CREDIT RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

Light Lines

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Looking Forward 2009

CRAA Stream Rehab and Conservation Work

John Kendell

With the excitement and enthusiasm of 2008 behind us 2009 may hold a chance to finally break through the barriers that have been holding the Credit River fishery back. This could truly be the pinnacle year for CRAA and the work I have been spearheading with hundreds of CRAA members for 17 years now. What do I mean? Read on…

By far the greatest time commitment for me, Louis and many volunteers has been opening up access to the Credit River for migratory fish to reach vital spawning grounds. While a small minority may not favour this, the vast majority do. As long as we put in place mechanisms to ensure the great resident trout fishery is protected from over fishing and other impacts we have an obligation to make the Credit River 'all it can be'. The Norval Fishway and Fish partition are the two largest projects CRAA has been involved in for a very long time. Talk of both goes back to the late 90's, over a decade ago.

Norval Fishway: The fishway is on track at this time, with our engineers finalizing the flood risk assessment for MNR regulations. Once complete the engineers will complete a final design and we will be ready to move forward with construction. The MNR has been very supportive and last fall CRAA and MNR formed a partnership to build the new fishway. This brings in MNR funding and allows Louis and I to keep the ball rolling. The land owner, Mr. Reed has been very supportive and we thank the Reed family for their ongoing support. If all goes well the fishway will be built in the summer of 2009.

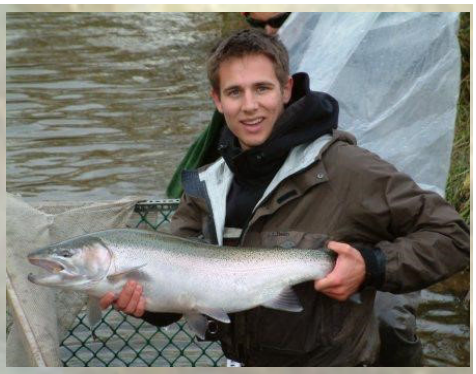
Cam and Dave with two of the 49 atlantics from last fall.

Fish Partition. We are progressing through the barrier EA, slowly, but surely. While slower than some would like, it is coming along and the engineering firm is making good progress. I hope the team will be ready to move to the next public open house in spring 2009 and I expect we will be looking for possible construction later this summer as well.

This Steelhead received its third CRAA tag last spring.

Once these two massive projects are complete it will dramatically change the way CRAA operates, as fish transfers, manually lifting fish and raising rainbow trout at the hatchery will be all but history. This will free up thousands of hours of volunteer time from CRAA to put into other efforts to protect and restore the river.

Spring Fishway: Hopefully the spring of 2009 will be the last year of manual lifts and transfers if the above projects are completed. Nonetheless, we are starting in the most advanced position ever and spring is still to come. Last fall CRAA volunteers transported 300 wild steelhead up the river so we already have 300 fish done for the spring lift. It should make breaking the 1,000 fish mark much easier come April.



Big Credit River Steelhead

Spring Steelhead Tournament: Justin Elia, the tournament director has thousands dollars in prizes for the event. This event helps raise funds for stream rehabilitation and is fun for all. You will likely be ahead by just joining in the event with door prizes for all that often exceed the entry fee cost. And what a great event for new anglers where they can learn from more experienced anglers in the pro/am format we use. The tournament will be held one week after opening day. More details about the tournament can be found on page 3.

Spring planting: We have many volunteer and crew planting events planned. From touching up over 50 sites on the main Credit River to targeting new sites in Milton on 16 Mile Creek and other new sites in Georgetown, Terra Cotta and Caledon it will be a very busy year. CRAA is applying for funding from many organizations to hire a crew and plant trees for the season. Let's hope the funding comes through. Other planting planned includes the Forks on the Chan property, sites along Rogers Creek, Black Creek, Silver Creek and more. A major planting in Inglewood along the Caledon Golf Course is also planned, where the

Looking Forward 2009—Continued

By: John Kendell

crew planted over 500 trees in 2008 and we are targeting another 1,000 in 2009.

