



LIGHT LINES

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Burnhamthorpe to 403 Section Opened!

By John Kendell

It took us five long years and it finally happened. The idea, initiated by CRAA and with the help of the MNR-Aurora biologist, Ken Cornelisse – encouraged by my constant harassment – the MNR opened the all-year fishing section to Highway 403 this Fall. We almost had it to Eglinton, but the Croatian Park Manager wanted assurances that the MNR would patrol more often or enforce a closure from September 1 to October 15 instead to reduce the problem of trespassing.

When I look into the CRAA file on this subject I first see a request I put to the MNR in March, 1995. Nothing happened. Several letters from 1995 to 1998 with nothing. Another formal request to the Minister and the district in 1998 – little happened. Then, finally the most recent formal request in the Spring of 2000 to Ken. With suggestions in the CRFMP to open more fishing access and a biologist who was ready to push from the inside (MNR) it happened in a month! Ken and I met with the Croatian Park, CRAA gave

assurances to the City that we would continue our Stream Watch in the new section (which we had already done) and a blessing from Mayor Hazel McCallion and Council plus Mississauga Parks and Recreation coordinator put this in motion. Why did all these people agree? The long history of CRAA's great work on the river, especially working closely with Parks and Recreation and City Council made this happen.



New signs for the newly-opened section erected by the MNR in November.



Mike Tost with a chrome wild hen from the new section.

Still on hold are reduced limits and perhaps slot limits to reduce harvest with the new open area. CRAA has asked the MNR for a one fish limit with a minimum 30" size limit for all salmonids and a closed all year season to continue on Atlantic salmon. The intent of this regulation is to allow harvest of a salmon or large steelhead, but eliminate harvest of maiden spawn steelhead and egg harvest from unscrupulous types. This request has been the result of several hundred comments received on the subject over the past few years. We hope the new harvest regulations and the opening to Eglinton Avenue will be in place by the end of 2001!



Credit River Anglers Association

LIGHT LINES

Contributions are welcome from all members and non-members alike.

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Litter Not!

By John Kendell

I'm sick and tired of picking up other people's garbage. It seems half the human population that uses the Credit Valley for fishing, walking, picnicking or whatever seems to think our natural areas are a garbage dump. CRAA's Fall crew filled over 25 large garbage bags full at the Burnhamthorpe Parking lot and upper half of Erindale Park. Every few days there was litter all over, after they had cleaned the area!

Some people blame anglers, some blame kids. Well, it is everyone's problem. Over the Fall I have watched elderly people, even couples – I'm talking over 75 individuals – throwing garbage out their car window. Apparently the ditch is the latest garbage dump. The same week I watched a mother of two kids driving her Land Rover toss a Tim Horton's cup out the window. On one weekend I saw some dumb fisherman throw his coffee cup into the bush while a family down the way got up and left their Kentucky Fried Chicken containers, napkins, plates and chicken bones on the picnic table and walk away. I never knew Erindale Park now had staff to clear the tables like a restaurant.

These actions pissed me off, and I told the people so. I embarrassed the KFC parents in front of their kids. I told off the people in the cars for throwing garbage on the road. Unfortunately not enough people stand up for the environment. I urge every member of CRAA to speak up when some jerk throws garbage in the river or anywhere it does not belong. Don't go overboard and threaten a gang or shady persons. Be civil and encourage people to act responsibly!



Boulder Placement Success!

By John Kendell

Satisfaction! I landed 7 steelhead from the new Clay Bank pool this Fall before steelhead fishing was cut short by this freezing winter. The vortex weir we built scoured a small pool very quickly and it worked. I never had more than one fish per visit from the Clay Banks – still a shadow of its former glory – but that is still a major improvement. Other pools such as the Barn pool, Pond pool and the Falling rocks all produced excellent hook ups. The Falling Rocks is now an excellent wintering pool, but some warm weather is needed to take some of the slush away.

R + M Construction finished the boulder placement for CRAA in October while they were completing the Cities work at Burnhamthorpe. R + M and the city completed the placement of the last 20 rocks free of charge to help us out after our machinery had a mechanical problem. They did a

fantastic job to place the rocks and in time I hope new pools will form.



Mike Brody with a big chrome courtesy of CRAA's boulder at the Basket Pool.

Skamania Steelhead Disappearing

By John Kendell

Sad to say, but Skamania Steelhead, like the one pictured below, will become much more difficult to find for steelheaders in Southern Ontario in a few years. The Sydenham Sportsmen who put forth a valiant effort (that deserves the applause of all steelheaders) ended their Skamania stocking program last year due to poor returns in the local Owen Sound rivers. The fish they stocked did, however, create a fishery in many other rivers, including the Nottawasaga, Beaver, Saugeen and Owen Sound Harbour. In a few years, as the last SSA Skamania run the rivers and reach the end of their lives, the Saugeen and Niagara may be the only rivers with a chance at summer-run Skamania, both the result of stray U.S. stocking.



