

Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2005



THE ONTARIO  
TRILLIUM  
FOUNDATION

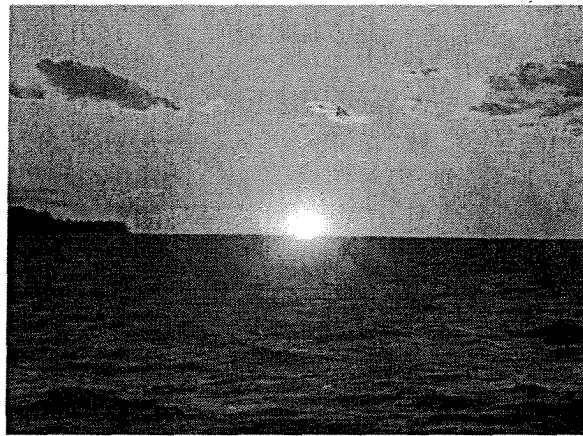


LA FONDATION  
TRILLIUM  
DE L'ONTARIO

## **STRUCTURE**

Formed in 1999, the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council (LNSC) is a registered, non-profit, charitable organization with a mandate to "*preserve, protect, restore & improve*" the natural resources and environment of Lake Nipissing. A board of directors governs the Council and an executive coordinator manages the operations. The 16-member board represents a diverse group of stakeholders who all have interests in the management of this local resource. Honorary directors provide additional consultation and expertise.

The core areas of the organization are Fisheries & Habitat, Water Quality & Land Use, and Public Education & Awareness. A sub-committee is responsible for each area, and is overseen by a chairperson who is a member of the board. Additionally, a Finance sub-committee implements the Council's funding strategies and an executive committee assists with administration and management.



## **OPERATIONS**

The LNSC participates in the management of the Lake Nipissing ecosystem and works closely with government ministries and other organizations to implement projects and perform practical research and assessment activities. In addition to providing expertise, funding, and volunteers, the Council provides valuable feedback on issues concerning Lake Nipissing.

Individual committee and board members do most of the project work and are sometimes assisted by students and other volunteers. The LNSC also partners with other organizations on projects of mutual interest and benefit.

The Board of Directors meets approximately every second month. The sub committees and executive committee meet on a schedule as determined by the chair of the committees. Annual work plans and budgets are prepared by each committee and primary fundraising is undertaken by the executive coordinator and finance sub committee. The executive coordinator provides daily management and administration. The annual general meeting is held in the spring each year.

## **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The past year 2005 has been one of challenge and change for the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council. Long serving executive members Gary Preston, Marcia Stroud, and Marlo Johnson retired from the council as well as other contributing councilors James Anderson and Rob Hyatt. I thank them for their years of dedication and effort on behalf of Lake Nipissing. The North Bay district office of the Ministry of Natural Resources shuffled the deck and Richard Rowe, the original MNR biologist, was moved to other duties and replaced by Shaun Roberts who has continued to assist the council at the same high level as his predecessor. Gail Laird became the new coordinator and in the short time that she has been with the council has proved to be invaluable in efficiently attending to the day to day tasks so vital to a volunteer organization. When one considers that the council was created in 1999 it is no mean feat for a volunteer organization to achieve the lengthy list of accomplishments that this council has in such a short period. Now there is a new executive and a significantly different council ready to carry the stewardship responsibilities for Lake Nipissing forward.

The discovery of rotting fish laden nets in the spring of last year tested the council's ability to respond to a crisis. In retrospect, I admit that we were found lacking in some aspects of our handling of this situation but I am confident that now having experienced it the council is better equipped to respond in a more sensitive and thoughtful manner in the future.

Again, the council organized and directed a cadre of volunteers in the cleanup of the area surrounding the fishing huts in Callander Bay and along the south shore. In the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup we targeted the exposed rocky area just below the dam on the Sturgeon River in Sturgeon Falls and with the help of the Sturgeon Falls Rod & Gun Club we removed and disposed of the accumulated garbage.