Stream rehab: We have stream work planned in Erindale to finish our boulder placement under our CFWIP permit if additional funding becomes available. This will be the installation of two more wing deflectors in the clay banks to try and scour out the pool. Work on Rogers Creek in notching the concrete at the Graydon dam and possibly some bank stabilization work on another property. On Black Creek Derek Konieczny has organized more projects and we will be installing a livestock fence on the Odorico property and continue planting. Derek is also working on another cattle fence on that tributary. Both of these sites are excellent brook trout and Atlantic salmon waters. Derek and I are also working on access to another horse farm to install fencing and plant trees along the top of the Stewarttown head pond and I am discussing planting opportunities with the golf course below Trafalgar Road. Other work is on the books for 16 Mile Creek, Carolyn Creek, Mullet Creek and hopefully Wolf Creek in Terra Cotta with CVC.

Hatchery: Joe Ward, Peter Swift and the whole hatchery team are doing some incredible work for the fishery. Last fall they managed to collect about 40,000 brown trout eggs from our brood stock and they were down every day through December and January picking eggs and making sure they hatched with minimal fungus. The MNR has also sent us 20,000 brown eggs. When all is said and done we should have at least 40,000 brown trout fall fingerlings for release. The team did a great job raising about 40,000 steelhead fingerlings from 2008 and are targeting the same in 2009. Eggs will be collected at the Streetsville fishway as always. The other exciting news is CRAA is slated to receive 10,000 advanced Atlantic salmon fry to raise and stock. The fry should arrive in April and we will hold them until they smolt in the hatchery to maximize survival and return rates. CRAA was the first NGO to raise Atlantic salmon back in 1995 so it will be nice to get back into the game and hopefully add to the returns in a few years.

One of the many Atlantic salmon CRAA is hoping to see return to the river this fall.

Atlantic salmon: CRAA will be monitoring the Streetsville fishway for Atlantic salmon all summer and fall as we did in 2008. Let's hope we see continued and growing returns. CRAA will again be ready to collect and transfer Atlantic salmon as they return. OFAH will also have a crew out to assist us and MNR has been very active in the program with our area biologist, Mark Heaton putting in hundreds of volunteer hours to help the fish return. Let's keep our fingers crossed for some more coasters too!

Fall brown trout: CRAA plans to continue the transfer and lifting of brown trout as well. We only had 70 browns come back in 2008 but with renewed stocking by CRAA and the adult transfers past Norval we expect to build the population once again. Hopefully the Norval fishway will be operational this fall and we can lift the fish rather than have to transfer everything. Time will tell.

Orangeville STP : At this time CRAA still needs a volunteer to be involved in this Environmental Assessment. The Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) released over 30 million litres of raw and/or tertiary sewage after Christmas in 2008. The impacts of this are potentially horrific on water quality and fish health.

TU's STP bioassay: TU conducted tests using live brook trout in cages below the Orangeville STP in 2008. The results were tragic and frightening. Below the stream that has the STP outflow most trout died in a matter of hours. Test fish upstream from the outflow survived 11 weeks and fish below the outflow died in a matter of hours or overnight 1 km downstream. There is clearly a huge problem. The Georgetown STP on the other hand was upgraded a decade ago and the outflow is so clean we have juvenile trout living all year in it and have actually been able to raise Atlantic salmon in the outflow which are the most sensitive of all.

NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS TO MANAGE PROJECTS

CRAA is managed exclusively by volunteers. We need you to get involved and make a difference with us. CRAA needs volunteers to help organize projects on Bronte and 16 Mile Creek, the Orangeville STP EA, assist with fund raising and more. E-mail CRAA or come out to a meeting to get more involved!