The MNR has not added the strain of summer-run steelhead to their stocking program and no other clubs have taken up the cause. Somewhat understandable considering you have to collect the adults in July to August and hold them in spring-fed ponds giving them hormones in mid winter to get the eggs developed for March. Then you have to freeze your butt off to collect the eggs in the snow and ice and raise them to smolt size in a hatchery for a year. This is costly, time-consuming and extremely difficult.

A good friend, Rick Matusiak really blazed a trail to fish for this great game fish and I owe Rick a debt of gratitude for the many days I had the pleasure of catching these fish. Not to place the fish on a pedestal, but they are unique. There are few opportunities to hook chrome 10-20 lb steelhead in July and August in a river near home. Not to mention the powerful fights. Sure, every fish was different. I had a few big skamies that came to shore in seconds but the majority gave me a beating and kept me begging for more. Imagine a chrome 15 lb fish tail-walking down the rapids below Denny's Dam or at Thornbury, wrapping around every boulder and log in sight. I for one will be saddened when they are gone.

Georgetown Brook Trout Stream Destroyed

By John Kendell

Sadly, a small stream that was a jewel among the Credit River and southern Ontario has been all but destroyed by housing developers in the middle of Georgetown. Spawning counts and video have shown a 99% decrease in the brook trout population of this small stream in two short years. That's right, 99%! The MNR, DFO, MOE, MNR and CVC were all contacted many times on this. The MNR biologist and CO did visit the site but still, nothing has been done!



The headwaters of this former brook trout stream are buried under 3 feet of mud and rock.

I have also told this horrific story to TU (Greg Clark Chapter) and IWFFC but they have chosen not to become involved. It is a pathetic situation when all the groups and people who continue to whine about steelhead coming up the river to spawn do nothing about such a horrific crime to

brook trout. To date, CRAA has taken water samples, sediment samples, lots of photos, dozens of hours of video, YOY counts and spawning counts.

The damage to the stream is clearly visible from old to new video. Floods (which never happened on this former tiny spring creek) are now frequent, silt has filled pools, buried spawning beds and destroyed the invertebrate population. Peak floods regularly overflow the banks into the forest. View the creek after a heavy rain and see the dark red water running

down the channel that should be perfectly clear.

CRAA is currently investigating alternative actions to deal with this issue. Embarrassing the government for not enforcing laws or legal action are the only real alternatives remaining.

CRAA Managing Former TU Section

By John Kendell

In a twist of fate, the new landowner of a major part of the former TU section contacted CRAA to manage their property without fishing access for the continued enhancement of the river. The landowner's representative contacted CRAA after a very offensive letter from TU was received by the landowner. In the letter TU (Greg Clark Chapter) all but accused the new landowner of damaging the river by not granting them access or letting them fish the section. I have dealt with a lot of landowners in the past years of rehabilitating the Credit River and have to say this was a very bad move. TU has certainly done some good work in the past and is trying to get things going again, but in my opinion their approach was a terrible mistake.

The landowner asked CRAA to manage the section without fishing access – which we gladly accepted in accordance with our goal of a healthier river. It is not always about fishing, but a clean river and more fish! The landowner cited many beaver dams, major beaver flooding and cutting, a large log jam and bank erosion as concerns that TU had not dealt with, although they said they would. To date, CRAA has taken out the beavers with a licenced trapper, and in the summer will remove the log jam and beaver dams under MNR/CVC guidelines. Also this summer, CRAA plans to have a rehabilitation day to remove the dams and jams. Check our rehabilitation schedule and mark your calendar.

Please note that this section is private property and the stream bottom is deeded to the owner – making any trespassing an offence. CRAA volunteers will be given access on a selected day(s) to do rehabilitation work only.

Praising CRAA

By John Kendell

Over the years there have been many messages and e-mails sent to CRAA, most saying you guys (CRAA) are doing great work, etc., and of course a few that were not so happy. However, this year there has been a lot of praise so I felt it fitting to share it with the membership.

“ I just got off the Credit today (Erindale Park) and there were a lot of salmon in the water. But that is not the gist of my e-mail. I would like to offer my congratulations to CRAA for the great work that was put into this section of water in the way of the rock placements. The river looks incredibly good in this section and should be a very viable fishery for the rainbows. I have already noticed the salmon using alternate travel routes and the 'bows should follow suit. I spoke to a fellow who said he engineered the rock placements (me) but I didn't catch his name. I would say that he and all the members deserve a pat on the back for their great effort.

