



# LIGHT LINES

WINTER 1997

Volume 8, Number 1

## 1997

CRAA will be continuing our work to improve the fishing within the Credit River watershed with a number of new projects that have been planned. We are going to be looking for more help than ever from our members and their friends so we may complete all the projects.

### FISH LADDER

We will only operate the fish ladder in April if we are able to transfer the steelhead past Norval. However, the MNR does not want us to transfer after the success we have had in reproduction in the last two years. It's very frustrating for me to have the MNR fighting us to stop transferring steelhead following the phenomenal success from our efforts (up to a 3000% increase in steelhead reproduction). We need to ALL get after the MNR to make them aware that steelhead are wanted by all of us.

### ERINDALE PARK PROJECT

This will be a series of days that will be combined to improve the fishing in Erindale Park. We are going to be constructing some very large bank stabilizers and deflectors to increase the number of deep pools in the park. We will need a lot of help for these projects so make sure you take the time to help out at least once.

The work days will begin in late June and end in early September. The dates will be published in the Spring 'Light Lines', due out in April.

### CRAA NURSERY

CRAA will be collecting cuttings of poplar and willow trees in February for our nursery. In April there will be a couple of tree collection and potting days planned for cedar trees. If you know of any areas where there are a lot of cedar trees that we can transplant, please let us know over the hotline.

### GOALS

The main goal of CRAA is the improvement of Salmon and Trout fishing within the Credit River. This goal is being realized by an established plan with numerous clear and concise steps aimed at increasing the number of salmon and trout in the river, lakeshore, and Lake Ontario in general. The positive benefits will be felt most strongly by those who fish Port Credit and the Credit River.

In this new year that will be our 9th year of success, we hope you will join CRAA volunteers and members to make our fishing better!



## **Credit River Anglers Association LIGHT LINES**

Contributions are welcome from  
members and non-members alike.  
Send your articles, comments and suggestions to:

Light Lines Editor  
Credit River Anglers Association  
60 Dundas Street East, P.O. Box 48042  
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Or call the CRAA 24-hr Hotline

Commercial advertising rates:  
1/16 page - \$15, 1/8 page - \$30, 1/4 page - \$50  
Maximum size 1/4 page.

Newsletter production: 200 copies per issue  
Printed on recycled paper.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **FEBRUARY**

#### **14-16 SPRING FISHING SHOW**

CRAA will again be helping at the Spring Fishing Show providing volunteers for the "Kids Fishing Area". If you are available to help for two or three days of the show please leave a message on the hotline. We have nine volunteers signed up, but we could really use a few more.

CRAA will also operate our booth at the show providing information to the public and soliciting new members.

#### **16-28 WILLOW CUTTING FOR NURSERY**

During this two week span CRAA will conduct two or three evenings of collecting willow and poplar cuttings for our nursery. If you would like to help out please leave a message on the hotline so we can contact you on the evenings we plan. The weather will determine which evenings we collect the cuttings.

### **FEBRUARY CONT'D**

The cuttings will be put into cold storage until April when they will be transferred to bedding material in the nursery. This is the most successful way to root willows and poplars which are very important shade trees for the banks of the Credit River.

### **MARCH**

#### **22 FISH LADDER CLEAN-UP**

29 Rain date

CRAA members will clean the fish ladder area in preparation for the spring steelhead run. This will include removing debris from the fish ladder channel and opening the ladder so steelhead can pass through on their own.

You will need waders (chest), gloves and extra clothes incase you get wet.

### **APRIL**

#### **1-30 FISH LADDER OBSERVATION**

We will need a list of volunteers who can check on the fish ladder on a regular basis for the month of April to ensure the water flow is at the proper level.

At this point, the MNR does not want us to lift and tag steelhead at the ladder. Why, I don't know, other than the fact that we have been much more successful at the fish ladder than they anticipated.

We are currently having negotiations to allow CRAA to manually lift steelhead and tag them for research purposes, but the government still has the final say!

*Continued on page 3*



MAY

## TBA CRAA GENERAL MEETING

CRAA's Annual General Meeting will be held during the month of May to inform members of new goals and objectives, and to hold elections. If you are interested in running for a position please let us know by mail or over the hotline.

## JUNE - AUGUST

On at least four different occasions CRAA intends to complete work in Erindale Park that is aimed at creating more holding pools so we may have better fishing in the park.

Once we have completed this work we hope to see a major improvement in angling success due to increased numbers of fish holding in the park, rather than rushing up the river.