The fish of the future in one of the CRAA hatchery tanks

Dave holding a huge lake-run brown trout

2009 Spring Steelhead Tournament

Justin Elia

I'll be running this year's spring steelhead tournament. Last year we had 48 people enter, our best turn out ever. We will be meeting at Erindale Park (Dundas Parking Lot) in Mississauga at 5am sharp on Saturday May 2nd, 2009 to suit up, pair up and start fishing. The tournament will end at 1pm with lunch to follow. The format of the tournament for those not familiar is an experienced angler is teamed with a non-experienced angler. The team who catches the most total inches win prizes. The top draw prize is a brand new Islander Float Reel, everyone is entered into this draw with registration.

Just a few of this years sponsors include:
Raven has donated a Float Rod and Float Reel combo
Dickies Work Wear
Streamside Inc.
Centerpin Angling
Natural Sports
Hook Line & Sinker
Wilson's
Normark
Islander
We should end up with between $3,000-$5,000 worth of prizes so there is a lot to go around.

Remember that this is a fun tournament, and all money collected goes towards the event, the prizes and the club.

If anyone has any questions or would like to enter, please feel free to contact me at justin.elia@ca.cushwake.com. Make your cheques out to Credit River Anglers Association and send them to the following address, **please include a note with your email address, whether or not you have a digital camera, and your experience level**:

Justin A. Elia
64 Thorncrest Rd.
Etobicoke, On
M9A1S9

Entry fee is $30 and the entry deadline is April 15th. This is a great opportunity for people new to fishing who would like to learn a lot from an experienced angler.

In case of Flood or severe weather conditions which may heavily effect the tournament, the reschedule date will be May 9th, 2009.

Credit River Anglers Association
Light Lines
Contributions are welcome from all members *and* non-members alike.

Send you articles of interest, messages or suggestions to:

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News and Announcements

Highlights within CRAA!

Spring Steelhead Lift

Ever want to see what CRAA is all about?

- Come down to the Streetsville fishway and lend a hand at the fish ladder. The work is fun and rewarding!
- Watch the CRAA message board for more information!

Record Trout Production

The cold summer of 2008 with record rainfall has made for one of the best year classes for trout and salmon on record, and not just in the Credit River. Now if the summer of 2009 is cool we could be in for the best salmonid fishing ever in the next 5 years. Sites all over the Credit River have shown above average trout and salmon numbers and many sites that are normally void of trout were overrun.

Highlights/Executive Team Update

- CRAA is looking for people to join the Executive Team for the following positions:
  - —> Fund Raising Chair
  - —> Special Events Chair
  - —> Public Relations Chair
  - —> Orangeville Sewage Treatment Plant
  - —> Tree Nursery Chair
  - —> Website Help
  - —> ROPPA 15 Rep
- CRAA is also looking for Sponsors for the spring steelhead tournament, if you or your company are able to help with a donation or some prizes please contact:

  Justin Elia via email: justin.elia@ca.cushwake.com

New Membership and Member Renewal Information

Are you concerned about the future health of the beautiful Credit River and Bronte Creek watersheds including all their tributaries? Do you enjoy fishing, hiking and other activities in the valleys? Do you want a cleaner river, better fishing and a cleaner environment for the future?

Then you should join CRAA NOW. CRAA's address is on page 3.

Membership Fees: 1 year $10.00 3 years $30.00 (Please enclose cheque payable to CRAA)

Name : _____.

Address : _____.

City : _____ **Postal Code** _____.

Tel (Res) : _____ **Tel (Bus) :** _____.

E-mail Address : _____.

Yes! I want to volunteer for: _____.

Are Sea Lamprey Native to Lake Ontario?

Brian Morrison

Theoretical thought has lead to the belief that sea lampreys are indigenous to Lake Ontario indicating a post-Pleistocene invasion similar to other species typical of the Atlantic coast (e.g. Atlantic salmon, American eel). As many people realize, sea lampreys are able to surmount obstacles that even the strongest salmon are not able to, which leads to the belief that if Atlantic salmon and American eel were able to gain entry into Lake Ontario via the St. Lawrence River, then surely sea lamprey would be able to as well, with Niagara falls acting as a barrier segregating the Upper Great Lakes from Lake Ontario. Until recently, there was little empirical evidence to support this. American eel are still able to migrate from Lake Ontario to the Sargasso Sea (North Atlantic Ocean) where they spawn and then the juveniles return to Lake Ontario to mature (although the R.H. Saunders Hydroelectric Dam highly impedes both upstream and downstream migrations).

