



Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

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Media Update – 2010-01

(Fun In The Sun article)

The Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) is one of over 45 Councils throughout the Province under the Ministry of Natural Resources' (MNR) Ontario Stewardship Program. The Council is generously supported by the MNR but Council projects are independently chosen by Council members and their partner organizations. The Council currently consists of 14 members who are volunteer, community leaders including representatives from partner organizations. The Ontario Stewardship model is founded on the principle of voluntary, collaborative community efforts to enhance the health and sustainability of natural ecosystems.

Thanks to the generous efforts of its many partners and their volunteers, the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) is pleased to report a very productive year for 2009.

Headlining their accomplishments was the excellent work conducted by the 5-person Ontario Stewardship Ranger Crew. In conjunction with nine partner organizations, the crew worked on 28 ecological and education related projects including: waterfowl management, walleye stream and spawning bed restoration, wetland assessment, reptile research, property boundary marking, water sampling, deer yard maintenance and custodial work on Crown land. Council Chairperson – Terry Crawford, noted: "2009 was our first year with a Stewardship Ranger crew and we were absolutely delighted with the quality of work conducted by these young people and how they acted as excellent ambassadors for our Council and the Ontario Stewardship program. We – and our partners are very much looking forward to having a Ranger Crew again this summer."

Insert photograph 1

Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council Rangers and volunteers from Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and Parry Sound Nature Club working on Chimney Swift nesting structure along the Seguin River in the Towns of Parry Sound; summer 2009.

Another highlight from 2009 was several related projects at Go Home Bay culminating in the construction of a walleye spawning bed in the fall. The next steps for the project are walleye re-introductory plantings planned for a 3-4 year period commencing in 2010. Chairperson, Terry Crawford: "Partners and financial donors have been very generous in supporting our 'Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation Program' and we are determined not to disappoint them. Re-introducing walleye into the Go Home Bay area and re-establishing them as a primary sport fish in south-eastern Georgian Bay is a key objective of our Council."

Insert photo 2

Walleye spawning bed enhancement work being conducted at Go Home Bay – fall 2009.

Walleye population rehabilitation work in the Moon River area of eastern Georgian Bay has been a long-term project continuing throughout 2009 and into 2010. Major spawning bed enhancement work conducted in 2008 was assessed in 2009 and has been readily adopted by spawning walleye. In 2009, spawning population monitoring and rehabilitative plantings of over 5000 summer fingerling walleye and half a million fry was conducted.

This year's (2010) spawning population survey and egg collection is happening as this article is being written (early April). Bill McRobb, project leader for the EGBSC and also a member of the Moon River Walleye Association commented: "The remarkably warm weather we've had this spring has prompted us to start netting operations earlier than we ever have. We're more than two weeks ahead of a typical spawning run. We began collecting eggs on April 8th; unbelievable!"

Insert photograph 3

Parry Sound High School co-op student, Shawn Payerl - with a lunker walleye captured during the spring 2010 spawning population monitoring and egg collection project.

Unfortunately Mr. McRobb also lamented some highly regrettable actions by individuals over the Easter long weekend: "On Easter Monday we arrived to see our net having been pulled to shore and all the fish gone. I can't tell you how devastating and disheartening this was. So many volunteers and supporters have worked tirelessly for years to help bring this population back; to see this is heart-breaking."

Council coordinator – Eric McIntyre added: "My first reaction was one of anger, but upon further reflection it just turned to sadness. The people who did this have no sense of community; they have no love or respect for Mother Earth; they are poor in spirit. I really do have a genuine degree of pity for them; they are lone wolves with no sense of being part of a community effort for the common good - it is a sad state of mind to be in."

Despite this serious setback the Council retains its determination and optimism. Mr. McRobb stated: "People on the Moon River have been trying to help rehabilitate this heritage walleye population for over two decades; we will just have to swallow our frustration and soldier on – it's what we do."

Chairperson Terry Crawford said: "In spite of this sour note to kick off the 2010 field season we're looking forward to another productive year by our Council and partners. We are pleased to have strengthened our ties with other committed community groups – the GBBR (Georgian Bay Biosphere), GBA (Georgian Bay Association), Georgian Bay

Forever, the GBLT (Geo. Bay Land Trust) and a host of other dedicated groups and individuals. There is a vibrant spirit of cooperation and all pulling together towards a common goal of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable Georgian Bay. Stewardship is truly thriving on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay.”

Additional information about the EGBSC and the various projects they are working on is available on their website at www.helpourfisheries.com.

Our Motto:
***“Tell me and I forget;
Show me and I remember;
Involve me and I understand.”***
(Anon.)