

2012 WORKPLAN



Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council

protect • conserve • improve • restore

Successful completion of the following projects is contingent upon the amount of received funding, partner contributions, volunteers, license/permit approvals (where applicable) and time available from the project lead/coordinator/board of directors. The council may add or subtract projects subject to decisions of the board based upon these factors. Results will be summarized and communicated through the annual report which will be completed at the end of 2012 and released in the spring of 2013.

McQuaby Lake Walleye Monitoring Project –Year 4 of 9



The McQuaby Lake Restoration Project which began in 2007 effectively wrapped up in 2010 with the trap & transfer of 198 adult walleye and augmentation of the final spawning shoal. All fish which were transferred are legally protected by a regulation slot size and there is a voluntary ban on walleye fishing in the lake in order to protect the brood stock. Adult fish were chosen because each of the other remedial steps to rehabilitate the lake as per Ontario's Provincial Stocking Guidelines (including the stocking of walleye fingerlings) have proven unsuccessful.

This adult transfer was the final attempt at recovering the walleye population on this lake and there are high hopes that it will be successful. Anglers may continue to fish for smallmouth bass and northern pike or panfish; other recreational fish species found in the lake.

If the initiative is successful, it is expected to take 5-7 years to establish sufficient year-classes to support a walleye fishery, though even then, McQuaby will never be a "walleye factory". Inherent environmental and natural resource characteristics of the lake will, at its best only produce a limited annual harvest of walleye.

When the time comes to lift the ban, the Friends of McQuaby Lake and the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council will work with MNR biologists to better understand population dynamics and set a manageable harvest limit for the lake. Exactly how to do this has been a subject of great debate, but there is time to find a solution. With or without regulatory assistance, a self-sustainable population of walleye for future generations will only be possible with the ethical help from all anglers.

To gauge the success of completed efforts, the partners will be conducting a spring walleye spawning survey to observe spawning numbers of fish and evaluate the condition of the spawning shoals. These efforts will help forecast the outcome of our restoration efforts.

Activities for 2012 are expected to include:

- A spring walleye spawning survey
- Shoal cleaning if necessary
- Continued lake-wide voluntary closure of the walleye fishery

Northern Afforestation Program



Through 2011, discussions with Trees Ontario and some federal partners have proven successful and the northern councils are awaiting confirmation of funding in 2012, to initiate a northern afforestation program which will be available to public and private landowners. The council will lead the initiative and delivery will be made by working

together with local partners and businesses.

At present the target areas will be focused upon where the six Ontario Stewardship Councils are located north of the French and Mattawa rivers. Other councils locations (other than the GNSC) include: Manitoulin & Area, East Algoma, Thunder Bay District, Rainy River and Temiskaming.

This program is intended to be delivered on two phases; a workshop phase and implementation phase. The workshop phase will be completed in 2012. The implementation phase is (at present) forecasted to operate on a 10-year horizon subject to interest generated and funding secured.

The reason for splitting this initiative in two is to give this program a truly northern flavour and provide the opportunity for local influence. During the first step of this effort we are interested in hearing the opinions and desires of our partners. Their feedback will provide

the required information to design the program and carry it out in a way most fitting to the local area. This will create consistent program guidelines while allowing for adjustments to be made to suit each of our communities needs.

During 2012, produced in this initial consultation phase will be two products:

1. Northern Afforestation Program Guidelines, and
2. Northern Afforestation Program Business Plan

TD Tree Days



For the past two years, the stewardship council partnered up with Tree Canada and the local TD Friends of The Environment to plant areas alongside Chippewa Creek and in Laurier Woods. The City of North Bay and North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority were added as partners to the respective sites.

Established partnerships with the City of North Bay, North Bay/Mattawa Conservation Authority and the Ontario Stewardship Ranger Program will ensure that the seedlings are looked after and sites are replanted as necessary.

The simplicity of the project and the easy going nature and dedication from the Friends make this project a pleasure to deliver and the council looks forward to participating in this national event again in 2012.

The site to be planted in September of 2012 will be selected later on in the spring and consist of approximately 400-500 seedlings.

