



# Light Lines

Journal of the credit river anglers association  
Summer, 2004  
Volume 15, Number 1

## PHASE III—CREDIT RIVER REHABILITATION PLAN

What are the next steps in the associations activities? What will be our main focus for 2004? As you may know, the Credit River Anglers Association has spent extensive time and resources planting trees in stressed areas of the Credit River Valley. Those efforts will be continued and augmented—to ensure high survival rate of previous years planting efforts, as well as apply knowledge acquired from past experience to new works for greater success.

Transplanting trees from a vacant owner, CRAA has been able to pro-stretches of the River with relatively opportunity, is to eliminate mulching cation—criteria being 1) indigenous, summer grass cover for high survival

Focusing on creating an arboreal water diffusing/absorbing root mass planting caliper trees in many popular areas help relay to the commu-banks are. These accessible areas are working with other stake holders such as land owners (like municipalities), it is possible to come to very beneficial ends.

Streetsville large caliper tree planting with Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion (2002)



lot, with the permission of the land vide instant impact to exposed low cost. Another benefit to this trees that are perfect for our appli- 2) tree height exceeding maximum 3) accessible.

buffer to provide shade, and rain to eroding banks, we have started lar park sections. These high im- nity how important naturalized also good for media coverage. By

Although many planting projects are slated for 2004, the association is constantly looking to find more projects. The idea that our work seems to be unending is half true—as land owners see what work can be done for essentially no labor or material cost to them, the projects become self perpetuating, as neighbour after neighbour sees value in keeping banks covered and stable.

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- ??Science Behind Size Reg's
- ??CFWIP updates
- ??Club News
- ??Summer Gar Pike
- ??Editor's Perspective
- ??Project info
- ??Lowville Park Planted
- ??\$30,000 from Eco Action
- ??Membership notes

### Member Contributions to Newsletter

Its with great pleasure that we can include some summer fishing suggestions from Blaire Miesner. His depiction of Longnose Gar action is worth checking out. For others interested in contributing a fishing factoid, or a story of their own please observe the following criteria.

- 1) Send contributions by email to [info@craa.on.ca](mailto:info@craa.on.ca)
- 2) Include at least one picture that we can add to the article
- 3) As you will see Blaire's Story is a bit jammed into a 2 page spread. For ease of reading, and layout, keep stories to about 1000 words.
- 4) Preferred document format is pure text, although Word documents can be processed.
- 5) Please indicate if you want your name included in the write up, if not you can be AA—Anonymous Angler.

In the end, what the membership gets out of the newsletter, is what they put into it. Thanks for your help. —*editor*



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:

Credit River Anglers Association  
128 Queen Street South  
PO Box 42093  
Mississauga, ON L5M 1K8

E-mail : info@craa.on.ca

Website : www.craa.on.ca

Contributors to this newsletter:

Brian Morrison, John Kendell, Matt Taggart, Blaire Miesner

**CRAA Executive**

President : John Kendell

Vice President : Mike Tost

Treasurer : Jim Kendell

Secretary : Matt Taggart

Membership : Vacant

Fish Rearing : Mike Tost

Webmaster : Jerry Tusa

# News and Announcements

## Lowville Park Plated by CRAA—2004

*CRAA volunteers planted some 500 trees and shrubs into Lowville Park as the first stage of the planting work on Bronte Creek. The majority being cedar trees 4' tall were planted in open areas adjacent to the river. In the future they will provide important habitat and shade to trout and salmon.*

*Watch the CRAA homepage and our e-mails for the next volunteer event!*

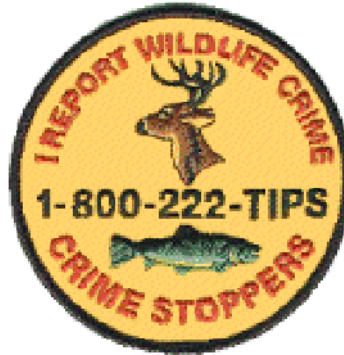
## CRAA ADDS ANOTHER MUNICIPAL ALLY TO GROWING LIST

In late January, CRAA representatives met with City of Burlington Staff to discuss projects on Bronte Creek in the future.

The City has been involved in major bioengineering projects, most visible to anglers, the Hidden Valley Park Grindstone Creek improvement.

It is hoped that collaborative works with the experienced staff will pay dividends for future projects on severely stressed stretches of Bronte Creek and others.

