



Newsletter – Oct 2011

Prepared by Al Frenette

Supported in part by: Wade Tech - (866) 901 3272

Outstanding Progress

Oct 1st, 2011 – Ontario Steelheaders President's Address

I trust everyone had a great and relaxing summer, and you are now looking forward to the beginning of another exciting fall steelhead season. I know it's the beginning of autumn, as I just got back from my annual duck, grouse and walleye trip with my son Kevin and two of his buddies; Cameron and Matt. More ducks than grouse this year... too many leaves on the trees still to see the grouse, but as we all know, we can't control old Mother Nature. I'm either getting older, the young guys are getting faster, or the trails are getting longer because I was really tired at the end of each day. Good thing I brought my liquid medicine (Forty Creek) to help with the tired bones.

Well, where do I start? There are many things to bring to your attention, as it's been a very, very busy first year for all of us.

Late spring, Rod Jones, Darryl Choronzey and I were invited by the good folks at the Owen Sound MNR office, to the opening of the new and improved Walkerton fishway. It was an informal get together to thank all those involved in the improvements to the existing fishway. We got to meet the MNR's, Shawn Carey and Jody Scheifley; the people primarily responsible for getting this done. And of course, our own Darryl Choronzey, who had a very large part to play as well. Others in attendance were the contractors who did the work to the fishway, other MNR personnel taking pictures, and a few LHFC directors. It was a great day, and despite it being very cold, Jody did a great job on the BBQ, even in the gale force winds. I left that meeting with a positive sense, that everyone was ready and willing to work together to make a real difference on the Saugeen, and that the improvements to this fishway was just the beginning.

As some of you may or may not know, Hammond Power Solutions donated \$1500 to the Ontario Steelheaders to be used for future conservation projects. A huge thank you to Bill Hammond! We thought it would be a great idea to show our appreciation of their most generous donation by presenting them with a granite plaque. Stefanie Bradley, head of Human Resources at Hammond Power Solutions in Guelph, graciously accepted the plaque on their behalf in June. Their contribution, combined with advertising revenue, corporate donations, fundraising activities and our operations at Denny's Park all contribute to our financial commitments in fisheries enhancement, and meeting our objectives.

On Sept 25, 2011, the Ontario Steelheaders Board of Directors held a meeting to discuss current and future business. On that day, our Constitution was unanimously adopted for immediate implementation. The Ontario Steelheaders now has a very comprehensive set of guide lines to build on for the future of this great organization. I'd like to take a moment to thank my fellow Directors for all their efforts in this first year of office. Thanks to Carlo Baldassarra, Dave Munro, Don Power, Madeline Walker, Al Frenette and Harold Curtis. A big kudos must also go out to Darryl Choronzey, LHFC, the MNR, and the Ontario Steelheaders volunteers for the amazing amount of work that was accomplished this year.

Our long list of outstanding achievements, is something that as a member of the Ontario Steelheaders, you should all be very proud of. It is also why now, more than ever, it's important that you renew your membership and get involved. The goals and objectives of this organization will not only benefit you as a member but all future members and the general public who share this very precious resource with us.

This is also a very important time for all of us to rally the spirit of cooperation. Teamwork will make us stronger and better prepared to meet the challenges ahead of us. We can do far more as a group than we can as individuals, so let's stay focused on working together, and in harmony, towards our goals.

If you have any questions, ideas or comments please feel free to get in touch with any of the Directors of the OS or myself, and we'll be glad to discuss them with you, and if we can't give you an answer right away we'll make sure that as a group, we try to get you one.

In closing, I'm very proud of our outstanding progress this year. You'll see in the pages of this newsletter that there's lots of great news and interesting stories to read about. Most of all, I'm looking forward to the projects that lie ahead of us and the fun we'll have doing it together!

Yours in Fishing!

Karl Redin

**President
Ontario Steelheaders**



**P.O. BOX 604
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
N3T 5P9**

**Improving Access and Habitat for
Migratory Rainbow Trout.**

2011 Membership Application Form

New Membership_____ Renewal Membership_____ (Check one)

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Province _____ Postal Code_____

Telephone _____ **Email** _____

I wish to opt out of receiving newsletters and other communications by mail (paper copy). I prefer to receive communications by E-mail only

Please Circle the Type of Membership Required Below:

Regular 1 Year = \$25.00 Regular 3 Year = \$60.00 Family 1 Year = \$30.00

Junior 1 Year (16 years or under) = 10.00 Senior 1 Year (age 65 and over) = \$20.00

List all Names for Family Membership

New

Renew

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NOTE: For Family Membership, all correspondence will be addressed to the person first named above.