Partners who may wish to suggest a site for planting are encouraged to contact the stewardship council. The only condition applied to the planting is that it must be within a 30 minute drive of the North Bay City Centre in order to be readily accessible to the North Bay centric partners involved in this project.

Shoreland Buffer Program



The Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council continues to work towards creating a shoreland buffer program which will provide access to trees and shrubs for landowners (public and private) with shoreline properties.

While a small scale planting in Nipissing township was funded and successfully planted in 2012, the council expects another year of planning and program design taking place prior to implementation.

Shoreland health has become more and more prevalent as a natural resource management concern in the past few years -especially so after the passage of the Clean Water Act in 2006. Source water protection (for our own drinking water purposes) have help highlight the need for improved management of these land & water interfaces that will benefit fish & wildlife as well.

Shorelands are some of the most highly sought after yet also the most highly fragile properties. Improving the buffer zones on these lands addresses many of the challenges related to nutrient loading, pollution, habitat loss and soil erosion.

Healthy shoreland buffers accomplish the following:

- provide resting & feeding habitat for fish, wildlife & birds
- provide spawning & nesting habitat for fish & wildlife
- provide travel corridors for aquatic & terrestrial wildlife
- provides cleaner water through natural surface & sub-surface filtration system binding runoff from agricultural, industrial, roadways, residential and commercial areas to soils and plants.

- provide a natural barrier to nuisance wildlife
- reduce and eliminate soil erosion
- adds property value for landowners
- reduces heating and cooling bills for cottages and residences built on shorelines

Over the course of 2012, the stewardship council will continue the endeavor to build a shoreland buffer program to make native trees, shrubs and support services readily available to landowners.

Lake Nosbonsing Loon Educational Project



Some concern has been expressed about the reproductive success of Lake Nosbonsing's loons over the past few years.

In 2010, local Corbeil residents partnered with the stewardship council and a crew of Ontario Stewardship Rangers managed jointly by the council and local MNR Office with support through MNR Youth Programs to find out what might be happening with this iconic bird species on Lake Nosbonsing.

A habitat survey was conducted taking into consideration the entire lakes shoreline to evaluate nesting potential for the common loon. Even with the high level of development around the lake, it was found that there is sufficient nesting habitat to support a healthy population of loons.

A nesting survey was also completed in conjunction with the habitat survey. The unexpected early spring made nesting season unpredictable and therefore slightly more difficult for volunteers observe nesting loons during the usual timeframes.

However, two confirmed active nests and one suspected third loon nest (possibly an abandoned or older nest) was found. Despite the unusual weather patterns (or perhaps because of them) the nesting season was successful for at least 2 mating pairs of loons on Lake Nosbonsing. One pair was observed with a single chick and the second pair with a rare, but occasionally documented, set of triplets.

Numerous additional adults were also observed over the course of the year, feeding during the summer and staging prior to fall migration.

As it is much easier to sustain a healthy resource than it is to rebuild a damaged one, efforts for 2011-2012 will shift from the expected habitat repair necessary to education and awareness for local and visiting users of the lake.

Planned efforts for 2011 will include:

- Erection of public educational signage at Nosbonsing's various access points
- Discussions with spring fishing tournament organizers to minimize impact on migratory bird nesting habitat
- Educational materials made available for landowners who wish to learn more about the stewardship of loons and other migratory birds.
- Opportunities made available to landowners who wish to naturalize their shoreline to improve the health of the lake.

Invasive Species Information Project (Trout Lake)



Invasive species continue to be a concern for Greater Nipissing residents and there are many opinions and misconceptions as to what can and can't be done to control these potentially devastating plants and animals.

Sitting at the crux of two major watersheds with a major thoroughway to southern Ontario in between, North Bay sits in an area that has connections to the St. Lawrence to the East and Georgian Bay to the west. This connectivity and ease of access makes it important for protecting our waters, not just for the well-being of natural inhabitants of the lake, but the tourist and recreational industries we ourselves enjoy.

The council has proposed working together with marina's conservation associations and other partners to make users of our lakes and rivers more readily aware of what they can do in order to prevent and the spread of invasive species.

