



# Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

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## Media Update: 2011-02

### Osprey Nest Installation – Oak Bay Golf Course



Brian Emery and Cam Sproule, installing an osprey nesting platform at the Oak Bay Golf Course, Port Severn.

The Oak Bay Golf Club and Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) are hoping there will be some new residents on the new golf course at Port Severn this summer. In late March, they erected a couple of osprey nesting

platforms on decommissioned hydro poles that were purposely left standing when the golf course was constructed last year. The poles were seen as a great opportunity to encourage osprey nesting because of their excellent locations – adjacent to an ample food supply, and isolated from but within viewing distance of golf course patrons.

Ospreys are generally undeterred by nearby human presence. Several osprey nesting platforms have been constructed elsewhere on Georgian Bay and many have been adopted by this magnificent fish-eating hawk. In early April, osprey return from their wintering grounds in Central America to claim, build or repair an old nest. Usually two to three eggs are laid in early May with the female doing most of the incubation and the male supplying fish for food.

Larry Wickett, Environmental Consultant for the Oak Bay Golf Club said: “We were looking for a willing partner with community connections to help with erecting the nesting platforms, and the EGBSC seemed like a good fit. They were very enthusiastic right from the get-go.”

After getting some advice and concurrence from the Georgian Bay Osprey Society and the Ministry of Natural Resources to proceed, the Council began planning the project. Council Coordinator Eric McIntyre explained how this was a potentially difficult job that was made quite easy: “Construction of the pre-fabricated platforms was pretty straight forward. The difficult part was how to get the platforms atop a 40’ pole. That’s not a job for your week-end handyman.”

By good fortune, one of the EGBSC members just happens to be an experienced hydro worker with pole climbing experience. Bryan Emery who works for Parry Sound Power gladly volunteered to do the installation. Bryan solicited the help of one of his co-workers – Cam Sproule, and installation of two nests was completed in a matter of hours. McIntyre further noted: “This was the perfect instance of getting the right people with the right training to do the job. If it wasn’t for Bryan and Cam ... we’d still be scratching our heads on how to get the platforms on top of those poles!”

Larry Wickett noted: “The osprey nests aren’t the only fish and wildlife habitat aspects that this golf course has maintained or improved. The course is seeking the prestigious Audubon certification. It has incorporated many features, such as boardwalks over wetland areas, turtle nesting areas and sunning logs, snake hibernation locations, and made a real effort to maintain trees and wildlife corridor connections.

Larry also added: “The Port Severn area already is a haven for waterfowl, fisheries and rare wildlife species. It will be great if we can add nesting osprey to the ecology of the area.”

In addition to the EGBSC and Oak Bay Golf Club, other partners in the project included the Ministry of Natural Resources and Georgian Bay Osprey Society – providing valuable advice. The Council expressed much appreciation to McNabb

Home Lumber of Parry Sound who donated all the construction materials, and to Parry Sound Power who provided the climbing and safety gear for installation.

Council Chairperson Terry Crawford summed up the project: "This is another instance of community volunteers and partners pulling together to promote ecosystem health along Eastern Georgian Bay. And who knows ... I might just take up golfing to enjoy a wildlife viewing opportunity!"