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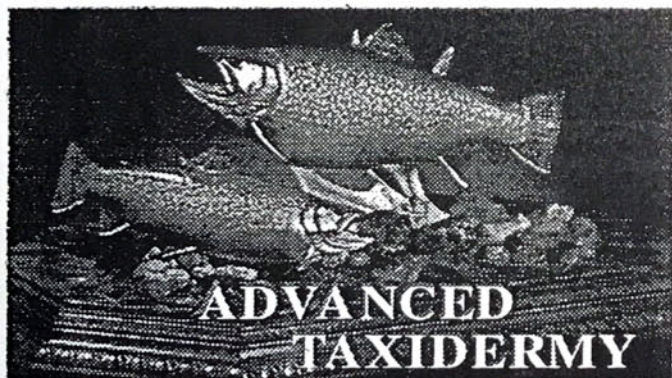
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## STREETSVILLE FISH LADDER

### HOW DOES IT WORK

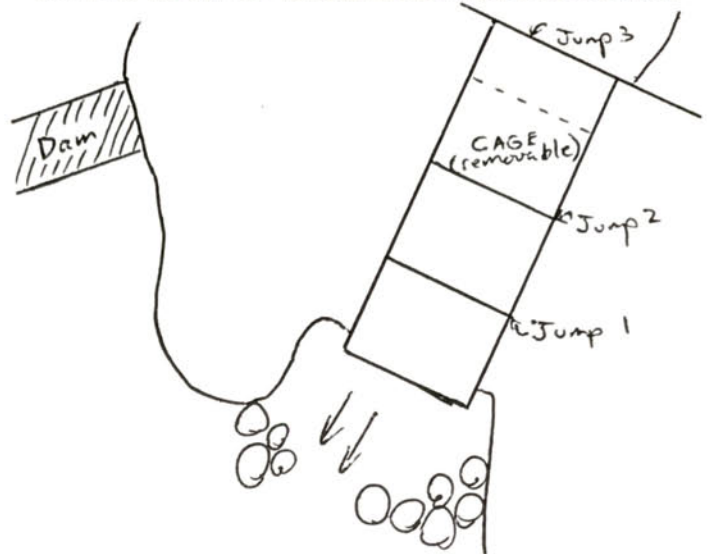
Over the years I have operated the fish ladder I have been asked how it works many times. Therefore, I wanted to explain the operation of the ladder so everyone understands it.

The fish ladder follows a simple principle of dividing a big jump into a group of small ones, similar to the locks used in canals. However, fish ladders are only suitable for fish that can jump successfully, which are mainly salmon and steelhead. Therefore this type of ladder would not be suitable for bass or walleye.

The ladder works on the notion that the fish are attracted by the current flow. Once they find the flow, they jump over the small jumps and pass the ladder. However, the fish are not wise enough to realize that the ladder is the best or easiest way around. They simply must luck into trying the proper channel.

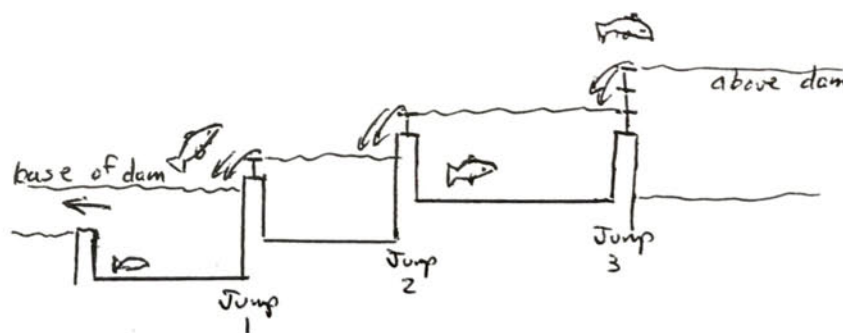
The Streetsville Dam is an example of the fish lucking into the correct path. The fish ladder can carry between 5% and 20% of the rivers flow in Spring, depending on water levels. Before the MNR completed the work at the fish ladder steelhead would swim up the river, and if they passed the entrance to the ladder they would enter the dam pool. At that point they would try with very little success to jump the dam. Meanwhile, the fish that chose the fish ladder would easily pass the dam and swim up to Norval.

OVER-VIEW OF STREETSVILLE LADDER



MECHANICS OF THE FISH LADDER

SIDE VIEW



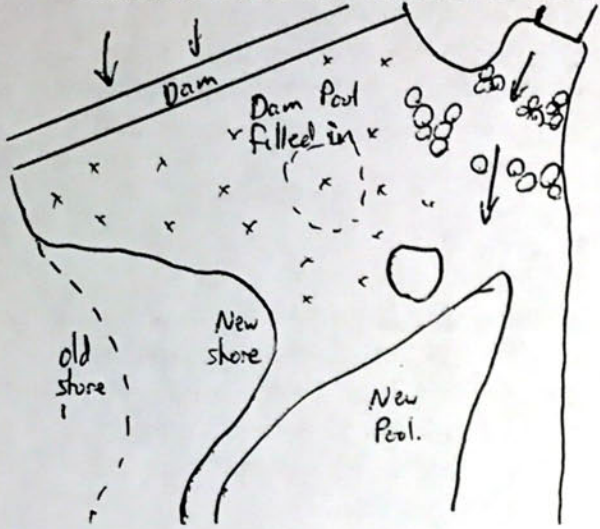
With the changes made at the Streetsville Dam last summer we expect a big increase in the success of the ladder. By filling the dam pool in the steelhead are forced to hold below the fish ladder entrance, thus greatly increasing the success of the ladders attraction.