Environmental Projects

Annual Used Household Battery Collection Competition



The stewardship council has been a lead partner of Nipissing Environmental Watch's 'Used Battery Contest' for a number of years now. After having delivered the project for a decade, we are just shy of collecting 40,000 pounds of batteries and redirecting them to the proper disposal and recycling facilities.

The competition is held amongst secondary schools across the region giving students an easy opportunity to help protect our environment.

At the conclusion of the project in the springtime, the batteries are disposed of in the most environmentally friendly way possible at the North Bay hazardous waste disposal site. This avoids these materials entering landfills' common waste facilities.

The partners would also like to encourage you to consider using (cadmium free) rechargeable and/or mercury free alkaline batteries in your household appliances.

Many thanks to Nipissing Environmental Watch and to TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for keeping this successful initiative going. More details including:

- A list of participating high schools,
- Printable electronic pamphlets/posters to get your organization involved
- Award Details
- Contact information to arrange for dropping off batteries

can be found at the NEW or GNSC websites using the following respective internet addresses: <http://www.nipissingenvironmentalwatch.org/> & www.greaternipissing.ca

Community Outreach & Involvement Programs in Natural Resources

Ontario Stewardship Rangers - North Bay Crew



Although funding is not consistent every single year, the Ontario Stewardship Ranger Program has operated successfully in the North Bay District since 2000. Plans are being made to bring the program back again in the summer of 2012.

Four *17-year-old crew members and an *older crew leader will be hired on for a summer contract to work on natural resource and environmental improvement projects in the local area. Hiring notices will be posted in the spring. Students who meet the hiring criteria and have an interest in the outdoors be it a casual or career interest are encouraged to apply.

This allocated crew will be based out of the MNR office on Trout Lake road. The lion's share of the crews work schedule will be at the discretion of the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council, but there will also be experience opportunities working with MNR field programs and staff to round out the work plan.

Specific projects which the Rangers will be working on will be decided upon in the spring and confirmed after the crew leader is hired on in early June.

Typically, students work on a variety of short-term projects. Past examples have included:

- Waterfowl Banding
- Radio Telemetry of Species at Risk
- Assisting at the Local Fish Culture Station (Fish Hatchery)
- Backcountry Canoe Route Cleanups
- Electrofishing
- Clean Ups of Beaches, Parks & Public Land
- Plantation Management
- Collecting/Updating Computer Mapping Information
- Trail Construction & Maintenance
- Tree Planting
- Helping Out At Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres
- Provincial Park Maintenance Work
- Building & Installing Duck/Bat Boxes
- Natural Resource/Community Outreach Efforts
- Fisheries Assessments
- Restoring Rare Ecosystems

Applications and advertisement for *Crew Lead* and *Crew Member* positions will be made via:

- The Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council's website
- The province of Ontario's MNR Youth Programs website
- Guidance departments of in area high schools,
- Local 'Service Canada' employment centres
- Local 'Service Ontario' centres

Newspaper ads may or may not be utilized to broadcast these employment opportunities.

Successful applicants are hired from an open, fair and competitive interview process.

Partners participating will be identified in June after the hire of an OSR Team Lead. Should any partners have project ideas or needs suitable to an OSR team, please contact the GNSC's Stewardship Coordinator.

**To be eligible for hire, Crew members must be turning 17 years of age in 2012, meaning they have to have been born in 1995. In the event that insufficient numbers of applications from 17 year olds are received, students who are 16 years of age (born in 1996) or 18 years of age (born in 1994) may be considered for hire. As such, students of these age groups are encouraged to apply. Crew Leaders are typically college or university aged students and in some circumstances have been older professionals. Crew leaders must be at least 18 years of age and demonstrate the maturity and other relevant competencies required to meet the conditions of hire.*

Annual North Bay Regional Science Fair Awards



Each year the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council Supports the Regional Science Fair.

This is done with two certificates and cash awards for the top science fair project in either the Junior or Intermediate competition levels. There are no specific criteria other than the project must have an environmental or natural resource flavour. Selection of winners is completed by the judging committee during the evaluation of submissions.