Members with project suggestions or time to volunteer can reach the city parks department, or info@craa.on.ca to identify themselves, or their project.



# Get Yours At

**CRAA Members receive a 10% discount at the retailers listed below!**

<http://www.outdoors.on.ca/wildlife/crest.html>



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# Who's Who

### Board of Directors (elected)

Chairman John Kendell (since 1994)

Board Mike Tost (since 2000)

Board Mike Brady (since 2000)

Board Peter Petos (2003)

Board Brian Morrison (2003)

### Executive (elected)

President : John Kendell (since 1994)

Vice President : Mike Tost (since 2000)

Secretary : Matt Taggart (since 2002)

Treasurer : Jim Kendell (since 2001)

### Management Board (by appointment of the board)

Hatchery Manager : Mike Tost (since 1997)

Membership Mgr : How about you?

Volunteer Cdnt : Give a little back.

Web Master : Jerry Tusa (since 1998)

## Our Mandate : To protect, restore and enjoy our rivers

The editors Perspective.

In an effort to stimulate some discussion, and input to Lightlines, I am going to articulate what I see is the vision of the Credit River Anglers Association (CRAA). An important part of what I would like to do is reveal some of the inner workings of our association, and encourage others to participate.

Many people seeking memberships in clubs are looking for community, and regular meetings. Others are looking for discounts, or magazines, or just a bumper sticker like “real fish don’t eat pellets”. The Credit River Anglers Association is an entity that fits the dictionary definition below.

ASSOCIATION : **as·so·ci·a·tion** -*N* -An organized body of people who have an interest, activity, or purpose in common; a society.

We are an organization of people who have a common purpose. The purpose I have conveniently placed at the top of this page. Our purpose as an association is to protect the resource, to restore the river to historical health and abundance, and most of all to enjoy the river.

The activities of the association originally centered around the clean up and accessibility of Erindale Park in Mississauga. After success there, members have come and gone, and a few die-hards have continued to participate. In that time the focus of the association has shifted to a broader and far more challenging scope. With sensible scientific guidance, and permission from land owners, municipalities, conservation authorities, and ministries CRAA has worked with other clubs to initiate a program to stabilize eroding banks, reduce high summer temperatures, and limit extremes of flood and drought. The plan to achieve this in the face of rapidly advancing urbanization includes building collaborative relationships with Conservation Authorities, Municipalities and Cities, and landowners.

Obviously such ambitious works can’t be performed with out money. We seek funding from an ever expanding list of donors regularly.

To keep our projects on the go we have gone so far as to take our works outside the volunteer ranks, by hiring seasonal student staff. We need these employees to plant trees and water them, to beat the bushes so to speak for new projects, and to keep our agenda moving forward while our volunteers are living out their regular lives full of responsibilities of kids, husbands/wives, jobs and other commitments.

As a legal body—the association is registered in accordance with the Ontario’s Corporations Act. In compliance with the act a board of directors manages the affairs of our not-for-profit corporation. The board must consist of a fixed number of directors. Our organization has 5 director positions including a chairman and 4 board members. Each director must be at least eighteen years of age. The directors are elected by the members and each director must also be a member of the corporation.

As a member, it is your right and democratic responsibility to take part in the election of directors. You can also steer the course the association takes by providing ideas for activities, and requests for volunteer assistance for projects.

The association also has executive positions that are filled by elected members, and management positions that are appointed. The elected positions are President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, while the appointment positions are Hatchery Manager, Membership Manager, Web master and Volunteer Coordinator.

We don't have roe bag or fly tying classes, we don't get together for slide shows, and we don't organize trips to the far reaches of the globe. But that doesn't mean we can't. The association isn't specifically a float fishing club, or a fly fishing club, or spinner fishing club—the purpose is to work for accessibility, abundance of opportunity, and enjoy the fruits of our efforts. My perspective, if I can be so bold, is to join your fly fishing club, go to your weekly meeting, but participate in association activities as well, as no other club has the broad scope or the funding for such ambitious projects.

