

# *Naturally Niagara*

Newsletter of the Niagara Chapter, Trout Unlimited Canada

## Chair's Message

Many of you saw the article that appeared in the St. Catharines Standard on October 2 <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2017/10/02/environmental-groups-concerned-about-npca-cuts> might be wondering why the Niagara Trout Unlimited Chapter would choose to take such a public and outspoken position critical of actions by the board of our own Conservation Authority.

Since our inception the Chapter has had a close working relationship with senior management at Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) who have supported a partnership with Trout Unlimited and encouraged front line experts to assist us in fulfilling our mandate. Working closely with the NPCA's eco-restoration group we have accomplished projects together that would not have been possible should we have attempted to do them as two separate entities.

An example of this synergistic partnership was the retrofitting of bottom draw dams in the largest ponds in the headwaters of Twelve Mile Creek. These ponds were acting as heat sinks raising temperatures and making much of the Headwaters to the north of the dams uninhabitable for Brook Trout, the sentinel species and indicators of aquatic health.

As a non-governmental entity, TUC was able to engender the trust of landowners, to fund raise, and to coordinate planning using students from Niagara College's Environmental Programs. NPCA provided on-the-ground experience, expertise in permitting, and project management expertise.

This spring NPCA had just participated in a planning session for the five-year rehabilitation plan for Twelve Mile Creek, contributing to several new joint projects slated to begin in the spring of 2018.

We knew something was amiss when over a six week period our calls and emails to our contacts at NPCA were not returned. However the news of NPCA's decision to disband their eco restoration program and the firing of eight experienced eco restoration specialists was totally unexpected. Especially since this occurred a week or so after we had been assured by NPCA Chairman Annunziata that NPCA was fully committed to eco-restoration.

For the past year we have been concerned by some of the actions of NPCA such as their intent to destroy scarce Niagara wetlands via a poorly conceived biodiversity offset plan. Now with the demise of their eco restoration program we fear that Niagara's environmental heritage stands defenceless and at the mercy of developers - reason enough for the Chapter to raise its hand and register its deep concern.



## Healing Waters #4

Kudos to all involved with our late September fly-fishing retreat for injured Canadian military personnel. As usual, ten soldiers from across Ontario joined Sgt. Jamie McIntyre from Soldier On to enjoy the hospitality of Calamus Winery, the great pond facility of Doug and Sharon Leavens, the casting instruction of TV personality Bill Spicer, the food of Comfort Kitchens, the generosity of Roxi Young and Bass Pro, and the friendship and fly fishing and tying guidance of our TUC volunteers.

Highlights included the wonderful hospitality of Pat and Derek at Calamus, including winery tour and tasting, and the opportunity to fish the exclusive Franklin Club. This year we were able to supply the soldiers with our own rods and reels, donated by Kent Ratcliffe. Fundraising efforts are already underway to help defray costs to volunteers and ensure another great event in 2018.

### Thanks to Calamus

This year, Calamus hosted both evening events and meals for the Healing Waters Program. The generosity of Derek and Pat extends through the year as they have given us the use of their beautiful upstairs room for meetings and events, as well as the “above and beyond” commitment to Healing Waters.

### Twelve Mile Creek

Under guidance of the program project manager who we hired to oversee and co-ordinate our efforts, Kyle Swanson, we began to put into action the Three Year Plan that we had formulated last spring along with our partner Allison Graszat and the Niagara Restoration Council. Native species were planted along the banks of the stream in several locations, and at last we were able to do the Electrofishing that we have been anxious to accomplish for several years. This exercise provides us with a base line population of fish that we can use to measure our progress in returning Brook Trout to lower reaches of the watershed.



*Morgan Stanford piped the soldiers in to Doug Leavens' pond for their day of learning to fly fish.*



*Gary and Paul led a very successful fly tying workshop (note the Calamus wine!)*



*Electrofishing to catalogue fish populations in Twelve Mile Creek*

## Recognition for Kyle Swanson... and Ian Smith

After meeting him in the GIS Program last year when he did a project for us, we hired Kyle with our partners in the Niagara Restoration Council to manage the work we were undertaking through the grants received last winter. His work in overseeing summer projects and developing relationships with landowners along the stream will continue to pay dividends into the future. Kyle was hired by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority as a fulltime permanent staff member. Congratulations, Kyle, and best wishes.

Ian Smith, our Projects Chair, received the Eco Canada National Impact Award for his work with TUC on restoring Brook Trout to the Twelve. Having benefitted from Ian's input and leadership, we can all attest to how well deserved this award was.

## Niagara College Student Projects

Again this fall, we are fortunate to have the cooperation of Niagara College, which provides real-world projects for students in the Post - Graduate Geographic Information Systems and Ecosystem Restoration Programs. These projects give us the knowledge that enables us to understand in detail the ecosystems of the Creek and the science to undertake remediation of damaged and at-risk sections. The reports, which are in excess of 50 pages of information, charts, graphs, photos, and recommendations, are valued at approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 in labour and expertise.

This year, we have three groups of GIS students working Twelve Mile Creek, continuing the mapping and analysis of reaches of the stream that so far have not been examined. In addition, two groups of Ecosystem Restoration students are continuing the analysis and recommendations for restoration of the St. John's Branch that were begun by last year's groups. Another group is working on the former fishing preserve on Sumbler Road and using TUC members Brian Green, Peter Hyde, and Doug Leavens as resources.



*Kyle (left) with one of the fish catalogued in our Electrofishing, and Ian at work on the Twelve*



## Continuing Initiatives

**Scouts:** We are continuing to explore ways to work with Scouts Canada and local troupes. We have been asked to provide our program for scouts in Waterdown and are working to expand outreach in Niagara. Please contact Brian Green or Gary Kosinsky if you are interested in helping out.

**Soldiers:** There may be opportunities to expand our Healing Waters activities to include local military personnel through the OSSIS Program (Operational Stress Injury Social Support). We are investigating offering day-long fly fishing and tying programs through this organization.

**Fundraising:** Efforts are ongoing to raise funds to support both our outreach programs (that promote our conservation message through fly fishing and tying), and our restoration program. We are continuing to research grants for work on Twelve Mile Creek, and have added a grant writing expert, Yvonne Hopkins, to our Executive Working Group. We continue to seek corporate and individual donors to further our outreach activities. Contact Valerie Grabove [vgrabove@sympatico.ca](mailto:vgrabove@sympatico.ca) if you are interested in helping with this important work.

### Naturally Niagara

Newsletter Editor: Brian Green

Contributions to future newsletters are welcome.

Address all questions and suggestions for Newsletter items, photos, ideas to [tucniagara@gmail.com](mailto:tucniagara@gmail.com)

Check us out on Facebook: Niagara Chapter, TUC

[www.niagaratuc.com](http://www.niagaratuc.com)



### Niagara Chapter, Trout Unlimited Canada

Chair: Dennis Edell

Vice Chair: Valerie Grabove

Treasurer: Jeff Shook

Secretary, Communications: Brian Green

Projects: Ian Smith

Membership: Donna Cridland,

At Large: Al Unwin

Landowner Liaison: Doug Leavens

Outreach: Gary Kosinsky, Paul Furminger

Fundraising: Brian Custers, V. Grabove

Restoration: Deanna Lindblad