Partners for this activity include the Near North District School Board and participating post-secondary institutions.

Youth Hunting Opportunities Day



2012 is looking to be the council's first instalment in what may turn out to be an annual Youth Hunting Opportunities day. Planning activities went as scheduled in 2011 and the intention of the effort will be to make a program available for youth which allows them to learn more about hunting as a resource management tool and its role in today's society.

Such programs have been successfully implemented across the province of Ontario over the last number of years to engage partners and a diversity of youth in the outdoor sports. Such efforts have won positive recognition from sporting association and provided numerous opportunities for youth to make informed decisions about this heritage activity.

Partnerships will be sought out with councils with pre-existing program models, national resource management agencies as well as local shooting sports, rod & gun clubs and various tourism-based businesses.

Media Partner Activities



If you have seen an ad in the newspaper or a service announcement on television about the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council, we have our media partners to thank for that.

For 2011 through 2013 they are: Cogeco Cable, the North Bay Nugget and CTV. Each media organization has entered into an agreement with council which will allow for the in-kind efforts similar to those completed in the past to continue.

The council makes use of this time to publicize projects such as tree planting and educational events, advertise the meeting dates and location of our 'Annual General Meeting' and invoke community participation and support for our various other activities.

Their generous donation of in-kind media coverage makes each of them valuable corporate sponsors and accounts for approximately one hundred & seventy three thousand dollars of contributions annually. Their assistance in preparing these announcements is greatly appreciated and further demonstrates the benefits of truly local television & media.

Greater Nipissing Eco-Tourism Guide



The Greater Nipissing/ Near North area offer plenty of back country, watersheds and trail systems to explore. The creation of a geocache program offers a great way for explorers-at-heart to get out, get active and appreciate some of the region while learning about how to protect and conserve it.

With a guide as reference - individuals and families will use a global positioning system (GPS) to locate water-proof containers (geo-caches) that contain interesting facts and stories pertaining to the environment.

Geocaching helps to add awareness and generate positive public perception of the importance of protecting and maintaining our green spaces in the Near North region.

The project aims to educate residents and tourists alike on the following aspects:

- Flora & Fauna unique to the Near North region
- How to protect, conserve, improve and restore our local natural resources
- Being a responsible visitor; water safety, fire safety, reducing environmental impact while traveling
- Local eco-friendly businesses
- Nipissing Stewardship initiatives

Community Event Participation & Township/Municipal Meetings



In order to better serve our communities, the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council is planning on attending three community events. We will also entertain opportunities to speak to our township and municipal partners as they arise.

Recent years have taught us that planning the dates and making contact with event organizers at the start of the year has greatly improved our ability to tailor our schedule and presentation materials for the public.

This year the council plans on setting up a display at the three following events:

- The Powassan Fall Fair held August 31st-September 2nd, 2012
- Mattawa Voyageur Days held July 26th-29th, 2012
- The 3rd event will be determined over the course of 2012. As always suggestions from our members and partners are welcome

Educational Efforts

Presentation of the Lake Nipissing Educational Kit (French Version)



This is a popular project that was in fairness completed in 2007, but because of its popularity we just can't seem to draw it to a conclusion! The Stewardship Council first created a primary grade elementary school educational kit and made it available through the Near North District School Board.

Karen Anderson, the author and a retired teacher herself, made sure that the unit included everything a teacher would need to fit the unit into Ontario's primary school curriculum when she initially wrote the material and put the kit together.

The kit contains a teacher's reference, source material, visual aids, an original board game and even an original storybook which traces a dog named Diggy around Lake Nipissing's various landmarks & points of interest.

Near North teachers may currently sign out the kit from the board office. A copy of the kit has also provided to the elementary school in Dokis, as well as the French Catholic School Board. Home-school parent/teachers may also sign the kit out from their affiliate school board which administers student testing.

