



October 2009

The **Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council** (GNSC) is comprised of

a diverse group of individuals representing the following interests: First Nations, fisheries, tourism, conservation, forestry, agriculture, wilderness sports, biology, youth, public-at-large and the environment.

Originally founded in 1999 as the Lake Nipissing Stewardship Council, the GNSC is a charitable organization that partners with similar-minded groups and government agencies to implement environmental programs; provide information on conservation and sustainability; and to increase awareness of the ecosystem. The Council relies upon a strong core of volunteers from member organizations to implement many of its initiatives.

GNSC Featured Projects

In this newsletter we feature **Stewardship** at its finest! Read on to see how local individuals and groups are making a difference.

McQuaby Lake

The McQuaby Lake Walleye Restoration Project began in 2006. It started with a handful of concerned citizens and has grown into a great example of the benefits of stewardship and how momentum can build when like-minded individuals and groups roll up their sleeves and get to work. Here are some of their accomplishments – and they aren't done yet!

The Friends of McQuaby Lake, made up of year-round and seasonal residents was formed to implement the project and address other concerns around the lake. With the assistance of the GNSC and the Commanda and Area Anglers and Hunters, the "Friends" spent many hours in the spring of 2008 surveying spawning shoals for signs of walleye. Only 49 walleye were sighted that spring. That summer, a youth ranger team with help from volunteers conducted a live-release trap net survey to determine the presence and numbers of other fish species in the lake. At that time only two walleye were captured.

In the spring of 2009 a questionnaire was sent to all residents and cottage owners to determine community interest in the project.

The survey results demonstrated solid community support. The majority of residents believe improvements to fisheries habitat and shoreline improvements would improve outdoor recreation as well as quality of life around the lake.



This summer, 45 volunteers using high-pressure pumps, washed detriment from the spawning shoals. The following weekend, these same volunteers placed several tons of rock rubble on the primary spawning shoals. Recently, a sign was placed at the public launch ramp on the lake informing everyone of the agreed upon voluntary closure of the walleye fishery on McQuaby.

Plans for 2010 include: further surveying of spawning fish; the transfer of adult walleye; and shoal cleaning and augmenting the southern spawning shoal.

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Stewardship Momentum in the North!

The inaugural meeting of the **Ontario Stewardship 'Northern Zone' Committee** was held in Sault Ste. Marie in October 2009. Since the formation of the GNSC in 2006, five other coordinators and councils have been added to the North: Manitoulin, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Fort Frances and Kirkland Lake.

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Rural Tree Plant Program

Do you have sites on your property in need of more tree cover? Those living in a rural area may be interested in having trees planted on their properties. There are many benefits to planting trees including: **Water Quality** – trees can intercept and remove pollutants and sediment before reaching watercourses; **Erosion Protection** – root structures provide stream bank stability while trees provide windbreaks which can conserve soil; and **Habitat Enhancement** – trees act as a source of food, cover and shelter for many species and provide wildlife corridors so that species may travel safely from one habitat to another.



The GNSC Rural Tree Plant Program began in 2008 with approximately 6,000 seedlings planted. This past August, our numbers grew to 21,000 more seedlings! Trees were planted in West Nipissing, Rutherglen and Trout Creek.

Most of the costs associated with the program are covered by the GNSC through grant programs. Such costs include: price of the seedlings, transportation of stock, taxes and planting costs. Sites are planted by professional contractors. Landowners do not need to worry about paperwork or any liability concerns related to others working on the property as each of these are also taken care of by council.

Landowners are responsible for initial site preparation and the care and maintenance of the trees once planted.

Please call or email the council as far in advance as possible if interested in having your property planted. Significant lead time for planning is required to help us ensure that the species and quantity desired are available come planting season.

Board Profiles

Peggy Walsh Craig has been involved in the North Bay area promoting environmental issues for the past two decades. Peggy graduated from the University of Guelph in horticulture in 1976 and worked for 10 years in wholesale nurseries in southern Ontario. She helped grow, sell and ship tens of thousands of trees and shrubs. Since 1991 Peggy has been the Managing Director of the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation, involved with the funding of the development of new ornamental plant varieties.

In addition to serving on the board of directors of the GNSC for the past ten years, she has provided leadership to many organizations such as: Nipissing Environmental Watch (NEW); Nipissing Botanical Gardens; North Bay Blooms; and committees struck by the City of North Bay including - the Waste Resources Liaison Committee, the Sustainable Communities Advisory Committee and the Pesticide Advisory Committee.

Peggy will be stepping down from the board of directors of the GNSC next year to pursue other interests, but stays on as a *Lifetime Member*. Good luck in your next (ad)venture Peggy!

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