Once again, a round of applause for the Credit River Anglers Association.”

— Donald Waugh (September 11, 2000)

“ O.K. guys, I've fished Bronte a lot this Fall, as well as the Credit and I've come to the conclusion that the Credit is killing Bronte when it comes to fish caught. And we're not talking stocked fish here either, there have been a ton of wild steelhead pulled from Erindale this Fall. Why? The only reason that I can come up with is habitat management and improvement. Look how much CRAA has done for the Credit River, all the trees they've planted to ensure cooler water temperatures for wild fish spawning success. And all the boulders that have been placed to improve fish holding areas. They do a lot of work in the middle sections of the river where steelhead spawn to ensure that wild fish returns are high...”

— Andrew (November 27, 2000)

Nice to hear something positive, isn't it?

Hatchery Report

By Mike Tost

The hard work continues. With freezing cold conditions the hatchery is not a fun place to be. However, with warm groundwater the eggs are progressing well. The MNR sent us 29,000 Atlantic salmon eyed eggs in early December and we managed to collect about 22,000 migratory brown trout eggs from Streetsville in early November. The Atlantics have all hatched with a very high survival rate and are doing well. They are absorbing the yolk sacs at this time and should begin feeding soon. The brown trout did not fare as well, with some high egg and hatch mortality. However, we should end up with 10,000 fry for our first year at the brown trout game.

Volunteers are needed to help up here. Call the CRAA hotline 905-814-5794 or e-mail us to help. An hour every week or two can really make life easier for the few who do this regularly.



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2000 Rehabilitation Primer

By John Kendell

Most of you are already aware of just how much CRAA accomplished last year, so this article is a short recap. The completion of a long and successful year with 67,000 trees in the ground along the river in just a few short months. This, in addition to over 40,000 trees planted by CRAA in 1999 and 1998. And NO, these were not seedlings. Over half the trees CRAA planted, 40,000 last year alone, were in excess of 6 feet tall. In fact, our best cedars, maples, ash and poplars were in the 8 to 12 foot range!



We have also increased public awareness of the projects with large and small *Stream Rehabilitation* signs placed at most reforested sites within view of public roads. The first picture shows a sign at the Steeles Avenue site planted in April, 2000. The second smaller sign was put up



CRAA employees erect an information sign in Erindale Park.

in Erindale Park in a site with reforestation and placed boulders. These signs are very important in making the public aware of our rehabilitation initiatives. CRAA will continue to install these signs as our work progresses this year.



Volunteers finish a 50-foot long log stabilizer in Glen Williams.

We accomplished much more than just the tree planting, maintenance of the trees, fertilizing, cutting competing grass and weeds, and protecting the trees from humans, mice, beavers and deer. Our hatchery produced 225,000 steelhead and several thousand Atlantic salmon for stocking last year, the fish ladder operations were great, the collection of Brown trout eggs this Fall and 250,000 steelhead eggs in the Spring! Cattle fencing was erected, major log stabilizers were built, like the one shown from the August 19, 2000 workday, cedar and pine revetments were placed in the main river, Black, Silver and Levi's Creeks. The massive undertaking of the boulder placement was also completed with 79 new huge rocks being added to the Erindale section of the Credit and another 35 or so moved to better locations. After years of petitioning, the MNR finally opened the river from Burnhamthorpe Rd. to Highway 403, increasing the all-year section by 60%. Finally, we also enjoyed some great fishing too. With the new pools, last Fall salmon fishing was more fun and the steelhead fishing was incredible in November. All in all, one hell of a year!

Burnhamthorpe Bridge Work

By John Kendell

The City of Mississauga and R + M Construction did an incredible job to rehabilitate the section under Burnhamthorpe bridge this Fall. Due to changes in the river over the past few years the pillar holding up the Burnhamthorpe Bridge was at risk of damage from flooding and ice. Therefore the region and the city had to re-direct the river away from the pillar for safety. I had the opportunity to comment on the project on behalf of CRAA last winter when this project was opened to public meetings. The planning for this project was very well done with special attention given to the fishery and the importance of a natural channel form.

The contractor started by building a sand bag dam to direct the river down the smaller west channel to de-water the main channel. A new channel was then excavated and lined on both sides with a combination of boulders, rock, logs and stumps. The photos show the construction work including stumps surrounded by boulders forming the new stream bank. A 350 m section was changed to this new format and several large scour structures were added to create deep holding water and cover for fish. These structures were built using logs (15' to 20' long) cabled into large boulders. When placed perpendicular to the bank the water is forced under or around the rocks and wood to form a deep scour pool. Several rock veins (long lines of boulders) were also added to create pocket water and smaller scour

points which may form small pools over time. Following the construction the banks were planted with hundreds of willow and ash. Upon completion the sand bag dam was removed and the river entered its new channel.