Rock rubble was dumped on the ice and became part of the North Bay waterfront near the Golden Mile Beach, in an ongoing effort to increase and improve available spawning sites for Lake Nipissing's walleye.

With the assistance of the personnel of the local MNR, the council initiated a very successful "Adopt a Sturgeon" program. For a modest charitable donation, the contributor got a boat ride to the netting area, a picture taken with his her adopted fish, a certificate with the details of that fish and a commitment to inform him her of the activity of their adopted fish whenever it was recaptured.

We organized a very successful well attended "Lake to Plate" workshop featuring recipes and cleaning techniques for the non stressed Lake Nipissing fish species of northern pike, whitefish and cisco. We are planning to hold more of these workshops in the near future as we continue to work toward fulfilling the commitments that the council made to the Ontario Trillium Foundation as a condition of the successful 2004 grant application.

With the invaluable assistance of members of the Lake Nipissing Partners in Conservation, we hosted a very successful silent auction and dinner fund raising event at the Pinewood Clarion Resort.

We continue to support all reasonable efforts by the resident First Nation Communities to rationalize and control the commercial harvest of walleye on the lake and urge the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to continue working toward a fair and equitable agreement with those native communities.

But enough of the past, the future of the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council looks even brighter. We are currently negotiating with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to join the Ontario Stewardship Program. Entry into this highly successful southern Ontario program will result in improved access to funding, the assistance of a stewardship coordinator and continued expansion of the shadow cast by the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council. When I listened to a list of projects that our executive members would like to see the LNSC pursue in the future, I know that there are exciting times ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the board of the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council, the businesses, outside organizations and the individual volunteers and contributors who gave material, money and time to support the stewardship activities of the council. It is your collective efforts that have made it possible for the LNSC to continue to fulfill its mandate of *preserving, protecting, restoring and improving* Lake Nipissing now and it will be similar contributions that help us maintain the momentum into the future.

John Thornton  
Chair

## Executive Coordinator's Remarks

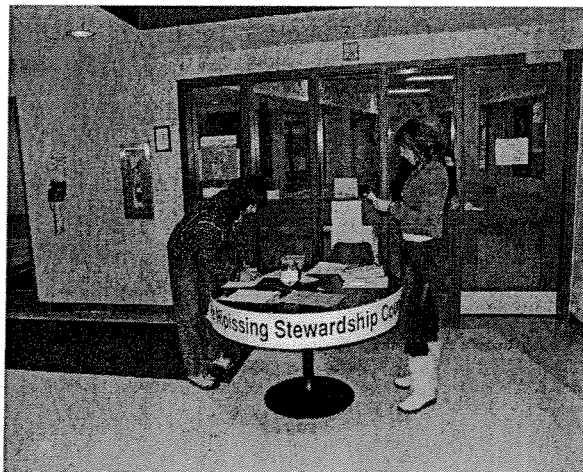
During the term of my employment in 2005, I have been happy to meet and get to know a diverse group of people – all of them volunteers, who give of their time and energy to secure the best possible results for this organization. I salute them for their efforts – it is not an easy job!

This past year of 2005 had the Council involved in

- The Adopt-a-Sturgeon Programme
- Slot ruler construction
- Spawning bed reconstruction
- The annual fundraiser Dinner and Silent Auction
- The tremendous "Lake to Plate" Workshop series run by the Education Committee

The Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council's mandate to 'preserve, protect, restore & improve' is what this Council is all about. This mandate requires that Lake Nipissing and its watershed be protected and enhanced, to enable this natural resource to allow the surrounding municipalities and First Nations to continue to have the use of this invaluable resource for future generations. There is much to do!

Gail Laird  
Executive Coordinator



## MNR LIAISON REPORT

The Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council has now been established for almost six years. Since its inception, the group has established itself as a valued and active partner to the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Council has worked tirelessly towards the long-term health and prosperity of the Lake Nipissing ecosystem. The past year was no different. Having been the group that facilitated public consultation in 2004, in anticipation of a new 5-year management plan for the lake, the LNSC began 2005 by processing and summarizing public comments into a set of recommendations. These were then submitted to MNR, and represented a thorough account of public opinions that were voiced during the consultation process. This product will play a vital role in MNR's evaluation of management and regulatory options for the future.