Our Members are interested in various fluvial waters —from the eastern creeks to the head waters of the Credit, as far west as the Grand River or even the Maitland. You will find our members fishing bodies of water in Georgian Bay country, and even Superiors north shore. The purpose of doing all that traveling is to benefit from good accessibility, and plentiful fish. The question I put to the membership then is this: ***Why can't we have good accessibility, plentiful fish, and opportunity for our kids here in the GTAA?***

TELL US YOUR PERSPECTIVE SEND US YOUR LIGHTLINES INPUT TO INFO@CRAA.ON.CA

*The angler stands attentively at the bow of the boat. He silently says to himself while gazing through the binoculars "Come on fish, lets get to it, show yourself!" As the boat slowly glides across the glass calm water, cutting through the morning mist the man listens prudently, anxiously awaiting the sound of splashes and snapping jaws.*

*With still no sign of fish, the keen angler contemplates changing spots. Perhaps these fish that were so active the previous night are still sulking in the depths, recovering from a bait fish induced hang over.*

*All of the sudden, breaking the silence and the monotonous drone of the trolling motor, a magnificent fish reveals her location with a spectacular leap - clear out of the water. Startled by the excitement the fearless fisherman gingerly casts his bait of choice towards the foolish fish. The minute the bait hits the water a fish porpoises, with another and another close behind. It doesn't take long, soon the slack line becomes taut but the eager angler knows he must be patient if he is to have any chance of hooking the fish. After what seems like an agonizingly long wait the hook is set with an awesome power, however the line goes slack yet again.*

*Disappointed he begins to retrieve his line knowing another customer is near by, but in an instant the rod is almost jerked from his hands and the reel starts to scream, then the mighty fish makes for freedom by breaking the surface with a loud splash.*

# Summer

The previous was not a description of a day Tarpon fishing in the Florida Keys, nor was it a portage trip to a remote lake in the mountains of British Columbia for wild Rainbow Trout, it was however a description of what you could experience in your own back yard when you give Longnose Gar a try this summer on a cottage country lake in South Central Ontario.

The Longnose gar is a rather unique fish found in abundance through out much of Southern Ontario. Gars are long, narrow fish with beak like snouts filled with terribly sharp needle like teeth. They have a lung-like gas bladder which enables them to breath air which gives them the advantage of being able to live in poorly oxygenated water. Gars have a rapid growth rate during the first few years after hatching, they have been known to reach eighteen inches with in a year.

Finding gars can be very easy and at the same time difficult. These elusive prehistoric fish can be found in the same spawning bays as bass and pike during May and June once the warm spring sun warms up the shallows. After the spawn is complete gars can be found in unbelievably large schools in many of the same bays used for spawning. The only trouble is finding the right bay, as not all bays will hold gars. Its just a matter of exploration, although I have noted that the gars seem to cruise in the sandy areas of the bays. I'm not sure if this is coincidence or that the fish are drawn to the sandy areas because of the warmer water from the sunlight absorbing sand.

Later on in the summer into the fall particularly when the surface temperature is at its warmest gars can be found in open water in what might seem like the middle of nowhere. They can be seen gulping air at the surface and jumping right out of the water. The best time for open water gar action is just about anytime when the weather and boat traffic keep the surface calm, weather is more of a deterrent to fishing than boat traffic, unless of course you are in a main channel. When the surface is choppy the gars don't come up. I have yet to try night fishing for gars but it seems like it would be quite an exhilarating experience. I have read that they are active at night, so that will be something to check out.

My favorite method for catching Gar is an effective and simple one known as "Running and gunning." Gars are a warm water fish, and conveniently seem to be most active when you are most uncomfortable. Many of my best outings for Gar have been during blistering hot days with the sun beaming down directly upon me. For gear, you do not need to get very sophisticated. I use the same tackle I use for Bass, Walleye, and small to medium sized Northern Pike. A 6'6" medium action spinning rod with a fairly sensitive tip and reasonably large capacity reel spooled with 10 lb. test monofilament. This set up will suit you fine for any Gar you will be encountering in these waters and most other summer fish. For hooks I like to go with a simple snelled hook around size 2-4 preferably.



# Gar Pike

At this point in the article I know your probably thinking one of two things:

1. "Why would this guy purposely fish for those ugly things?"
2. "Why would he just use a plain snelled hook, I thought Gars had razor sharp needle like teeth?"

I use a snelled hook with no steel leader for a couple reasons, if I'm using smaller minnows it makes them sink too fast and they swim naturally. Another reason is that its just more convenient because I have lots of snelled hooks and I have never had a gar bite me off when using one. For weight I use one split shot about 25 inches or so above the hook, on occasion I will use heavier or lighter shot or add a second split shot depending on where the fish are cruising in the water column and wind and current velocity.