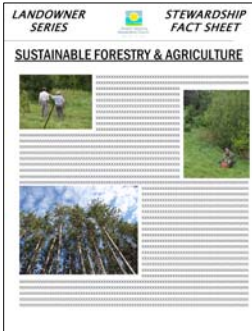
Now that a French version has been translated and provided to the French Speaking Boards and schools, the English speaking Boards have reconnected with us and reminded the council of their French Immersion programs! In 2012, the council will present what (we think....) will be the last of these kits -in full circle- again to the Near North District School Board and without exception, *all* of our young students will have the opportunity to learn about the ecology of Lake Nipissing in either official language...

We'll also be looking at ways to post the material electronically on our website should anyone else wish to review (or use) the material. A display copy kept by the council has already ventured south to Lake Simcoe upon request....

Project Partners:

- Karen Anderson
- Near North District Schoolboard
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Support Funding for translation)

Rural Landowner/Stewardship Fact Sheets



One thing that our rural partners have found lacking is the availability of updated information on natural resources management available to them as landowners.

As the scope of landownership continues to change within the greater Nipissing Area, elder rural organizations are becoming concerned with the knowledge transfer to the next generation in regards to land management.

To help address this, the council will prepare a series of electronic fact sheets which address a number of topics in regards to this.

If your organization wishes to see more information available on a topic that concerns you, please contact the council and we will work together to ensure the resulting fact sheet becomes available to the public.

Planning

Greater Nipissing Stewardship Planning Initiative



With such a large area of coverage for the stewardship council (the largest defined boundary of any council in the province) there is a vast amount of possibilities for stewardship work when it comes to project opportunities and partners to work with in the Greater Nipissing Area.

Approximate percentages of ownership in this area are 30% private to 70% Crown. Given these numbers the amount of private property within the Greater Nipissing

Area is equivalent to that of many south western Ontario counties.

The projects and activities of the council tends to mirror this ratio, however the council would like to further assist private landowners in improving the natural resources on their own properties.

The strategic plan created by this initiative would be designed to identify these opportunities and help the council prioritize stewardship activities. Further, the plan produced will help sell higher dollar value projects to potentially interested funders.

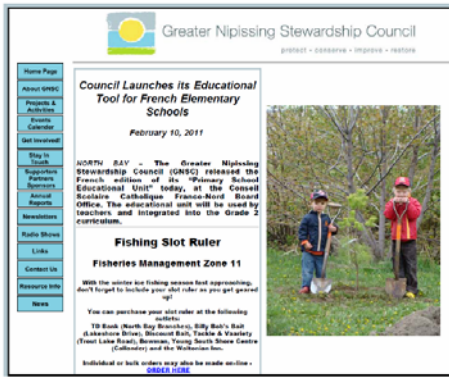
Such a plan will not restrict future council activities to the only the recommendations identified by the plan, rather it would serve to improve the decisions made around work planning and project implementation.

Annually, one or two projects or priority areas identified in the strategy may be selected for action. The plan will otherwise be used to facilitate efficiency of council activities and participation with partners.

This project will also function as a job creation initiative, because in order to create the plan, a plan author will be specifically hired to take on the workload.

Partners for the creation of the plan will be determined as 2012 progresses, however at this time, significant participation is expected from management bodies responsible for various components of natural resources management within the Greater Nipissing Area, including: the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority. Additional partners may be contacted by the plan author to provide information over the course of this project.

Website Administration

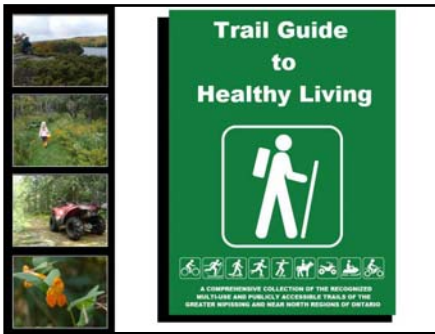


Our website will continue to be maintained throughout 2012 with information updated about our projects and activities as they take place.

Members of the council, landowners, public agencies, private landowners, partners, funders will continue to find information about the council and our local natural resources more accessible through this site.

**Project Partners:
Due North Marketing, Sturgeon Falls**

Trail Guide to Healthy Living (Distribution and Sales Activities)



Sales and Distribution of the ‘Trail Guide to Healthy Living’ produced by the council in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotions, Discovery Routes and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will continue.

