



LIGHT LINES

SPRING 1999

Volume 10, Number 2

Best Year Ever for CRAA Projects

The year got off to a great start with a \$10,000 grant from the MNR's minister's office, the Honourable John Snobolen to fund CRAA's many stream rehabilitation efforts and hatchery. On the heels of that, the Toronto Star Salmon Hunt, in conjunction with the Toronto Sportsmen Show donated \$10,000 to CRAA again.

Last year we expanded our land owner contacts and planned out many new projects for the future. I wrote a very long (60 pages) funding request to Environment Canada's Eco Action 2000 and submitted the request before the January 31st, 1999 deadline. This past week the grant for an additional \$40,000 was approved. This past week the City of Mississauga also passed the by-law to allow CRAA to operate the launch ramps and collect fees as we did last year for fund raising.

Due to our success of raising money we will be able to complete more and bigger rehabilitation projects this year. Since March 1st of this year Aaron Bodiam and Mike Brady have been working full time for CRAA with two Co-op students Aaron organized. The work crew of 4 will grow to six by mid-May with the new funding approvals. Based on our budget surplus we may hire more students to work all summer and/or fall to complete even more stream rehabilitation work.

CRAA will also hire six students to operate the Port Credit weigh station for the Toronto Star Salmon Hunt and collect launching fees. If your looking for work, send us a resume, quick!

CFIP adds to work

CRAA applied for approximately \$13,000 in CFIP funding for all our 1999 projects. The great news is most have received funding 80% funding, with the exception of one project.

Our many thanks to the Aurora MNR Peel area Biologist Ken Cornelisse for his assistance. New personnel and a willingness to work together have put CRAA and the MNR on course to ensure the Credit River becomes all it can be!

CRAA Fund-raising

Fund raising through raffles and membership adds to our projects, however these methods have never provided the significant funds the major funding approvals have.

1999 Budget

A copy of the budget will be available at the CRAA Annual General Meeting for those of you who are interested. Due to the large budget of 1998 and 1999 after completion of the treasurers report we will have the books audited for filing.

With a surplus like we have we will consider expending money on the Inglewood barrier, fish ladder at Norval, pool creation in Erindale Park and more.

Tight Lines!

Credit River Anglers Association LIGHT LINES

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

Send your articles, messages
or suggestions to:

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Website : <http://members.xoom.com/craa/>

Or call the CRAA 24 hr hotline at:
(905) 608-0169

Contributions by John Kendell, Aaron Bodiam
Mike Brady and Mike Tost

CRAA Executive

President	John Kendell
Vice President	Mike Wiedemann
Treasurer	Jack Gibbons
Secretary	Grant Davidson
Membership	Jurgen Richter
Volunteer Cord'tor	Aaron Bodiam Mike Brady
Fish Rearing	Mike Tost

Commercial advertising rates:

1/16 page - \$20.00, 1/8 page - \$30.00

1/4 page - \$50.00, 1/2 page - \$80.00

Newsletter production: 300

CRAA Nursery Growing

As many of you know, CRAA has started our own small nursery to supply or reforestation needs throughout the year. With generous grants from CFIP, the MNR's Ministers Office, the Toronto Star Salmon Hunt, EcoAction 2000 and our own funding we have collected and/or purchased close to 20,000 trees for planting.

At this time we have over 1,500 willows potted, over 300 red maple, about 700 cedar, 1,000 pine and 1,500 poplar/sugar maple/birch mix. To date we have planted over 6,000 willow stakes, 200 red maple, 1000 willow cuttings, 500 poplar and 500 pine. We still have 2,000 stakes to be put in, 3,000 cedars to collect and 4,500 pines and poplars to be delivered from another nursery.

Sheridan Nurseries has donated a couple acres for CRAA to use near the river so watering and access is easy. Now comes the hard part, collecting the cedars and plantings all these trees. This task will surly keep our students very busy for a long time this spring and summer and when we have a volunteer day we need all the help we can get.

Vandalism at the Hatchery

On March 31st someone vandalized our hatchery by knocking down the four new raceways that were loaded with 60,000 steelhead eggs and 500 Atlantic salmon fry. The fry escaped into the ponds and will likely be eaten by birds or larger fish. The eggs all died due to movement from the fall.

For those of you who know, the hatchery can only be accessed with chest waders so we are sure the idiots who performed the illegal act did it to intentionally harm our steelhead stocking program. If anyone is caught for the crime we will ensure they are prosecuted and held liable to the fullest extent of the law.

CRAA MUST HAVE MORE HELP!!!