The contractor did a fantastic job minimizing silt and keeping the job site clean. R + M's careful work did not interrupt the fall fishing for more than a few hours over the project. After completing their own work under the bridge R + M and the City of Mississauga completed CRAA's boulder placement for us at no charge (see the article on the subject). By spring we should have one or two new runs or pools under the Burnhamthorpe bridge to enjoy thanks to careful planing and a job well done!



Boulders and roots line the new stream bank under the Burnhamthorpe Road bridge.

Etobicoke Creek Update

By John Kendell

To learn more about this system I set up our temperature data loggers throughout the system in late August to find out if trout and salmon could tolerate the temperatures. The good news, there is some hope. The bad news, there is a lot of work!

Our temperature loggers also found evidence of illegal dumping in Spring Creek, a major tributary of Etobicoke Creek. The loggers showed 7° C temperature jumps in the middle of the night – that's a little un-natural!

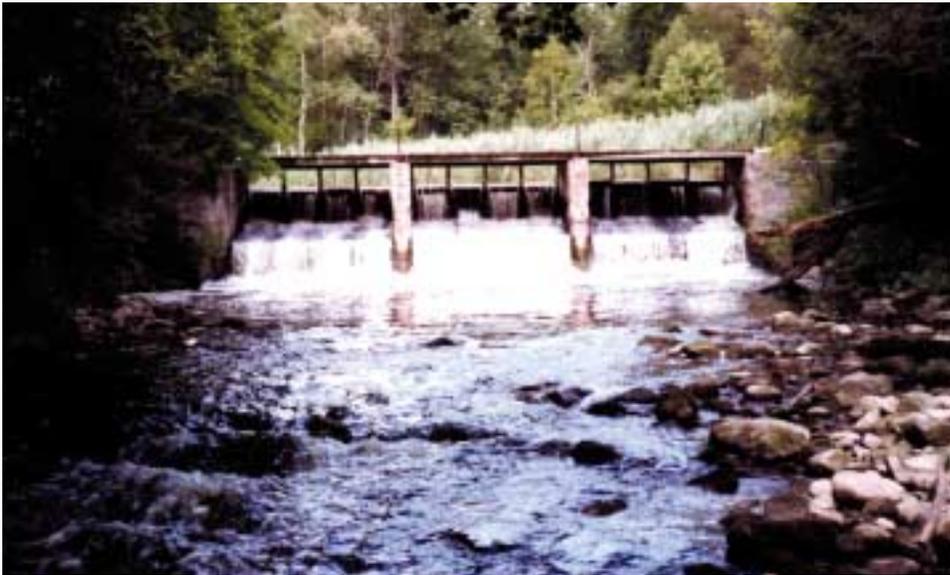
There is a dam that blocks most migration just above Highway 2. Therefore this river only has a tiny run of fish. Based on the temperatures and minnows identified in the river, there is good potential, so the first step will be to deal with the barrier and then look at rehabilitation works. There are endless sections that need tree planting, some sections need a new river channel and more. Flooding from Brampton and the Airport are also major issues. Barrier mitigation will be the best bang for the first step.

Bronte Creek Update

By Brian Morrison

On behalf of CRAA and with John's assistance I have made contacts and begun to plan projects to improve Bronte Creek. Although Bronte is well-forested, there are important tributaries such as Limestone Creek that are wide open, even exposed to cattle access. In the most popular spot, Petro-Canada Park, there is significant work we can do.

During the Summer of 2000 we also completed a temperature survey of the river from Progreston to Oakville. Unfortunately, the high water and cold weather made the results far from the normal hot dry summers so we will have to do it again. However, the cold, wet summer should give us a good year-class of salmonids!



The Dakota Mills Dam above Cedar Springs is a barrier to resident trout.

We are also investigating the Lowville Dam which was modified by a small number of individuals to stop migrating fish. This has had a serious negative impact on steelhead reproduction. We have asked the MNR to provide data and reasons why the barrier was modified, why anglers were not properly informed, and how we can correct this.

This summer we hope to build a large log crib wall in Petro-Canada Park as our first major project. This will be done with volunteers and funding through CFWIP (MNR) if approved. The project will include the planting of numerous trees in the area. We are also working at contacting landowners on Limestone Creek to plan future plantings.



The Progreston Dam, 14 feet high, may have major thermal heating impacts on the lower river.