I am interested in the following:

Stream Rehabilitation _____ Egg Collection/Adult Transfer _____ Smolt Release____ Hatchery Work_____

Committee / Director Work _____ News and Media Work _____ Other_____

I have enclosed a cheque/money order for \$_____ with this membership application, payable to:

The Ontario Steelheaders
Box 604, Brantford, On.
N3T 5P9

Please allow 3 weeks from time of receipt of this application, for mailing of Membership Cards, crests and decals.

News and Media Update

Hello Steelheaders! These are exciting days for the Ontario Steelheaders indeed. Our advertising support is unbelievable this year. There are so many businesses that want to support us through the Decal Program and through other channels that it's been difficult to keep up with them. "Nice problem to have" as the saying goes. Seriously though, the support is sometimes overwhelming but also encouraging! One thing is obvious... the community, industry and affiliate organizations are behind us...Big Time!

For my next project, I've initiated a complete website overhaul which we hope to launch this winter if all goes well. There's a fair bit of work involved, and tons of details, but hopefully, the end result will be a new, easy to navigate, modernized website complete with all the bells and whistles. Many of our members have made suggestions and ideas for updating and expanding our website; and I can assure you we are carefully evaluating each one of them. I know you'll be impressed when we go live!



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the newsletter and website contributors. Without you, there wouldn't be anything to publish. Directors, project managers, sportsmen and researchers alike, thank you so very much for your hard work. It means a lot to us, and I look forward to seeing even more in the future.

The stories and articles within these pages will have you laughing, cheering and may even choke you up a little. If they don't; stick around with the Ontario Steelheaders a while and get to know these people... you'll soon know what I'm talking about. Please feel free to circulate it to anyone you know. Enjoy the newsletter and have a great fall fishing season!

Al Frenette

News and Media Director
Ontario Steelheaders
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www.ontariosteelheaders.ca



Get your Supporter decal today!!

E-mail: webmaster@ontariosteelheaders.ca for info.

Fisheries Report

By Darryl Choronzey



For starters, let's just say that the Ontario Steelheaders in partnership with the Lake Huron Fishing Club and Ministry of Natural Resources have accomplished one hell of a lot over the last six months. It's been very interesting watching things develop and in a few cases the results have even surprised me. To be honest, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to simply raise and release fish. Hell, numerous clubs around Ontario raise fish, but with many; their results are all but nil.

The important questions to be asked though are:

- do we want the fish to grow and survive?
- do we want fish to return to our stocking sites to spawn?
- do we want fish to naturally reproduce and survive on their own?

For too many years, too many angling organizations and the Ministry of Natural Resources have been stocking inferior sized rainbow trout and other species in the wrong locations. Little if any survival has been achieved. Fish have not been imprinted properly and fail to return to generate a sport fishery. If they don't return to their release sites they definitely aren't going to reproduce.

A little more than a half dozen years ago, the Ontario Steelheaders met with the Lake Huron Fishing Club and the Ministry of Natural Resources to formulate a plan to achieve all three of these goals.

In my estimation, there is only one other club in the province that is presently rearing rainbow trout yearling smolt that can compare with those being raised in the Lake Huron Fishing Club's Kincardine and Port Elgin fish hatcheries. The boys from Lake Huron for the most part annually raise some of the healthiest 8 to 9 inch rainbow smolts for spring release. Every April for the past six years approximately 60,000 yearling steelhead are stocked far upstream in the main Saugeen.

Lobbies Park in Walkerton is without a doubt one of the best stocking locations to help achieve our goals on the Saugeen River. It's approximately 50 miles upstream on the main system. This location provides 'prime' imprinting of the one year old fish. For the most part, minutes after being released from the tanker truck the youngsters are down river bound for Lake Huron, but on that journey they are picking up all the necessary imprinting senses they need to return and spawn.

The first part of our goals has been achieved. The first autumn after the initial stocking we witnessed excellent returns of juveniles back to the river. Today, six years after that initial stocking, we are witnessing a tenfold return of adult rainbow back to the river.