In 2004, researchers from the Hudson River Foundation for Science and Environmental Research Inc. and Department of Environmental Medicine examined the genetic structure of sea lampreys along the Atlantic coast and the Great Lakes. Utilizing mitochondrial DNA (haplotype frequency – haplotypes are combinations of alleles), it was determined that significant differences occurred between geographic regions (Lake Superior, Lake Ontario and Atlantic coast drainages). Pronounced differences in haplotype frequency patterns between Atlantic coast and Lake Ontario drainage collections, together with arguments against the viability of canal passage, strongly support the idea of post-Pleistocene natural colonization by at least one of the hypothesized pathways (three colonization pathways are proposed). What this means is that sea lamprey are likely an indigenous species within Lake Ontario. This evidence is corroborated by Bryan et al. These also support the literature of invasions into the Upper Great Lakes within the last 100 years (first observed sighting in Lake Erie was in 1921). The conundrum lies wherein how we manage sea lamprey in Lake Ontario. Biologically, they are integral part of the Lake Ontario fish community, where they would have coevolved with lake trout and Atlantic salmon since the last period of glaciation 10,000 – 13,000 years ago. Evidence also supports that the Seneca strain of lake trout, which is likely the only remaining strain of lake trout from a lake which had native sea lampreys, appears to be the only strain which has behavioural adaptations and environmental preferences that may aid it in avoiding predation by sea lampreys in the Great Lakes.

Predation by sea lampreys on native fish may have also been exacerbated by commercial fishing impacts. Commercial fishing pressure is usually concentrated on larger fishes. These were the same size classes preferred by the sea lamprey. A reduced level of mortality is incurred by the larger fishes from periodic feeding. Mortality of smaller individuals is much more severe, or when larger fish are repeatedly attacked. With the commercial fishermen harvesting virtually all of the large fish, both commercial fishing and the lamprey were exploiting the entire breeding population. This is supported by Lett et al., who demonstrated that the number of age-classes and the mean weight of trout were important characteristics for lake trout mortality from sea lampreys. Large lake trout, when present, were subject to most of the lamprey predation allowing for survival of smaller trout.

Following the period of extensive commercial harvest of lake trout and other commercially important species in the Great Lakes, researchers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Duluth, Minn. have uncovered that contamination from dioxins and similar chemicals were high enough in Lake Ontario to kill every lake trout hatched there from the late 1940's to the late 1980's – fishing or no fishing, lamprey or no lamprey. This is also the period of time where lampreys were implicated in the major declines in lake trout abundances.

Albeit there are few references available to support sea lampreys presence before the middle of the 19th century, lampreys were likely present, but in much lower population sizes. The massive changes in habitat that extirpated Atlantic salmon also impacted most species within the Lake Ontario watershed. These changes, which included the loss of habitat due to extensive pollution, land clearing (deforestation) and dam construction altered spawning stream habitats, likely impacting sea lampreys along with Atlantic salmon.

The societal perception of sea lamprey has chastised these animals with draconian beliefs; as malevolent and bloodthirsty. People utilize these animals as scapegoats for any perceived decrease in our top predator species within Lake Ontario. How would we go about changing the perception people have about sea lampreys, or will this ever happen? Some strides have been made elsewhere, such as Vermont, where officials have accepted that sea lampreys are native to Lake Champlain (also see Waldman et al). Landlocked Atlantic salmon were once in Lake Champlain as well. If we do start managing sea lampreys differently, this could allow millions of dollars to be spent on other problems plaguing the Lake Ontario ecosystem.

Spey and Float the same pool!?