For bait I like to use minnows, I prefer to use minnows in the size range labeled "Medium" by most bait shops. These Gars aren't very picky any kind of minnows a good minnow to use, even chewed up minnows or half a minnow. Many times I have had the same Gar repeatedly attack my minnow when I was reeling in. Some fish have taken the minnow up to 6 times until they were hooked, even if all that was left was the head. Larger Northern Pike suckers, chubs, and shiners that are commonly sold as "Large" minnows will work well but I'd rather just save my money and not bother with these unless they are all you have to use because when the bite is on the fish don't care what you throw at them. During tough conditions smaller minnows seem to out produce the big ones anyway.

Sunfish are the answer to all your prayers if you are broke, running out of minnows, or you want to save some later for the Smallmouth Bass you were going to fish for before you saw the schooling Gars. I have read about guys chumming with sunnies too, cut them up and throw them out in gar spots to get the bite going when fishing is tough, I have never tried this though.

The specific tactic used to catch them is easy as well. Just cast out your minnow in the direction a surfacing fish is heading or cast your bait right into a school hanging out on the surface. After your bait lands keep your bail open and let another 20 feet or some of line out and keep it slack, just let it sink on its own accord and wait. When you see your line moving or the bait looks like it has stopped sinking very gently pull the rod back and if it bends, you have a fish on. If this happens, drop the rod back to give some slack line and do one of two things, set the hook as hard as you possibly can and cross your fingers or gently set the hook with a sharp moderately slow side sweeping motion.

Option number two seems to work best for me, that is the only way I set the hook. It seems like you might hook all yours gars very deeply using this method but I have only done that once, and I have caught a lot of gars this way. When a gar first takes your bait he will run with to held gingerly at the front of his beak, and you have a very small chance of hooking a gar in that area. After he stops running he will work the baitfish back towards its mouth. If the fish gets off don't worry about it, he'll be back very soon. There's plenty more fish near by.

Spoons, in-line spinners, jitterbugs, and spinner baits with a chunk of nylon rope for a trailer will all work, I have caught them on all these lures. As well, Husky Jerks are supposed to work very well. Make sure you use a steel leader with lures though because attacks are vicious.

Despite the rampant heat and money spent on bait fishing for Gars is something everyone should try. It's easy, fun, and great fish to pursue when teaching kids how to fish or for taking someone out who doesn't fish often. I have not found any books on gars yet but [www.garfishing.com](http://www.garfishing.com) is a very informative site with links, GArticles, a board, weight conversion table, and pictures.

By Blair Meisner



### Membership Renewal

Members are reminded that your membership may have expired. If it has, please take a moment to mail a renewal to CRAA so we can continue to restore this great river! See page 8 of the newsletter for the renewal form.

**CRAA**



**\$30,000**

in funding from Eco  
Action granted to  
CRAA!

## Membership Updates

### Volunteers needed:

Volunteers are still needed to manage the membership roster, including the printing and mailing of the newsletter and renewal notices. A further volunteer is needed to help manage volunteer to spread the word and make sure people know about our project events and how they can be involved.



### New club crest:

CRAA's crest has been revised slightly to show a chrome salmonid, rather than a steelhead in spawning colour, better depicting our clubs goals of improving all salmonid populations.



With new memberships. Car decal with renewals!

### Delay in newsletter

The executive apologize for the long delay in getting this newsletter out. With everyone being so busy with their family/work and involvement in the club projects has prevented putting this newsletter together sooner..

A shortage of volunteers is another factor. If you can spare some time to help, let us know! We hope timing will be better in the upcoming months!

## Eco Action Funding—\$30,000.00

After exhaustive work from John and Brian to put the application together for Eco Action the situation looked great. With further dedication from Linda Robertson, an Eco Action project manager CRAA's application was giving a solid review and moved to the final funding stages. Following yet

another string review, we were hit with a poor review over the large tree transplant program. These reviews are done by Eco Action for guidance to the funding committee. After further review, Eco Action came through with a solid financial backing of \$30,000 over two years to aid CRAA in tree

planting along the Credit and Bronte Creeks! With Eco Action and other sponsors the project will receive in excess of \$350,000 cash over three years, of which 2004 is the middle year!