The MNR secured a new position within the district. The position will break new ground in the north, as it represents the very first establishment of the Ontario Stewardship Program in this region. The program has operated successfully in various areas in southern Ontario for many years, developing and implementing projects that promote resource conservation. North Bays new "Stewardship Coordinator" will work exclusively on behalf of two Stewardship Councils within the district, to develop and promote various resource based initiatives within the area. Currently, the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council is negotiating to become one such group in the Ontario Stewardship Program. A new partnership may then be forged, opening additional funding doors and enhancing work capacity among the existing group.

The Lake Nipissing ecosystem represents a vital driver to the local economy. Its importance from a biological standpoint cannot be overstated. The Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council has played a vital role in the preservation and management of this resource for many years, and this momentum will surely carry through into 2006 and beyond.

Shaun Roberts  
MNR Biologist



## **FISHERIES AND HABITAT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Fisheries and Habitat Sub-Committee of the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council initiated a new program in the spring of 2005 that started with a bang! The Adopt-A-Sturgeon program which ran in conjunction with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources netting program at Chapman's Chutes on the South River caught and made available for adoption a Lake Nipissing sturgeon that was over two meters long, in excess of 200 lbs and 100 plus years old. This program presented the public with an opportunity to expand its knowledge about this fascinating and mysterious long time resident of Lake Nipissing and catching a star in the first year resulted in media coverage that we would not have been able to pay for!

John Seyler, the past chairman of the Fisheries and Habitat Sub-Committee originated the idea of offering interested individuals the opportunity to see a sturgeon being netted, adopt that fish and pay for the privilege. The MNR had been netting fish at the Chutes for four years previous in its ongoing program to assess the health of the adult sturgeon population by gathering data on the age, size, sex and numbers of spawning fish. They graciously supported the Council's proposal.

The response was exceptional, as many paid \$100.00 to have the chance to see and hold his or her sturgeon. Each sturgeon is identified by a microchip, which is injected harmlessly into the fish, and holds its own unique identification number. This information, along with various biological attributes (length, weight, sex: male or female), was recorded on a certificate and given to the adopter. The certificate also included a photo of the participant holding his/her adopted fish. In the future, if an adopted fish is recaptured, a data update will be sent to the adopter. While MNR has concluded the adult assessment at the Chapman's Chute location, there are plans to continue a similar study at the Sturgeon River spawning location. If possible, the LNSC intends to build on the success enjoyed in 2005, by continuing the Adopt-a-Sturgeon program.