John Kendell

Could this be possible? Just having the two words (Spey and Float) in the same title may bewilder a few anglers, but it can be done. All it takes is a little knowledge, understanding and courtesy.

Fly fishing and in particular spey fishing or swinging the fly is growing with great popularity on many Ontario steelhead rivers. And big rivers such as the Credit, Grand, Saugeen and Maitland are arguably some of the best options for spey fishing.

Sadly I often witness and have many friends experience difficulty fishing when a spey angler or a float angler joins them on the same pool. Since I enjoy both methods of fishing steelhead I have gained a unique experience that many steelheaders do not have; knowing how to fish together in relative harmony. All too often I hear a float angler griping about some fly fisherman hogging the pool and walking up and down the pool (rotating as it is called). And all too often I hear spey anglers gripe about a float fisherman growing roots in one spot or 'greasing' them out of the pool.

Firstly, it is quite possible for a spey fisher and float angler to fish side by side in the same pool and not stress each other off the water. However it takes understanding of the difference in both approaches to fishing the water and some courtesy towards each other.

Understanding some basics of Spey fishing (for the float guy to read). The fly line is cast on a 45-60 degree angle down and across the river below the angler and with a straight fly line the fly swings across the pool to below the angler. A spey cast (like a roll cast) is used to send the fly for another pass. Normally every two casts the angler takes one or two steps downstream (rotating) and this process repeats to the bottom of the pool. Over 20-30 minutes the angler will work the pool from top to bottom. Their fly has worked the pool from side to side, covering the pool in a series of swings through the rotation. Once at the bottom of the pool the angler will either head to the next pool or start again from the top with a new fly.

The float angler (this is for spey anglers to read) fishes the pool in a linear fashion; doing drifts parallel to the flow. The float angler covers water by simply casting further or closer and allowing the current to carry the float downstream. They can stand in one location and drift far below them and cover an entire pool from that one spot.

So, how can these two methods fish together, with one guy fishing up and down and the other across? I'm glad you asked!

I have to say river etiquette rules so whoever gets there first should have first rights. But this is where the issue comes from. Many float anglers walk in and see a guy swinging at the top of the pool, working his way down. What do they often do? Walk into the middle of the pool, below the spey angler and start drifting. To them this is natural. Giving a 50 foot gap is like miles to a float angler, but the spey angler is cursing under his breath. By doing this the float angler has basically just cut the spey anglers drift and rotation in half. Sort of having someone stand in the middle of the pool your trying to float fish.

So, if you're a floater and you walk into a pool and an angler is swinging his way down, don't walk in below him. If you're on a big river and long pool such as the Saugeen give yourself lots of space, but on a smaller river like the Grand or Credit stop and ask. Find out their intention. If they wish to swing through the pool no problem. Just step in upstream of

Continued from previous page.

them, giving them enough space to spey cast. As the fly angler rotates down the pool you can either extend your drift or rotate and drift behind them. Just be conscious of how far you allow your drift to go and bring the float back up when they are doing their cast. Otherwise the fly line is over your line and a mess results. Spey fishing often targets the most aggressive fish. So don't worry, there will be plenty of fish just waiting to grab your roe bag or pink worm after the spey line has passed.

Now if you're a spey caster and a couple of float guys are in the pool it is a different approach. Firstly, I always suggest stopping and speaking to the other anglers. Most people on the river are good guys and don't bite. Be friendly. All too often fly anglers are labeled as being snobs. Not true. So don't fit the stereotype. In this scenario the spey guy will likely start at the top

above the float guys, or well below them allowing space for their drifts. And as your fish down the pool you can either ask the float guy to give you a few swings through or simply walk around him and fish below if he does have roots.

The most important items to learn are communication, understanding and courtesy. We are all out there to enjoy the fishing and the river.

And I highly recommend that float anglers go to a spey clinic or try a fly rod and that the spey anglers dare to touch a float rod too. You may find you like it, or at the very least understand the other guy on the river.

