were stocked fish, indicating good survival of planted fish.



6. End-of-Spring Trapnet (ESTN) Survey – 12-Mile Bay: This survey provided a broad-scale assessment of the near-shore fish community in 12-Mile Bay. Preliminary analysis indicates fish community structure and abundance of game fish is quite healthy. Muskellunge comprised 28% of the total catch weight of 383 kg. followed by smallmouth bass (24%), northern pike (16%), rock bass (11%) and 12 other species comprised the remaining 21%.



7. Killbear Channel and Parry Sound Lake Trout Egg Collection for Thiamine (Vitamin B1) Analysis: A small sample (30-50) of eggs were collected from 11 gravid females encountered during the survey to test for thiamine levels, a vitamin whose absence is linked to reproductive failure in lake trout. This project conducted in partnership with the Upper Great Lake Management Unit – Lake Huron Office, Parry Sound OMNR and the US Great Lakes Science Centre in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



8. Harris Lake and South Magnetawan River Walleye Culture / Stocking and Index Spawners Project: Under the auspices of the MNR Community Fisheries Involvement Program, this project has run annually since 1998. Eighty-six walleye were captured with approximately 900,000 eggs collected of which 500,000 were successfully raised to the emergent fry stage and planted throughout the Magnetawan River system.



9. Custodial Co-Management of Conservation Reserve Campsites: Two formal partnership projects with Carling Township and Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association occurred, but the EGBSC was also informally involved with several locations: Moon River, Severn River, Gibson River, Pointe Au Baril and McCrae Lake. Additional partnerships are needed to effectively conduct this project in 2009 as demands are exceeding our capability to respond.



10. Smallmouth Bass Nest Creation Project: This project has run for many successive years with high levels of public interest, volunteer participation and positive contribution to increase bass productivity. Its popularity in 2008 was greatly diminished; attributable to having been run for many successive years with resultant project saturation. The Council plans to have the project 'lay fallow' for a number of years and perhaps resurrect at a later date.



11. Regional Economic Development – Fisheries Action Plan for the Rehabilitation of Eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel: Since 2006, the EGBSC and Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council (MASC) have struggled in pursuit of a pathway to fund and conduct broad-scale rehabilitation of Eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel fisheries. Councils are now intent on accepting a proposal from i.d.NOR Inc. to use existing socio-economic data to build an economic, job-related business case for fisheries rehabilitation. We look forward to reporting back next year on where this project will have taken us.

12. Partner Projects: The EGBSC not only seeks partners to assist with our projects, we also assist partners with projects in which they take the lead. In 2008, the EGBSC was a strong supporter of the conservation program of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and the French River (Water Quality) Stewardship Council. (For further information check out their websites at www.gbbr.ca and www.frenchriverwater.ca.)



13. Rino Ouellette Memorial Scholarship Award: The EGBSC is pleased to announce that Ashley Gardner and Caitlin Chantler were co-winners of the inaugural Rino Ouellette Memorial Scholarship Award. The award is given to a graduating Parry Sound high school student who demonstrates a passion and dedication to the Ontario Stewardship Ethic.



Summary reports for the above projects as well as a comprehensive 2008 Annual Report are available on our website at www.helpourfisheries.com.