

Media Update 2008-02

The Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council – Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program

The Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) in cooperation with the Georgian Bay Land Trust, have commenced an ambitious fundraising program related to the Council's *Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program*.

The EGBSC was formed in April of 2006, the result of a reorganization of the former 'Georgian Bay – North Channel Fisheries Stewardship Council.' The GBA were key founding members of the original Stewardship Council and continue to be represented on the EGBSC. The Council is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources' Ontario Stewardship Network. Ontario Stewardship Councils are financially supported but not controlled by MNR. Council activities and projects are those that Council members choose to work on.

The EGBSC is largely water-based and has a keen interest in fisheries management. The Council shares community concerns related to the precipitous decline of walleye, bass, pike and muskie populations along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. The glory days of internationally renowned fisheries at Port Severn, Moon River, Pointe Au Baril and French River are today but memories of a distant past.

Terry Crawford, EGBSC Chairperson, says: "Successful reproduction is the cornerstone a healthy, self-sustaining fish population. The Council considers the restoration and enhancement of spawning habitat to be the key

ingredient in any population rehabilitation project."

For several years, GBA member associations have been active in the Council's 'Bass Nest Creation' program, allowing individual cottage owners to participate in an easy, hands-on project to enhance their shoreline for spawning bass. The Council is now pursuing a more ambitious, spawning enhancement program targeting walleye.

Many Georgian Bay and inland lake fisheries are in a depressed state due to the loss or degradation of spawning habitat. The EGBSC has formulated a *Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program* to systematically enhance these vital habitats. The program can pertain to any fish species present in Georgian Bay or inland waters. However, the Council has identified walleye spawning sites from Port Severn to the Moon River as top priority for this program.



Walleye spawning bed rehabilitation work being conducted as the Tadenac Lake outlet during the fall of 2007.

In 2007, in cooperation with the Tadenac Fishing Club, walleye spawning bed enhancement work was conducted at the outlet of Tadenac Lake. For 2008, the EGBSC is leading a multi-partnership effort to expand and enhance up to 5000 square meters of high quality walleye spawning habitat below Moon Falls on the Moon River. To date, key supporters for this initiative include the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Georgian Bay Land Trust, Ontario Power Generation, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve.

The EGBSC in cooperation with the Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT) have commenced a two-year fundraising campaign to support this initiative. Wendy Cooper, Executive Director of the GBLT says: "Stewardship of Georgian Bay is a core activity of the GBLT. By assisting the EGBSC in this project, we enhance our own program and are able to combine resources with another organization also dedicated to stewardship. This is an effective way to increase all of our abilities to protect Georgian Bay. GBLT is pleased to be providing administrative support for the EGBSC to assist with this worthy project."

The EGBSC is planning for wide circulation of their fundraising brochure and will be contacting GBA member cottage associations as well as numerous other interest groups throughout 2008. Ray Hachigian, fundraising chairman for the EGBSC says: "To date, the EGBSC has garnered over \$100,000 in financial support for the Moon River project, but additional fundraising is needed for this and many other enhancement and

rehabilitation projects. The EGBSC and GBLT are asking you to be a genuine partner in our *Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program* through a financial contribution. Through the generosity and commitment of those who share our stewardship goals, we believe we will make a difference. We ask you to be part of it."

The EGBSC have formulated a program outline and listing of potential projects related to their *Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program*. To see what projects might be coming to your neighbourhood, you can view this report on the Council's website at www.helpourfisheries.com; look under the "Documents" tab. Information relating to the Moon River project can be found under the "Moon River Initiatives" tab.

Those wishing further information, please contact Eric McIntyre – EGBSC Coordinator, at (705) 773-4218 or Eric.McIntyre@Ontario.ca.



Bill McRobb – EGBSC Volunteer with gravid female walleye. Moon River walleye spawn collection and stocking project, Spring 2008