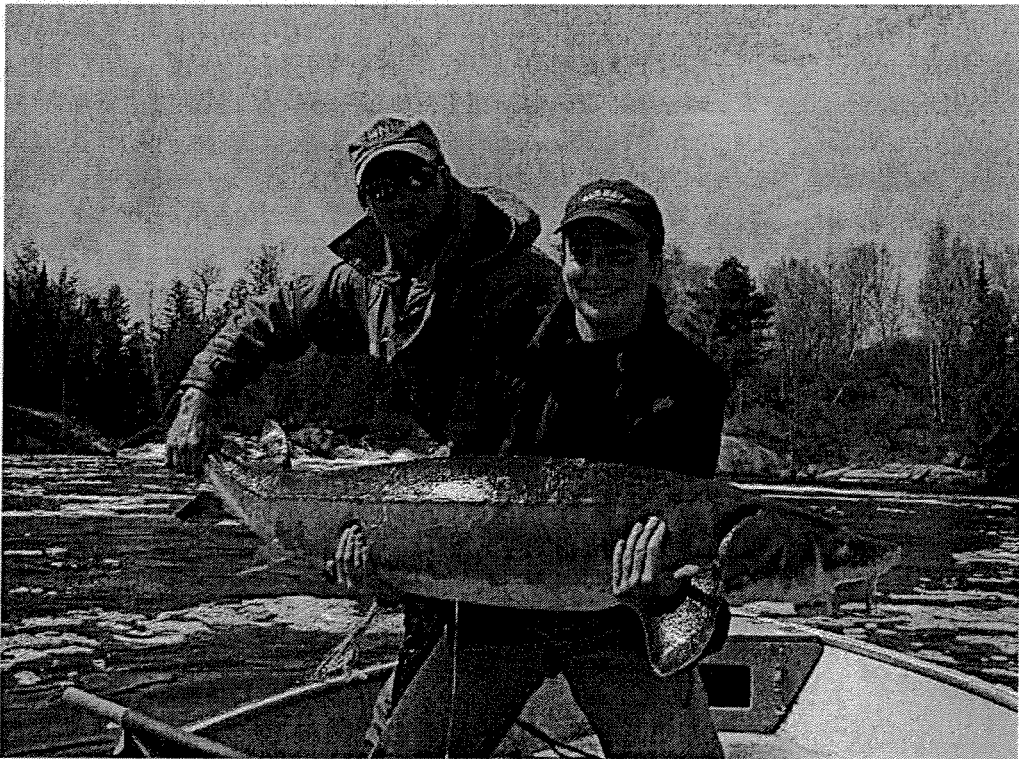
As a logical extension to the netting program, and because so little is known where these fish spend their time exclusive of the spawning period, the sub-committee is investigating the feasibility of tracking a small number of sturgeon to learn more about the species. Attaching a small radio transmitter to a fish and tracking its movements by aircraft could achieve this. It seems reasonable that the money being raised by the Adopt-A-Sturgeon program and other fund raising efforts might go to supporting such research in the future.

A number of other initiatives occurred over the past year. The LNSC continued to create and upgrade walleye spawning beds in the early spring of 2005 with

the dumping of rock rubble along the North Bay waterfront in the area of the Golden Mile Beach.

The Council continues to advise the Ministry of Natural Resources on its ongoing efforts to adjust fishing regulations on Lake Nipissing that reflect the realities of the actual fish stocks. In the MNR process of simplifying fishing regulations and reorganizing the fishing divisions in Ontario, the Council has achieved one of its long-standing goals. All of Lake Nipissing will henceforth be governed by one uniform set of regulations. The section of Lake Nipissing west of Highway 64 will no longer have different possession limits, slot size regulations and season dates than the rest of the lake.

John Campbell  
Sub-committee Member





## **EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

The slot ruler continued to evolve in 2005 with the introduction of the revised edition, which recognized the newly regulated winter slot limit on Lake Nipissing. In an effort to meet the demands of ice fishermen on the lake, the rulers were affixed to boards in order to facilitate quick and easy fish measurement. The updated rulers were sold at a number of local outlets. The Education Sub Committee wishes to thank Wassi Building Centre for the donation of material and Stewart Bowness, and the shop students of West Ferris Secondary School for assembling the rulers.

Two "Lake to Plate" fish cleaning and cooking workshops were held on December 8<sup>th</sup> at Nipissing Secondary School and on December 12<sup>th</sup> at The West Nipissing Recreational Complex. The purpose of these sessions was to promote some of the perceived less desirable fish species in Lake Nipissing. The overall message was that fish species other than walleye could taste equally as good if you know how to properly prepare them. Both workshops were well attended, and raised public awareness of both Lake Nipissing and the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council. A total of 88 people attended the events, 45 in North Bay and 43 in Sturgeon Falls. The workshops opened with introductions of the experts and a short power point presentation on the programs and work that the LNSC has spearheaded over its previous five years. The biology and historical significance of each of the featured species, northern pike, whitefish and lake herring (cisco) were presented by Shaun Roberts, MNR biologist and LNSC board member, and Norman Dokis, MNR native liaison, in a plenary session before the actual cleaning seminars began. The attendees were divided into three groups and rotated through the cleaning stations on a 10-15 minute time period per station. At the conclusion of the workshops, a selection of fried and smoked fish was available for sampling while the LNSC board members and volunteers were present for questions and conversation. The focus of the workshop was further enhanced by individual displays of the fish native to Lake Nipissing featuring a hand drawn reproduction of the fish, the name of the fish in English, French and Ojibway, and scientific and historical details.