By : John Kendell

CRAA has undertaken many large projects and we desperately need more members to manage components and oversee projects. Currently Mike Tost manages the hatchery full time, Jurgen covers the membership lists, Aaron Bodiam and Mike Brady are the main volunteers, Jack Gibbons covers the books (although he really wants to pass it to someone else) and I am left with everything else.

I regret I don't have more time, but averaging 80 hours a week at my real job does not leave much time for the club, my wife and a little time to fish. Fighting ignorant anglers who don't want steelhead above Norval and developers who want to pave over the valley takes a lot of time. Then there is writing the newsletters, letters to MNR, CVC, businesses, funding applications and more. Managing the work crew, the boat launch crew, the nursery, the reforestation work, stream rehabilitation planning the fish ladder and more. This all takes time and I have been putting over 20 hours a week in, but it's not enough. Then there is the hotline, calling volunteers, planning events, organizing materials, etc. Our core 6 guys cannot do it alone, **WE NEED MORE HELP FROM YOU!**

The following is a list of positions you could cover.

Nursery Manager

Henry Veenema has agreed to manage the nursery, but we have many other jobs that need to be done in a responsible manner.

Boat launch controller

Assist in the hiring of a crew and ensure they do their job. Also check daily income reports and ensure all funds are passed to the treasurer.

Volunteer Callers

We need at least two more people to set up a

phone tree or calling program to contact volunteers for work days and changes.

Work Day Organizer

We need someone to ensure food, drinks, materials and tools are ready at work sites for volunteers.

Light Lines Editor/write some articles

I'm sure your tired of reading my awful writing all the time. Someone who knows how to use WP 7.0 or another word processor and has a computer and has a few spare hours to put together a newsletter would be nice.

Hotline Operator

The task here is to update the hotline weekly and check the messages twice a week and return any messages. This would only take a ½ hour a week, surely someone can spare the time.

Secretary (must be filled)

Take notes at the General Meeting and file the clubs business papers (5 hours/year)

Treasurer (must be filled)

Keep the books and ensure all club money is accounted for. This is a tougher job and someone with a computer is needed. CRAA has just bought a book-keeping program and a CA will set us up. The treasurer will do the payroll, deposits, reimburse expenses, and keep receipts organized to be reimbursed by government funding. **The Treasurers position MUST Be FILLED.**

If all these positions are not filled we will not be able to continue our **VERY IMPORTANT** rehabilitation work. I and a few others cannot do all the work alone. Most of our volunteers are under the age of 20. We NEED some adults who have experience and can spare a few hours a week? Call the hotline if you can help and come out to the general meeting!

Fishing the Forks of the Credit

Despite some reports of slow fishing the Forks of the Credit continues to produce excellent catches of resident browns and brook trout. The fishing season is a little shorter than that for steelhead, but the weather tends to be much warmer.

The Forks of the Credit fishing offers exciting fishing for beginners and experts, spin fishers and fly fishers. However, some sections have special regulations of no organic bait, single, barbless hooks and one fish limits with minimum 20" requirements. Below is a map of the area and sections with special limits.

TU Section

The TU section is at the lower end of the good resident trout fishery running from the Grange Side Road (near Flapjacks Restaurant) to 500 m upstream of McLaughlin Road. This is a special Regulation section so no organic bait is allowed and most fish are under the legal size limit of 20". There are many good log jams and runs that produce fish on dry flies, wet flies, spinners and body baits. A few years ago I saw someone land a 21" brown from the Grange Road pool on a small Rapala (don't forget to remove the extra hooks, only one hook or one treble hook is allowed). Also, don't forget to pinch the barbs down. Most deep pools have 5 to 8 fish over 15" and other small fish will be in the runs.

Forks of the Credit Provincial Park

The Forks is a long section with no access other than foot, but there is some good fishing if you are willing to take a hike through some beautiful countryside. Where the two branches of the Credit join below Belfountain there are some good browns and scattered specks. In the West branch that flows though Belfountain there are good specks in

the pocket water, as well as young Atlantic salmon that the MNR has stocked. On the North branch the river flows for 2.5 km to the Cataract with many small pools and lots of riffle water. From the confluence of the two branches to the park gate the river is generally fast water with few large fish. However, at the bottom of the park there are some nice pools and deep runs. About two thirds of the way to the Cataract there are some nice pools in what is called the meadow section. Many 20" browns are in the area and two excellent pockets have 20 to 50 brookies each, where large springs enter the river.