But our goal is and always has been to achieve self-supporting natural reproduction. That goal now seems to be just around the corner, but we have to get those returning fish around that corner. The main Saugeen below Walkerton may look like prime trout breeding water, but it isn't. It's a big stretch of river that's often too muddy and too warm for adequate and successful steelhead propagation. The North Saugeen is even worse. Over the last two years I've carried out a series of temperature checks in numerous locations above Lockerby dam and the 82 to 85 degree temperature readings are lethal to the extreme. Rainbow introduced here are toasted and fried before most will ever head downstream and reproduction will never happen. As for any lucky fish that do survive the downstream journey to the lake, the dam at Lockerby will prevent them from even getting up into those 'supposed' spawning waters.

The returning rainbow trout have to get above Walkerton and then make their way into the Beatty Saugeen. The Beatty Saugeen River, from Hanover to Highway 6 is prime trout spawning water. For almost 50 miles it's a cold clear steelhead heaven. Besides its natural characteristics, this stretch of pristine flow is almost inaccessible and offers undisturbed protection for producing the 'wild' strain that we are attempting to introduce.

Let's have a look at just what we have achieved in the last six months. To be honest, it's pretty damn impressive. I'm probably more optimistic than most, but even I'm pretty blown away by what has been achieved in this short time period.

What The Hell....Let's Say It's Pretty Damn Amazing!

Spring Steelhead Adult Transfer

By Darryl Choronzey

For starters, it has to be remembered that the Ontario Steelheaders have been stocking adult rainbow trout into the Beatty Saugeen for what seems to be eons. Remember, the purpose of this project is to place adult steelhead into the prime nursery waters of the Beatty so they reproduce successfully and their protégé hatch, thrive, and grow 12 months or more in the cold waters, smolt down to the lake and then as adults, return to reproduce on their own in these same waters.

In recent years, the Ontario Steelheaders collected as many as 300 adults at Denny's Dam. In the spring of 2011 we raised that bar, and attempted to collect 1,000 adult rainbow. I was hoping we would attain this goal in a little more than two weeks. Well, a small group of volunteers reached that that thousand fish target in 4 ½ days!!!! On top of that amazing number we believe that just as many returning steelhead were lifted or passed through the fishway in that same period. Totally frigg'n amazing!



The volunteers that were part of this project were members of both the Ontario Steelheaders and the Lake Huron Fishing Club.

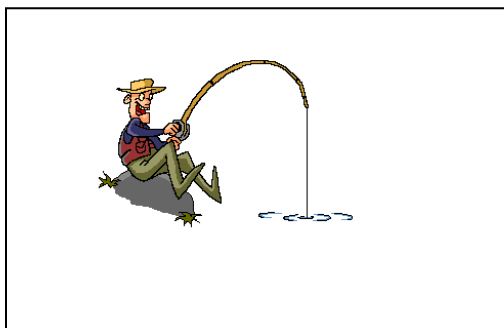
I always hate to name names, because you always forget someone, but I would like to personally thank Pete Gilles, Johnny Campbell, Brian Hambley, Grant McAlpine (and his group of tireless followers), and the two 'lid losers' Mike McDonald and Kirk Lund. Once again I hate naming names but to everyone involved...a big thank you!

Remember please, we need your assistance to keep this great program rolling.

Fletcher Sports

Hwy 6N & Ledgerock Rd.
Owen Sound, On.
519-371-8587

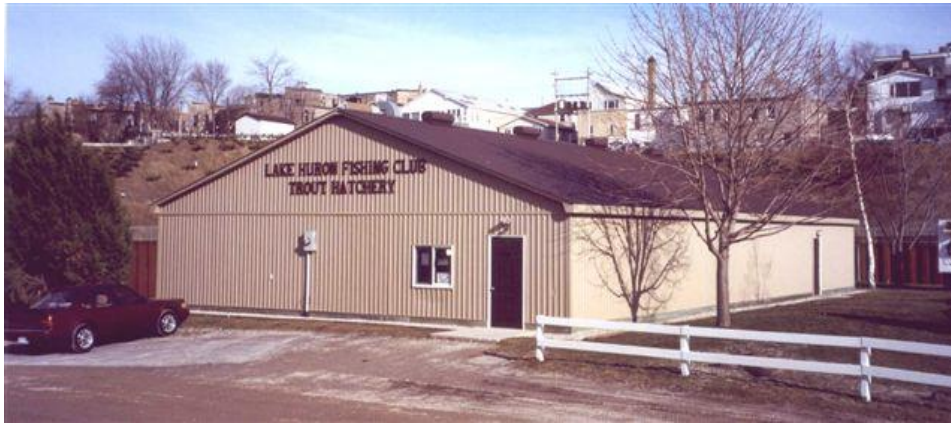
Proud Sponsor of the Saugeen Enhancement Program



Spring Egg Taking

By Darryl Choronzey

It takes eggs to get a hatchery program going and again, in my opinion no one club raises steelhead smolt like the **Lake Huron Fishing Club** at both their Kincardine and Port Elgin hatcheries, but someone has to collect those eggs and milt.