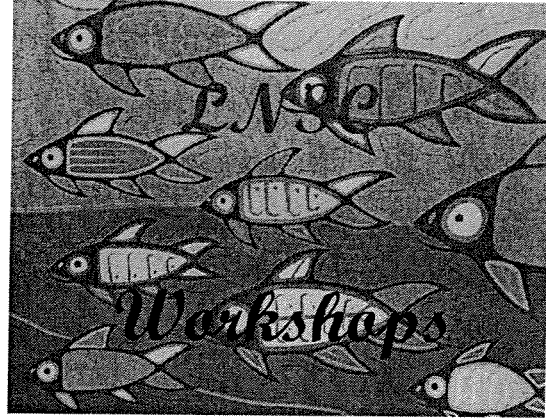
### **Initiatives for 2006**

The Education Sub-Committee is planning to continue its "Lake to Plate" workshops in the coming year, and will feature other fish species. Preliminary discussions have begun, concerning a number of other potential workshops.

These include fish handling standards for fishing tournaments and habitat conservation for shoreline development projects. We are currently completing the development of the third edition of the slot ruler, which will help to minimize fish handling time, and contribute to increased survival among fish that are released.

Shaun Roberts

Chair



## **WATER QUALITY & LAND**

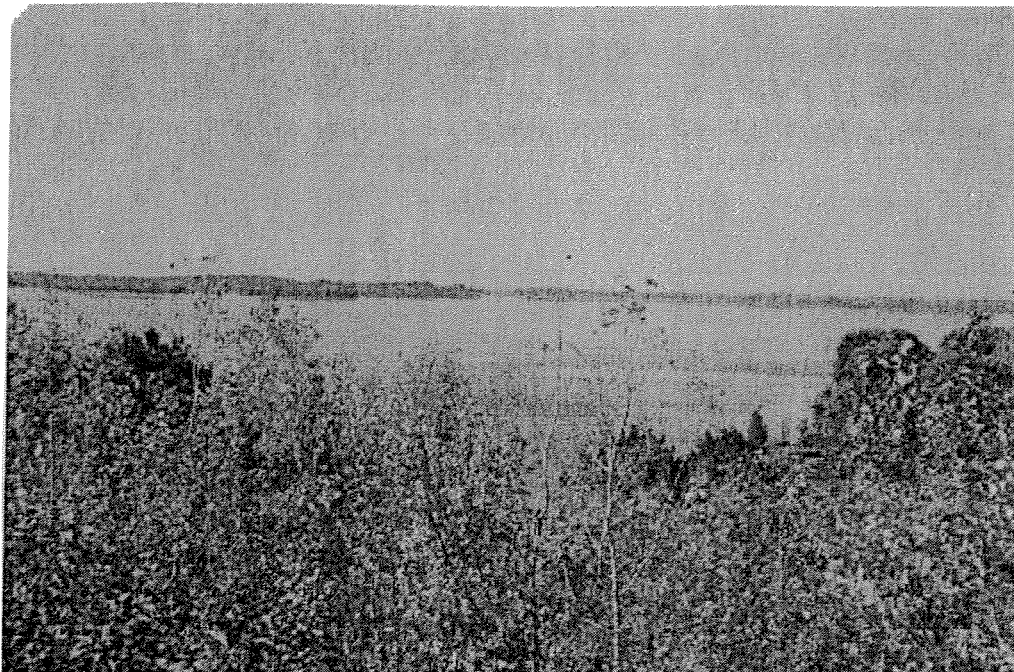
Projects this year:

With help from the Sturgeon Falls Rod & Gun Club, we participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup in September, instituted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through the Vancouver Aquarium. Volunteers cleaned up an area below the dam on the Sturgeon River.