The guide is a comprehensive collection of the recognized and

publicly accessible trails of the Near North.



Over 50 trails and trail systems Trails from across the broader area (pictured right) are described in detail.

Copies are available from area retailers (as noted on our website) and may be made available through the GNSC website as well. Prices of the guide are kept low intentionally to make it more accessible to all members the public regardless of income level. Proceeds from Sales are retained and kept in a specific account to be used for reprinting and updating of the guide when stock has been exhausted.

Zone 11 Slot Ruler (Distribution and Sales Activities)



The Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council reproduced the popular slot ruler for Lake Nipissing including several improvements and expanded content to include information pertinent to all of Zone 11. This is more reflective of the councils expanded coverage area and the recently updated Ontario Fishing Regulations.

Production of the ruler was made possible with help from Mercury, Power Sports & Marine, Sturgeon Falls Auto Sports and Marine, Hunters Bay Marine, Idylltyme

Sports & Marine, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Lake Nipissing Partners in Conservation.

Anglers can find the slot ruler decals at various locations across the Greater Nipissing Area, as well as portable ‘fish measuring boards’ which can be transported from one boat to another, or used in a boat where the owner does not wish to apply a decal to the seat or hull.

In 2012 the council will continue to distribute and sell these rulers to increase awareness of regulated sizes and limits for the local recreational fishery. Proceeds obtained go towards stewardship projects, improving the natural resources within our communities.

**To become a distributor of these rulers, please contact the council at:
info@greaternipissing.ca**

To find out what retailers or resorts are currently selling the ruler, please consult our website at www.greaternipissing.ca

Membership Drive & Newsletter



Over the course of 2012, the GNSC will continue its ongoing membership drive.

Those who become members receive:

- A membership card
- A quarterly news letter
- Voting stature at Annual General Meetings
- Email updates on volunteer opportunities

The cost structure for 2012 will remain unchanged has been set as follows:

- Adult (ages 18+): \$25.00
- Youth: \$10.00
- Family: \$35.00

- Life: \$1,000.00 (one-time dues)
- Bronze Supporter: donation of \$100.00 or more
- Silver Supporter: donation of \$500.00 or more
- Gold Supporter: donation of \$750.00 or more
- Platinum Supporter: donation of \$1,000.00 or more
- Diamond Supporter: donation of \$2,500.00 or more

Corporate or individual supporters who provide substantial donation receive a plaque in recognition of their donation to the council. Some donations may also be eligible for a tax receipt through the council.

Proceeds from the sale of memberships and donations are used to further the stewardship activities of the council across the Greater Nipissing area.

Monthly (full) Council and Executive Committee Meetings



The Board of the Stewardship Council generally meets once per month with a summer and winter (Christmas) break. Meetings are typically held in North Bay as it is central to the member directors but the group strives to take atleast one meeting into the field each year, usually in August.

The Executive committee similarly meets once per month to ensure that the business activities of the council are in hand and the 'red tape' matters are looked after to avoid weighing down the board too heavily at the larger meetings.

Guests are welcome at council meetings as well as are those who wish to make a project pitch to the council.

Occasionally throughout the year the council hears from local partner organizations and individuals who wish to find funding or assistance of some kind to achieve a stewardship project. This workplan is intended to be a fluid target, subject to funding, volunteer time available –etc. Partners who see opportunities to work together should not feel that this plan will block their chances of seeing a project to completion in the current year and are encouraged to bring all suggestions forward.

If you wish to attend a council meeting or would like to make a project suggestion to the council, please contact us and we will make arrangements to accommodate you.

Project Lead/Project Committee Meetings



Once a project has been added to this work plan and approved by council generally is only the Lead or committee that sit down with the councils Stewardship Coordinator to look after a projects fine details.

These meetings are usually brief in the interests of the volunteers or taken care of via telephone or email. The purpose of these meetings are to keep project work on track, on budget and on schedule.

While such meetings are a matter of course, they are mentioned here in the workplan to better outline the ongoing activities of council.