Above the Cataract

From the Cataract to Highway 24 exists an incredible brook trout fishery that is protected by special regulations. This section has one of the highest brook trout densities so there are lots of fish to catch. The brookies usually top out at 12" (30 cm), but they are fun on dry flies and are often easily fooled. Remember, no worms up here or our friend the CO, Mark will give you a fine.

Tactics

A fly rod is the most common choice, but not the only one. A hatch chart is available from the CVC and Izaak Walton's website, but generally the common flies such as caddis, stone, iconichia and drakes will cover you. Dry flies are the most fun and I have good success with hendrickson's, caddis and small mayfly patterns. For small fish you can drop a dry fly anywhere and work it carefully to ensure no drag. However, if you want large browns, the ones all that fly fishing folklore is about you need to work harder. These fish have been caught many times and probably know more about your fishing tackle than you do. The big fish usually come out at night or when the big hatches are on.

Fishing the Forks of the Credit Continued

Their most vulnerable period is the first few weeks of opener, when that sharp hook from last year is temporarily forgotten and feeding after a long winter is on. Many big browns fall to Hendrickson's in early May and the Giant Drake hatch in mid summer (late July usually). There are a few resident rainbows in the Forks (mostly hatchery escapees) that are fun on a 2 wt rod. Unfortunately some have been killed by some ignorant fly fishers throwing them in the grass in the idiotic belief they are harming the browns. They are most often taken on small fluffy white dry flies in the fast riffle water.

Some anglers float fish the upper river and have excellent success. Using wet flies like stonefly and mayfly nymphs under a small float anglers can outproduce the most experienced fly fisher. The float allows for a drag free drift and allows you to present your pattern under those deep log jams where fly line won't always go. Bottom bouncing riffle water with bead head nymphs and other flies can be productive, but there are lots of snags.

Finally, casting lures like spinners and small body baits can be very productive. Those big browns didn't reach 20" just eating size 18 mayflies. Small spinners in silver and small body baits in a range of colours can really produce. The best time for lures is when the water is off colour after a rain. The big fish are often out feeding on minnows and will happily grab your lure.

You may get some strange looks if you cast a Rapala in the Forks, but as long as you have your barbs bent down, only one hook/one treble and don't keep any fish under 20" your legal. I suggest a close reading of the regulations and err on the side caution. Some idiot fly fisher actually told the guy off I mentioned earlier for using a Rapala even though he was following the regulations.

See you on the river.

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CRAA Annual General Meeting

May 20th, 1999 at 6:30 PM

The Agenda:

- An update on the **Fisheries Management Plan**
- **Positions** to be filled to manage CRAA's activities
- Overview of **1998 works** completed (slide show) by John Kendell
- Slide show by Nottawasaga Steelheaders on the Boyne River (Chris A)
- Learn about CRAA's massive Rehabilitation plan
- Review 1998 Expense Report and the 1999 Budget
- Your chance to buy hats, golf shirts, sweat shirts and more with the
NEW CRAA LOGO.
- See our baby Atlantic salmon and Steelhead sac fry on display
- Annual election for CRAA executive

SLIDE SHOW OF CRAA'S REHABILITATION WORK

VIDEO of underwater fishing and CRAA's projects by Rick Matusiak

MAY 20, 1999

6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Credit Valley Conservation Office

1255 Old Derry Road West

Free refreshments and snacks - Raffle tickets available

Your attendance and ideas are very important. CRAA needs more members to help organize projects and continue our GREAT work. There are five important positions that MUST be filled by members to ensure CRAA can continue our stream rehabilitation work and improve the fishery! It doesn't take a lot of time, only a few hours and the rewards will be more fish in the Credit River!

1999 Fish Ladder Results

The Spring lift started in a craze as tons of chrome steelies filled the ladder. The weather turned warm very fast and the ladder operation started March 27, 1999. We broke our best day record in one lift with over 280 fish handled. We ran out of volunteers and time after working three hours into darkness with flood lights going. The next day was just as hectic with close to 200 fish handled in one lift. The following week the ladder was left open and an estimated 3,000 more fish passed on their own. Lifts continued on Easter weekend with low clear cold water hampering numbers. Our best day was 48 lifted. Over the next few weeks small numbers of fish passed but no rain. Finally when the rain came it was too little, too late.