LHFC Trout Hatchery, Kincardine On.

Grant McAlpine and your crew, thank you very much! Along with assistance from the Ontario Steelheaders, more than 200,000 eggs were collected, fertilized and hatched once again this year. The babies are now feeding and putting on the muscle in both hatcheries.

It should be noted that eggs were also collected for one other club and some fingerlings were also donated to a second club that had trouble getting their own eggs this past spring.



Stripping eggs and milt may sound like fun to some, but trust me; it involves a lot of tedious work. Once again, hats off to Grant and his crew of volunteers from both clubs.

HELP WANTED:

The **Ontario Steelheaders** are interested in putting your talents to work! If you believe you have a special talent to contribute to the management of this organization, please don't delay!! There are many ways you can contribute as our directors require assistants to complement their efforts. Please contact a director and we will do our best to put your skills to work to enhance and protect this fishery.

Walkerton Fishway

By Darryl Choronzey

By now, everyone should know that the Walkerton Fishway was given a major overhaul this past spring. Remember, the final goal is to get adult steelhead up and over the Walkerton dam and into the Beatty. The redesign meant a major overhaul. If you even think that getting the needed changes done was a simple matter, then you are dead wrong.

Shawn Carey and Jody Scheifley working out of the Owen Sound Ministry office deserve the lion's share of the praise for getting this old fishway up and running.



We've installed a system of new stop logs at the top and bottom of the fishway's piping interior, along with a large stainless steel control device that allows us to adjust water flow. Does it work? You bet your last fishing rod it does. Within a few hours of opening the redesigned passageway steelhead were moving through it.

There's still a little bit of fine tuning to improve the fishway even more, but that will come next spring.

Hard-hats off to everyone involved in transforming this fishery. Our achievements are made possible with your ***"HELPING HANDS"***



**Walker House
Restaurant**
146 High St. Southampton,
519-797-2772

Annual Spring Steelhead Stocking Continued

By Darryl Choronzey

It's great to inform everyone that approximately 65,000 steelhead yearling smolt were released once again this past spring into the mid-stretches of the Saugeen River below the Walkerton Dam and also into Otter Creek. These prime conditioned 12 month old fish were given a lot of tender loving care by the members of the Lake Huron Fishing Club who raised them from the egg stage to up over 8 inches in length.



Again, the reason for releasing these fish more than 50 miles upstream is to imprint the fish for great returns to prime spawning water. It's imperative that these fish get a good dose of the Saugeen so that when they do leave the river they know just where and how to get home again and into prime spawning waters.

I have a little saying that we should never raise fish to waste fish. Size at stocking is all important and the Lake Huron boys definitely get them up to the proper size. The next important thing is where to stock them for maximum imprinting and that's into waters below and above Walkerton

Fisheries Report Continued on Page 17

Memorial wreath collection 2011

Please remember to support Ken and Ron again this fall as they place memorial wreaths on our behalf at Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Lest we Forget...

Enforcement



Report a Violation

All Ontarians can play a part in protecting our natural resources from waste, abuse and depletion. If you are witness to a resource violation within Ontario, please call the Ministry of Natural Resources TIPS line at:

1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667)

In order to investigate an occurrence, it will assist an officer to know the following information:

- Nature of violation (see list in right column)
- Vehicle information
- Location of violation (address, county, township, municipality, lot, concession)
- Particulars of violation, other relevant information

The TIPS-MNR reporting line is not an emergency response telephone number. If you are calling to report public safety matters please call 911 or the police.

The TIPS line is designed to provide everyone in Ontario with a toll-free telephone line that they can call, any time of the year, day or night, to report natural resources violations directly to the Ministry of Natural Resources. This allows the public to report suspected natural resources violations that the Ministry may not otherwise be aware of. TIPS-MNR is not an anonymous program. Calls may be recorded and you will be asked to provide your name and contact information so that an officer may get in touch with you during the investigation and to assist them in any related prosecution.