## CFWIP—MNR best year ever for CRAA

CRAA applied a wide range of projects for CFWIP funding from MNR in 2004. Projects included the standard hatchery and fishway, to new sites on Bronte and the Credit. In all, roughly \$14,000.00 in CFWIP funds have been granted to CRASA this year. These will pay for trees and other related material to plant several thousand metres of river banks.

CFWIP provides very important seed money to help CRAA and hundreds of groups complete conservation work around Ontario. Highlights of this year include:

Limestone Creek, Lowville Park, Camp Sidrabene and Petro Canada Park all on Bronte Creek. On the Credit we received funding for: Fishway work, hatchery, Britannia

planting, Sligo planting and more! Many of the CFWIP planting has been done, but several sites will be completed in Fall, 2004.



## Phase III Update—Success Continues

Words cannot describe what has been accomplished. What were mere fields, cut grass and eroding stream banks just a few short years ago have changed, to what many said could never be again. The rivers edge in so many sections, for so many thousands of metres is changed, to trees, grasses, shrubs and more. Homes to birds and animals and making a better home for the fish too!

Here is a look at some of the



highlights to date!

From left to right; planting a 16' spruce, hundreds of mature trees, poplars in Glen Williams 20' tall after 4 years, 14' white pines, after 5 years in Terra

Cotta, 40' oak in Streetsville, hundreds of metres of stabilized bank—Norval.



### Hatchery Report

The hatchery is doing very well in 2004. We chose not to raise Atlantic salmon and brown trout over the winter to give our tired volunteers, foremost Mike Tost a break. In April we collected about 120,000 steelhead eggs, of which 95% have hatched. Mike and a few volunteers have been stocking the fry into our designated sites in the Georgetown area for the past few weeks.



### Sanford Farm—Planted by land owner

CRAA has offered the owners of Sanford Farm free tree planting along the river for several years. The farm owner, who actively farms the great property has not invited CRAA to plant, but did indicate two years back he would plant it himself. While we were perplexed at the refusal of our FREE tree

planting, we wholeheartedly hoped he would plant the farm. Well, this past May crews hired by the farm owner were planting away! How exciting, to have such key landowners supporting the riparian planting on their own. I wish them all the best and thank the farm for their efforts. I also leave

an open invitation that CRAA will be pleased to assist in future planting or maintenance through our volunteers and summer crews, for free of course.

Sanford farm is located in Meadowvale, and is private property.



### Some of the Science Behind Size Limits

Size-based regulations should reduce the biological impact of angling but not restrict angling opportunities. Size limit regulations are usually intended to increase the size of fish caught, maximize yield and protect the spawning population while maintaining angling quality often at intense levels of effort. There are three basic types of size limits: (1) minimum size limit whereby all fish below a designated size must be released; (2) slot size limit where fish within a designated range must be released (protected slot) or retained (harvested slot); and (3) maximum size limit where all fish above a designated size must be released. Size-based regulations require a thorough knowledge of growth rates, maturation schedules and recruitment for an individual fish population.



*Minimum Size Limits:*

In theory, minimum size limits allow fish to grow and spawn at least once, providing more big fish for angling. In order to be effective, growth rates of young fish must be rapid and stay that way after the limit is imposed. For steelhead management, this regulation would maintain excellent angling opportunities for large numbers of fish and for trophy steelhead. Large trophy steelhead, usually on their last spawning run would be available for harvest.

*Slot Limit:*

Slot Limits protect the brood stock of a population while allowing anglers to take smaller eating size fish and larger trophies. Slot limits are considered to work best if there is good reproduction, slow growth rates, high natural mortality (especially amongst younger fish ie. walleye), and heavy angling pressure. For steelhead, this regulation primarily leaves the smaller precocious fish vulnerable to harvest, and therefore not allowing them to spawn at least once in their lifetime.



*Maximum Size Limits:*

This regulation is utilized to protect trophy sized fish in order to create a quality angling experience. This regulation is generally unpopular and is not widely utilized. This regulation has the same implications for smaller fish as the slot limit, but would protect the large repeat spawning adults.



## Membership and 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 2.

**New Member Fees: 1 year \$25.00 3 years \$55.00** (Please enclose cheque payable to CRAA)

**Membership Renewal : 1 year \$20.00 3 years \$50.00**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_.

Address : \_\_\_\_\_.

City : \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_.

Tel (Res) : \_\_\_\_\_ Tel (Bus) : \_\_\_\_\_.

E-mail Address : \_\_\_\_\_.