



Media Update: 2008-06

Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project

After more than 3 years in the planning stage, the Moon River walleye spawning bed enhancement project was conducted from September 24 – October 31, 2008. The project comprised the importation of over 1100 metric tonnes of spawning rubble and large boulders that were deposited downstream of Moon Falls in the vicinity where Georgian Bay walleye traditionally spawn. Multiple boulder clusters were constructed on the south shore as well as optimal size granite rubble added to the north shore.



Walleye spawning habitat enhancement work in progress on the north shore of the Moon River of eastern Georgian Bay downstream of Moon Falls.

Eric McIntyre, project coordinator for the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council said: “This will increase what was formerly a woefully small area of spawning habitat by over 30 times. Furthermore, this enhanced spawning habitat is designed to be functional throughout the wide range of flows typically experienced on the Moon River during the walleye spawning and incubation periods (mid-April to late May). Walleye didn’t submit comments during our public consultation phase, but we think they are going to be pretty happy when they show up to spawn next spring.”

The spawning bed enhancement project is the centre-piece of the over-arching Moon River Walleye Rehabilitation Plan, formulated by the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council and the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit – Lake Huron Office, of the Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR).

Dave Gonder, management biologist with the Lake Huron Unit said: “The Moon River walleye population is at or near historic lows. Data collected in the late 1960’s estimated the spawning population at almost 30,000, but by 2005 the number of spawners had dwindled to less than a couple

of thousand. The provision of optimal walleye spawning habitat that is functional throughout the wide range of historic flows is a key component in rehabilitating this population.”

Mr. McIntyre further commented: “This project is a great example of real, tangible benefits to the fishery resource from a network of partners all pulling together to make it happen.” Partners in the project included: the Ministry of Natural Resources – Parry Sound District Office and the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Georgian Bay Land Trust, Great Lakes Conservancy, Ontario Power Generation – Evergreen Energy, and member associations of the Georgian Bay Association – Sans Souci and Copperhead Association and Woods Bay Community Association. The project was coordinated by the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council – a member of the OMNR’s Ontario Stewardship network.

The project was primarily funded by the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA), a cooperative partnership program between the Provincial and Federal governments to enhance ecosystems in the Great Lakes basin. Generous donations from Ontario Power Generation – Evergreen Energy and private donors comprised additional funding necessary for the project.

Project construction was by W.S. Morgan Construction in association with Red Rock Barging and Reiger Contracting; all from the local area.

Further information about this and other projects the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council is working on can be found at www.helpourfisheries.com.

