

Naturally Niagara

Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter, Trout Unlimited Canada

President's Message

After another dark but relatively mild winter we are finally emerging into spring and looking forward to getting back to work on new projects. Earlier this winter, Chapter Exec, Ian Smith and I attended the latest series of stream rehabilitation workshops in Guelph led by TUC's iconic national biologist, Jack Imhof. We both came away proud to be members of such a great organization but also with the same idea in mind: we should have our own workshop focused on Twelve Mile Creek. I am happy to say this idea met with great enthusiasm with the other members of our chapter exec and the wheels started turning almost immediately to invite Jack to Niagara and to plan our own workshop on March 18 and 19 of this year. The enthusiasm for this exercise was catching and soon we had thirty-three members and partners on hand to help craft a draft plan that we will soon be circulating for comment. It is difficult to underestimate the benefits of taking this step back and creating a three and five-year plan to guide our work on Twelve Mile Creek. Much thanks to all who gave of their personal time on the weekend to attend and support our first stream rehabilitation workshop.

Executive

The executive have been meeting to organize the Planning Session for Twelve Mile Creek (below). Also, they have begun the process of developing a more formal organization for our Chapter, based on the governance model of other Chapters and TUC requirements. Fundraising initiatives have resulted in some donations from corporate sponsors and we are seeking additional funding... and we are looking at ways to increase membership. Suggestions and volunteers welcome!





Meeting with NPCA Chair

Dennis and Valerie and Brian had a cordial and , we hope, productive meeting with Sandy Annunziata, the Board Chair of the NPCA. We emphasized the close and productive relationship we have developed with the NPCA and gave suggestions on how that might continue. But since it would be remiss for a conservation organization like TUC not to voice our concern with some of the recent actions initiated by the Board and senior management of the NPCA, we expressed the hope that Chair Annunziata will use his new position to restore the reputation of the NPCA and re-establish NPCA's role as the uncompromised protector of Niagara's wetlands and wildlife.

College Student Projects

Our student partners in the Ecosystem Restoration Program have been surveying reaches of the Effingham Branch along Sulphur Springs Road and the St. John's Branch along Hollow Road to determine ways of improving trout habitat. Both have made productive contacts with landowners and are in the process of completing demonstration projects along the creek. Their reports are due in April.

Meanwhile, the GIS students have been surveying the creek between Metler and Killman Roads and determining the temperature regime of those stretches. Among their discoveries: Brook Trout are resident in the reach, cold water upwellings cool the stream significantly, and a cold water tributary on the Hamilton Naturalist Club property adds a surprising volume of cold water to the branch. A third group is studying the shade canopy on the Effingham Branch in Short Hills Park and will make recommendations about how to improve that stretch with plantings where the sun is adding considerable warmth.



Restoration Council & TUC 3-Year Plan for 12 Mile Creek

Our planning session on March 18 brought out a great representation of stakeholders in Twelve Mile Creek: Anne Kubu from Friends of Short Hills, Nicole Stewart from Parks Ontario, David Denyes from MNR, and of course our friends from NPCA and Niagara College. The Niagara Restoration Council (NEC) was represented by Allison and Eric, and students from the ER and GIS Programs at the college provided a thorough background of scientific observations on reaches of the creek. The meeting was co-chaired by Jack Imhoff, the TUC national biologist and Ian Smith, our Chapter technical advisor, professor, and professional restoration guru.

A follow-up meeting on Sunday March 19 helped us distill all the information we gathered on Saturday and begin to come up with plans for each of the next three years.

Among the projects now in the planning stages are extensive plantings to stabilize banks and provide shade, angled log barriers to narrow and redirect the flow at vulnerable locations, removal of perched culverts, creation of spawning beds. We expect to hire a project overseer to assimilate our data and pinpoint projects that will make a difference to the stream.

It was especially important to have representation from MNR and Parks Ontario in the room to get an understanding of our plans and goals so that the process of getting permits to undertake the work will have knowledgeable and sympathetic ears.

Fort Erie Outdoors Show

Our booth at this year's show attracted a number of interested people, who have received invitations to join or attend our events. This is our third year at the show and our presence there has brought us several new members. Thanks to Brian Custers, Gary Kozinsky, and Brian Green for covering the event.



Upcoming Events

April 22: Opening Day for trout. **NPCA St. John's Conservation Area.** Fishing for stocked trout begins at noon. Visit the Niagara TUC booth and watch casting and tying demos.

April 26: First of a three part **Introduction to Fly Fishing for Fonthill Scout Troop.** Second session is May 3 and all day session is May 6. **Volunteers needed for the Saturday!**

May 4: TUC Niagara General Meeting at Calamus Winery, Glen Road, Jordan beginning at 5:30. Twelve Mile Creek Three Year Plan will be unveiled.

June 17: Family Fishing Day at Doug's pond 10:30am to 3pm. Lunch for \$10 and fly fishing and tying instruction FREE.

Please hold the date for this year's Healing Waters Program in collaboration with Soldier On. The Niagara Chapter of TUC will once again be welcoming injured Canadian Forces soldiers to Niagara for a three day intro to fly fishing. Please hold the dates of Sept 26, 27 and 28th and let us know if you are interested in being part of this important event.

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Newsletter Editor: Brian Green

Contributions to future newsletters are welcome.

Address all questions and suggestions for Newsletter items, photos, ideas to tucniagara@gmail.com

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Niagara Chapter, Trout Unlimited Canada

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