



Lake Huron/Georgian Bay Watershed: A Canadian Framework for Community Action

This project was provided partial funding through the Lake Huron/Georgian Bay Framework for Community Action to increase the capacity of local organizations, engage the community, and turn local interests and concern into environmental action consistent with 'Framework' principles – see www.lakehuroncommunityaction.ca

Project Synopsis

PROJECT TITLE: Nottawasaga Watershed Improvement Program (N-WIP), 2014-2015

RECIPIENT: Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (www.nvca.on.ca)

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

To improve the health of the Lower Nottawasaga River and Southern Georgian Bay by working with local communities to complete water quality improvement projects on Wasaga Beach and Collingwood area tributary streams.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

N-WIP Steering Committee; local landowners; area schools; agricultural associations, non-governmental environmental organizations; Essa Township; Essa Healthy Communities Committee; Nottawasaga Steelheaders Association; South Simcoe Streams Committee; private businesses, Environment Canada, Province of Ontario, local municipalities and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

PROJECT LENGTH: 12 Months

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The 2014-15 work season of this ongoing community action program has targeted implementation of four stream habitat restoration projects designed to integrate the engagement of volunteers.

- At the Willow Creek site west of Barrie high school students from Stayner Collegiate Institute and St. Joseph's Academy are using a soil anchoring approach to install trees in the stream channel to create wing deflectors. These in-stream structures narrow the channel and are placed in an alternating sequence to re-establish natural meanders. The narrow outside meander bends are starting to deepen and now provide pool habitats available for large predator fishes such as northern pike.
- At the Pine River site in Angus, the same soil anchoring approach is being applied to stabilize an erosive stream bank using Scots Pine trees and volunteers have been replanting the site the last 2 years using native tree seedlings. This is designed to enhance trout and salmon nursery habitat and to protect a local recreational trail.
- The Black Ash Creek project in Collingwood involves the extension of migratory rainbow



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trout nursery habitat using heavy machinery to stabilize the banks and narrow the stream channel. High school volunteers from Jean Vanier Catholic School will play a complimentary role in planting trees, installing live willow stakes to re-establish shading vegetation on the site and the installation of bio-degradable erosion control blankets.

- At the Lamont Creek site north of Stayner, volunteers are planting trees and installing erosion control blankets to reduce nutrient inputs and enhance aquatic habitat in order to further restore the area where livestock exclusion fencing and stream bank stabilization have already been completed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Coniferous trees planted (~80) in Willow Creek as part of the wing deflector construction project;
- Eroding stream bank (~20m) on the Pine River stabilized by anchoring trees (~40) at the bottom of the slope;
- Stream bank stabilized (140m) including in-stream habitat creation on Black Ash Creek, and
- The toe of an eroding stream bank stabilized using in-stream habitat structures along 90m of Lamont Creek.

NEXT STEPS:

Continue to implement the plan for two additional years. The plan includes a project which would involve the construction of a bypass channel on the Pine River in Angus designed to re-route the stream away from a 100m long eroding bank cutting into a community soccer pitch and to re-establish the stream back within its forested buffer zone.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Never miss an opportunity to bring new groups of volunteers on-board! At Black Ash Creek, many walkers and bicyclists said that they would have participated in the spring 2014 tree planting had they been informed before the event.

POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP PROJECTS:

This project has a detailed work plan for 2015-16 and for 2016-17.