



Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

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2010 Lake Sturgeon Spawning Monitoring Project at the Moon River of Eastern Georgian Bay

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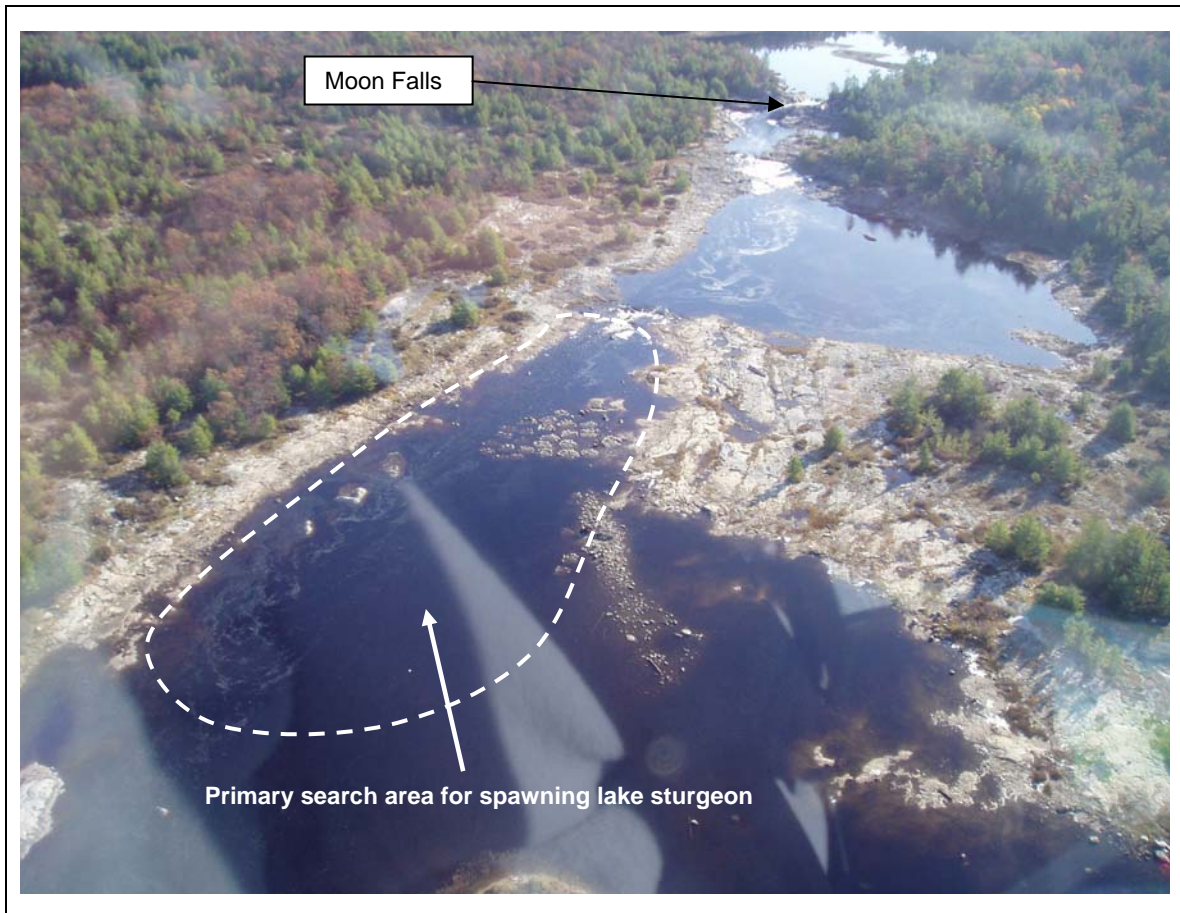
In 2009, the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) coordinated a Lake Sturgeon, spawning monitoring pilot project on the Moon River of eastern Georgian Bay. The survey consisted of volunteer participants reporting sightings of sturgeon during the spring spawning period (early May – mid June). Volunteers consisted of white-water kayakers, sport fishermen, near-by lodge guests, and members of the EGBSC.

In 2009, a total of 16 lake sturgeon were reported (McIntyre, 2009). Although the survey methodology was quite 'loose' – we were pleasantly surprised and pleased with the number of sturgeon sighted. The report of 16 sturgeon gives credence to the prospect that a viable spawning population still exists in the Moon River. The lake sturgeon is now listed as "Threatened" under the Ontario Species At Risk Act.

We repeated the survey in 2010.

As per the previous year, kayakers, fishermen and sight-seers were asked to report any lake sturgeon they might see to Bill McRobb, owner of the nearby Moon River Cottages and a member of the EGBSC. The primary search area was downstream of Moon Falls (Figure 1). Secondary search areas were anywhere in the Moon River between the falls and the constriction in the river 1.25 kilometers downstream.

Figure 1. Moon Falls area of Eastern Georgian Bay showing primary search area for spawning lake sturgeon.



Unfortunately, in 2010 the effort (i.e. time looking for spawning sturgeon) was much reduced from the previous year. Flow volume down the Moon River was much lower in 2010 than 2009 and consequently kayaking activity was similarly reduced.

Two volunteers from the EGBSC visited the site in kayaks on May 16. No sturgeon was sighted on this occasion.

On May 25, with the water temperature at a remarkably warm 24° C., two lake sturgeon were sighted by Bill McRobb. Bill reported both fish to be approximately four feet in length.

Bill also reported “hundreds of gar pike spawning at the Ranger Cabin narrows” (1.25 km downstream of Moon Falls) at that time.

The above observations were the only reports received in 2010.