16 Mile and Bronte Creeks

Milton – 16 Mile Creek Tree Planting

CRAA is working closely with the HRCA, MNR and the towns of Oakville and Milton to improve habitat on 16 Mile Creek. Last year CRAA planted 5,000 trees on 16 Mile Creek in Oakville. In 2009 CRAA is targeting some major planting work in the Milton area with several thousand more trees. CRAA has applied for funding through CFWIP, Evergreen and other sources to purchase trees for planting.

16 Mile Creek has a very small run of steelhead, but it has great potential. Long term goals are to improve access and habitat so the population can flourish and create another wild fishery in the western GTA.

Bronte Creek is well know and has a decent run of steelhead and salmon and resident browns. However Bronte Creek has several issues damaging the migratory fishery. First, the Lowville Dam blocks most fish from reaching spawning grounds. Second, three large dams are causing temperature stress problems that greatly limit natural reproduction. Third is lack of habitat on Limestone Creek, the primary nursery water for the system. CRAA has planted several thousand trees on Limestone and throughout Bronte watershed, but much more work is needed.

CRAA needs a few anglers or conservation minded folks to step up and help manage these and other projects on both Bronte and 16 Mile Creeks. There are dozens of properties that need tree planting and other stream work. If you are willing to help organize events or want to become more involved let us know. E-mail the president at info@craa.on.ca.

New Credit Planting and Rehab sites coming online

John Kendell

CRAA's reputation continues to grow with the amazing conservation work we complete every year. As forests grow larger, fish visibly spawn and now Atlantic salmon have a chance of returning, the public understand just how committed CRAA members are to the environment. And they are inviting us to work with them to improve their piece of the river in record numbers.

The Spring Fishing Show in February 2009 was exciting. Almost a dozen property owners who own land with the Credit River or tributaries came to our booth and either asked if we can work on their property to plant trees, or learned of the opportunity and were willing to invite us in to help the river.

Several members including Derek Konecizy, Peter Swift, Louis Milo and myself have been speaking to property owners and working on access in the field as well. Here are some highlights:

Black Creek: Derek has developed plans with the Ordocio Farm to install 400 feet of livestock fencing to keep horses out of Black Creek and continue planting efforts at the site. I recently met the managers of the North Halton Golf Course and they are also willing partners to ensure Black Creek is protected and improved. With these recent properties CRAA has worked on almost every private property on Black Creek from Limehouse to where it joins Silver Creek. Black Creek is the top system for natural reproduction of steelhead, brown trout, brook trout and Atlantic salmon. Only one small horse farm remains to be planted in Stewarttown.

Main Credit River: I recently spoke with the manager at Upper Canada College and they are also willing partners to improve the health of the river through riparian planting. I will be meeting their staff in spring 2009 to discuss options and develop a plan to work together. UCC is the only major property owner between Heritage Road and Terra Cotta we have not done work on yet. Upwards of a dozen smaller residential land owners in Glen Williams have also come on board this year, as well as property owners in Inglewood, Cheltenham, Terra Cotta and Silver Creek. We are also hoping a new member from Huttonville will be able to open access for our staff to plant along the river in the vicinity of the old Huttonville Dam.

I have also been working with parks staff from Oakville, Milton and Burlington to develop or continue planting plans on **Bronte and 16 Mile**. But CRAA needs help on these systems from members who can step up to manage some of the projects.

The only major properties on the Credit below the Cataract that CRAA has not planted will be the Huttonville dam area, Lionshead Golf Course, Sanford Farms in Old Derry Road and the two Mississauga Golf Courses above the QEW. If we can bring these remaining large properties into the rehabilitation and riparian planting fold the Credit will have a chance at attaining the world class fishery we all know it can be!

CRAA will also be assisting with work on some eastern tributaries with one planting planned for the **Ganaraska** and other works on the drawing board.

Remember: More Trees=More Fish!

CRAA Members

Receive a 10% discount at the retailers listed below on selected items!

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Report all tagged fish to CRAA!

www.craa.on.ca OR info@craa.on.ca