Year Class	Avg length	Avg weight	% of run	% wild	Average age
1996	47 to 52 cm	2 to 3 lbs	25-35%	95+%	2-1 (3 years)
1995	55 to 62 cm	4 to 6.5 lbs	25 to 40%	93+%	2-2 (4 years)
1994	62 to 68 cm	7 to 9 lbs	5 to 10%	25-40%	2-3 (5 years)
1993	68 to 74 cm	9 to 12 lbs	5 to 10%	25-40%	2-4 (6 years)
1992-90	74 to 93 cm	12 to 19 lbs	20 to 25%	78-85%	2-5+ (7+ years)

Normally the Credit River's largest running year class are 2-3 (5 years) fish that average 8 lbs. Due to the poor 1994 year class the 2-3 year class was the weakest, followed by the 1993 year class. By next year the 1992 year class (the cold wet summer of 92) will be dead of old age and we will have a gap in our big fish, however there will be lots of fish under 8 lbs.

I have not broken down the numbers yet, but here is a rough estimate of the year class break down this year.

Silver Creek Threatened

A large developer is trying to push through plans to build nearly 500 houses on the banks of Silver Creek, downstream of Cedarvale Park, along a prime cold water section. Approximately 75 homes are within the flood plain/valley and yet the CVC and regional planners have given the initial go ahead. The developer wants to fill part of the valley/ravine in and build over a groundwater discharge area.

Fortunately CRAA is not alone in fighting this. A large group of residents has taken up the cause and has been pushing the Halton Hills Council to stop the valley development. CRAA has become involved and will lend our knowledge and technical support to the residents opposed to the project in the valley. With two small storm water ponds and

500 houses the impacts on the valley could cause a serious loss of fish habitat.

I recently spoke with a member of the Georgetown council and all voted to oppose the project. However, it now goes to an Ontario Municipal Board hearing (OMB) for decisions. I will keep you posted as I hear more about the proposed project.

Meanwhile, another developer is bulldozing cedars along Black Creek for a smaller development within the valley. Where are the government agencies and councils that are supposed to protect these areas?

Steelhead run down!!!!

At this time the steelhead run has come to a finish with a serious decline in the numbers of fish running the Credit River. CRAA estimates roughly 4,500 to 5,000 steelhead passed the Streetsville ladder and dam from the Fall of 98 to May 1st, 1999. This is down 35% from 1997/98 counts and is the smallest run we have seen in many years. The poor run is due to many issues outlined below.

Mis-management of the stock - The past Management Plan (1989 to 1999) eliminated steelhead access past the Norval Dam due to the Atlantic program, biased members of the old committee and no steelheaders voicing their opinions. Since 1990 stocking was also severely cut by up to 92% from its peaks over the early 80's. By stopping most natural reproduction and decreasing stocking the formula equaled NO STEELHEAD! (This is changing thanks to CRAA's efforts)

Drought - The serious drought the region has been suffering for the past year and a half has diminished groundwater and severely lowered base flows. The lack of rain has also made it difficult for fish to enter the river and has limited high water periods when most fish run. Rain Dance Anyone?

Weak 1993 and 1994 year classes - The summer's of 1993 and 1994 were dry and hot. This equals bad steelhead reproduction. Add to that no access up the Credit River and you got it, bad year classes for the Credit. Read the Fish ladder update for more details.

Major increase in lake harvest - Last year was very calm and all anglers and charter boaters were able to hit the deep water and have big days on the bows. Preliminary results from 1998 creel surveys suggests a major increase in steelhead harvest.

There is Good News!

The 1995 and 1996 year classes are very large in the Credit due to CRAA's adult transfers in those years. 1997 and 1998 may be lowered by the drought of the past 18 months, but CRAA's hatchery efforts will ensure there are still good numbers of fish.

With the NEW Management Plan nearing final stages (writing that is) the future is bright for steelhead. I have fought hard with strong support from the membership and steelheaders alike against ignorance and even hatred of steelhead. Due to the fight steelhead will be passing the Norval Dam once again, and soon in big numbers. All the middle reaches from Inglewood down to Glen Williams and Silver Creek will be producing wild steelhead soon. Once this happens we can concentrate on rehabilitation and FISHING!

Upcoming volunteer Days

May 15, 1999 8:45 AM to 1 PM

Black Creek Reforestation and habitat enhancement project. Volunteers will plant trees along a 600 m section of Black Creek above the Stewarttown Dam to shade the creek, create overhead cover and stabilize the banks for brook trout and Atlantic salmon. Meet at 8:45 am in Stewarttown. Take Trafalgar Road north from the 401 and turn onto Stewarttown Road just after you pass Black Creek.

June 19th and 26th, 1999

Help stock our young steelhead into the Credit River. Meet at the hatchery both days at 8 am.