All reports to the TIPS line are reviewed by a Conservation Officer and those requiring action are assigned for follow-up in the most appropriate manner. Depending upon their other duties and priorities there may not be an immediate or on-scene attendance by a Conservation Officer.

The intelligence and field operations sections of the Ministry's Enforcement Branch use all of the information collected to help focus Conservation Officer efforts on areas where there are high numbers of reported violations.

All information is valuable and appreciated, the most important thing the public can do is provide the information to an enforcement officer, and we'll take it from there.

Please Note: This is not an information line. For general inquiries please call 1-800 667-1940.

Crime Stoppers

To make an *anonymous* violation report, please call Crime Stoppers at

1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

Denny's Park Project Report

Background: In 1996 The Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority announced that Denny's Dam Conservation Area would be closed to the public due to financial constraints. The possibility existed that the property may even be sold.

The Ontario Steelheaders, consistent with its mandate, approached the Authority with an offer to lease the Park and co-manage it in order to ensure continuing access for all resource users. This resulted in a significant financial commitment to the Ontario Steelheaders. Monies generated by our activities at Denny's Park, are from time to time earmarked for park improvements and fisheries enhancement projects. Our committee works diligently to collect funds, and to run the park efficiently, in order to make these ventures possible. The Ontario Steelheaders would like to thank everyone for their timely payments which make these and other improvements to our park and our fishery possible. Thank you! It's your park! Use it, respect it, and support it!

Chairman's address:

Well here it is fall already, seems like just yesterday we were busting up ice bergs just to get into the park. The spring ice jam certainly created havoc with the camp but through efforts of a lot of people it was brought back into shape.

Some of the camp improvements this year are the placing of speed limit signs, a new collection box which is more secure to collect funds and a new portable toilet at the west end of the park. We would like to thank everyone who helped in any manner in maintaining and improving the park.

There are two projects that need to be singled out:



First, is the placement of a concrete floor and eaves trough at the Rod Jones Pavilion; I know a number of people were involved in the labour portion of this project but special recognition is to be given to Derek Czarnota (Derek's Construction) for the donation of all materials required for this project.

The other is the new roof for the washrooms. Bob Pfaff spent a large portion of his holidays installing the new roof with donated materials that he required. These materials were given to us by Mr. Tom Ware of Hy-Grade Steel Roofing in Guelph. Once again thanks to everyone for efforts that make our park what it is.

Left: Ontario Steelheaders Volunteers replace the roof of the privy at Denny's Park

On a different note I would like to remind everyone that the use of abusive, insulting or threatening language, making excessive noise or disturbing other persons is forbidden in Denny's Park and on all SVCA properties. The vast majority of our users enjoy the park for what it is, and respect the regulations. The minority, I ask you to rethink why you are here and join with us to ensure that our park will be here for everyone's enjoyment far into the future. Please be mindful of your neighbours.

I do not want to leave you with the idea that the news is all bad because it is far from that. We hosted three youth groups this year at no charge that enjoyed our facility and were very thankful for our hospitality.

Through park revenues generated, we donated \$100 to the Goderich Relief Fund, \$2,000 to the Lake Huron Fishing Club for the rearing of smolts and transferred \$4000 to the Ontario Steelheaders Fisheries Enhancement Team to help with their work.

The Saugeen Conservation Authority and its board members toured the park and were very impressed with the park and the work the Ontario Steelheaders do as a whole.

It has been a learning year for your committee and I would like to thank each of them for their efforts. I know there were times you felt like walking away but stayed. Through your hard work, take pride in the accomplishments of this year.

Project Chair,
Gary Sherman

Are We There Yet?

A Retrospective look at the Saugeen River

by Rob Heal

On a cold, hard Sunday in late March of 1994, with an unrelenting wind blowing hard out of the west and driving the frozen rain against my face, I caught my first fly rod steelhead. She was one of three that I hooked and landed among the boulders above the big rapids on the Saugeen River at Southhampton. It's a beat that just looked fishy and although none of those steelhead were large, the big, brawling spring flows made each fight epic. It was that day, just after landing my third fish and feeling satisfied while sipping on a cold can of beer in the midst of a late winter storm that I knew I was truly screwed. It's what a horse racing enthusiast feels just after his first horse finishes in the money. "That was as exciting as a hell but it's going to cost me."