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## STREETSVILLE FISH LADDER CONT'D

### CHANGES AT THE FISH LADDER



### THE IMPORTANCE OF FISH LADDERS

Without fish ladders salmon and trout would be unable to ascend rivers to reach the best spawning areas. This would result in a catastrophic decline in wild fish (such as the extinction of Atlantic salmon from Lake Ontario). If the fish ladder did not exist at the Streetsville Dam the number of wild steelhead in the Credit River would drop by an estimated 80%. The decline would be closer to 100% if steelhead could not pass the dam, however, there are some days when water flow is just right for a small number of steelhead get past the dam.

### WHAT IF NORVAL HAD A LADDER?

Well, Norval does have a ladder according to the MNR, however, it is three feet above the current water level. In Fact, when the remnants of the Hurricane hit last fall water still did not flow through that ladder, even though the Credit was up more than four feet.

If the MNR allows CRAA to construct a fish ladder at Norval there would be some big changes in the steelhead population. For the 1996/97 season the number of wild steelhead is estimated at 10 000 fish with an additional 4 000 hatchery steelhead. If the middle sections of the Credit River were available to steelhead the number of wild steelhead would jump to an estimated 40 000 over the following decade.

That many steelhead would put the Credit River on the map of the world!

Some anglers worry that so many steelhead would create problems at the Forks of the Credit with the resident trout fishery, but the electro-barrier would ensure that no steelhead entered the area. On Silver Creek the escarpment blocks access to most of the speckled trout water, and on Black Creek the dam in Stewartown blocks access to all of the excellent speckled trout water.

The net result is no impact on the resident fishery, while the fishery in the Credit River, the mouth of the credit, and the lake is greatly improved!



## NIAGARA STEELHEAD

Let me tell a short fish story from last November. I was fishing with my two buddies, Shaker and Chris near St. Catharines, but fishing was pretty bad. So, we decided to give the Whirlpool a try on the Niagara.

After the strenuous walk down to the whirlpool (about 500 steps and 1 km of rough trail) we arrived, only to meet seven guys who were leaving because nothing was happening! Our favorite spot at the back of the pool was occupied so we decided to get more exercise and walk to the front of the whirlpool, another 1.5 very treacherous kilometers. We moved our floats up to run a 15 foot lead and set into the water. After a couple minutes I missed a good hit, but Shak thought I was telling a fish story. Next drift, boom, there it was, a thirteen pound chromer peeling line of the float reel. After 400 feet it decided to jump a few times and head towards the fast rapids at the front of the pool. During the disbelief that Shak was suffering he broke off a huge Brown and was soon into a nice little chromer, about ten pounds. Chris got the tough job of tailing both fish, which is not easy with three foot waves crashing on the slipper rocks.

With this early success we moved back to our respective spots only to suffer a triple header, of which I lost mine, but Shak and Chris did a little better. Shaker's steelhead was a generous 16 lbs while Chris got the baby at 5 lbs. Needless to say, we had a lot of fun, and by the end of the afternoon we had hit about 25 steelhead in three hours, and only been spooled twice.

If every day was like this the Niagara would be extremely crowded, but it's not. The Niagara is a river that demands a lot of energy, **SAFETY**, and a little luck. The secret to success is trying different spots. I have had numerous days at the Niagara when fishing was awful at the back

end of the whirlpool and awesome at the front, not to mention the other way around. There have been other days when Devils Glen (below the whirlpool) is loaded with fish, and Queenston is dead.

### WHAT YOU NEED

Waders, or better yet, a survival suit, your rod and reel, extra floats, hooks, weights, and at least one extra spool of line. For bait I always use roe tied in all colours and sizes, ranging from single chinook eggs, to bags that have 25 chinook eggs in (true golf balls).

You must also be in good physical shape! There are lots of huge rocks that require you to crawl, climb and slide across. Above all else, you must be **CAREFUL**! The Niagara is no place to fool around. If you fall into the river your odds of surviving are pretty slim.

However, the rewards are great. If you are careful and lucky the steelhead are extremely powerful as well as much larger than average. But don't expect fish all the time. I've had more days where I hit 2 fish than days I hit 10.

Good Luck