Committee member Roy Summers was named our representative to the Sustainable Communities Advisory Committee. This committee has spent 6 full days developing guidelines to assist North Bay City Council in developing a new official plan. We strongly urged the creation of a storm water management master plan.

The Ministry of Environment, North Bay office, was approached to request consideration of inclusion in the Phosphorus Water Sampling Program.

Peggy Walsh Craig  
Chair & LNSC Treasurer



## **Board of Directors**

### **Directors**

John Thornton, Chair  
Peter Bullock, Vice Chair  
Peggy Walsh Craig, Treasurer  
Gerry Duquette, Jr., Secretary  
Shaun Roberts, MNR Liaison  
Kevin Cameron  
John Campbell  
John Dobbs  
Leonard Dokis  
Frank Marusich  
Scott McLeod  
Bruce Sharpe  
Rick Stevens  
Dave Waye

Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters  
City of North Bay  
Nipissing Environment Watch  
Dokis First Nation  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
West Nipissing-Upper French Tourist Assoc.  
Director-at-Large  
Municipality of West Nipissing  
Dokis First Nation  
Lake Nipissing Partners in Conservation  
Nipissing First Nation  
Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters  
Nipissing First Nation  
Director-at-Large

### **Honourary Directors**

Mike Batsford  
Susan Brownlee  
Kim Carmichael  
Doug Walsh

South Shore Re-Stocking Association  
North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority  
Anishinabek/Ontario Fed. Fisheries Resource Centre  
Ministry of the Environment

LAKE NIPISSING STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2005

(With comparative figures as at December 31, 2004)

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>		
Current		
Cash	\$ 86,306	\$ 60,768
Accounts receivable	904	5,769
	<u>\$ 87,210</u>	<u>\$ 66,537</u>
<b><u>LIABILITIES</u></b>		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 707	
Deferred contributions (Note 2)	29,000	\$ 20,500
	<u>29,707</u>	<u>20,500</u>
<b><u>EQUITY</u></b>		
Balance end of year	57,503	46,037
	<u>\$ 87,210</u>	<u>\$ 66,537</u>

**UNAUDITED - SEE NOTICE TO READER**

**LAKE NIPISSING STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**  
**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2005**

(With comparatives figures for 2004)

	2005	2004
Revenue		
Grants	\$ 36,900	\$ 40,300
Donations	23,735	8,690
Fundraising	10,998	4,725
Trade show		3,271
Interest	29	23
	71,662	57,009
Expenditures		
Executive coordinator	29,507	19,519
Spawning beds	10,914	
Dinner and auction costs	7,607	
Office	4,430	1,746
Insurance	1,903	1,668
Public education	1,645	2,050
Professional fees	925	751
Annual meeting	923	898
Rent	790	
Board meetings	773	
Telephone	382	
Memberships and licences	224	692
Interest and bank charges	173	203
Management plan		9,194
Studies and surveys		9,099
Trade show		1,603
	60,196	47,423
Excess of revenue over expenditure for the year	11,466	9,586
Equity beginning of year	46,037	36,451
Equity end of year	\$ 57,503	\$ 46,037

**UNAUDITED - SEE NOTICE TO READER**

# SPECIAL THANKS

## Grants



## Sponsors

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
Max Multi Mart, Lakeshore Drive  
Miller Paving  
Miller Waste Systems  
Power Sports & Marine  
Sturgeon Falls Rod & Gun Club  
Wassi Building Centre Ltd.

## Supporters

Lake Nipissing Partners in Conservation  
John Seyler, and all the participants of the Adopt-a-Sturgeon Programme  
The people and businesses that sold LNSC Slot Rulers  
Barb Bukowski  
John D'Agostino  
Bill Hagborg  
NECO  
Roy Summers  
John and Mary Thornton  
Stuart Bowness and West Ferris Secondary School Shop Students

*Many thanks to all those who attended the Annual Dinner/Silent Auction Fundraiser held on November 12, 2005, at the Clarion Resort Pinewood Park as well as those who gave generously to support the silent auction.*

Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council  
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