A year later, on opening day of the general trout season the weather was different. Big, fluffy clouds drifted by a high, blue sky and only occasionally eclipsed the sun. The water was clearer than normal for this time of year as the run off had settled and spring was a full two weeks early. I was floating the Saugeen this time in a Mackenzie River drift boat through a sector in Walkerton and as my guide John Valk had indicated, we were seeing fish. Lots of fish! To be clear, we were seeing lots of redding fish; hundreds of them oriented to the gravel on the shoulders of the main flow and seemingly very content in what they were doing. These were the late run fish that were just finishing or very close to finishing their job as parents and getting back to the business of being trout. This redding activity started in town and continued for the 10 km that we drifted. Just about every inside bend or current break that maintained gravel and a uniform flow held redding fish and to this day, it is one of the most remarkable sites that I have ever witnessed. 16 opening weekends later, it still impressed the hell out of me.

Over my 15 years as a professional guide, I would reckon conservatively that I have drifted that beat or a similar one about 600 times and I've floated, fished and made observations on every inch of the river from Maple Hill dam to Southhampton save for 400 m downstream of the Truax Dam in Walkerton and the same distance below Denny's Dam to the trailer park. (Of course I've fished both sections but not from a drift boat.) I've seen it at its best when all of the requirements for great steelhead fishing are in place and I've seen it when nothing seems to go right. I've often lamented that no one complains about the weather more than farmers and fishermen, and feast or famine is the norm. Occasionally though, everything lines up and no matter how hard one tries, it's difficult not to catch fish. Spring of 2006 was one of those years. The sun rose on opening day to nearly perfect flows and just enough rain fell for the critical weeks of spawning that the fish and their eggs thrived. Returning kelts left their redds to favorable water temperatures and the eggs that they left behind had near perfect conditions to mature and hatch at a high percentage. The fishing for kelts that year was off the charts with just about every run holding groups of hungry, post spawn fish just waiting for a bunny leach or wooly bugger to drift near them. I'm not a numbers guy but when the fishing is that good it causes you to take a second look or in my case, a second guess and during that season I often found myself sitting at the rowers bench recounting the events of the day and debating with myself, "My god, was that the 14th or 15th fish hooked?" I had two days with more than 20 hooked fish that year and on one occasion, I had to call my shuttle service and get him to re-shuttle my truck. You see, we had put in at the Tim Horton stairs in Walkerton but hadn't reached Lobby's park at 3:00pm. We had hooked a full two dozen fish at that point and I began playing a bit of game with myself trying to find a fly that hungry kelts wouldn't hit. I didn't find one. As I said, I'm not really a numbers guy but that's three fish an hour, not including bumps, hits or brief encounters. That was fish hooked, fought, landed or lost and I don't care who you are, that's pretty good angling. My spring tally to the 28th of May was 107 fish landed so my guess is you could conservatively triple those figures with fish burned. I also landed seventeen myself that year, so that brings the number to 134. I guided or fished 33 days from April 17 to May 28 so if you do the math, that's just over 4 fish a day landed! But I'm not a numbers guy.

Thank the Fish Gods for balance as the following year was a 180 degree difference. 2007 had pretty good fishing in late March and early April but come the opener, it was all but over. May the 8th was the last day that I guided for steelhead and I admit now that I was pushing it. I followed the fish from Walkerton to Southhampton, fishing all beats in between until there was simply no steelhead remaining in the river. Water levels dropped to disastrous levels threatening to de-water redds and exposing eggs to the air and sun. Recruitment for 2007 we guessed would be have been low and we all lamented that 2011 or '12 would yield low returns as a result. Mother Nature gives and takes away.

That's where the Ontario Steelheaders come in.



ROB HEAL

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Even Mother Nature needs a “helping hand” occasionally as, despite her best efforts, things don’t always go as planned. In the Saugeen’s case, and during the fruitful years when conditions are good, recruitment can be high. Conversely, one bad year like that of 2007 can set things back considerably. As we know, the juvenile steelhead spends between one and three years in the river before descending to the lake. Here, they grow to maturity and feed on what the fertile lake has to offer before returning to the river one or two years later to spawn. Looking at the math of it, after the low water conditions of 2007, I anticipated doom and gloom for 2010 and ‘11. But it didn’t happen. In fact 2009, ‘10 and ‘11 would have to be considered bunker years in terms of returning fish and the subsequent recruitment. Why did this happen in the face of such desperate odds? Mother Nature did get her “helping hand” in the form of the quiet help of the Ontario Steelheaders. Through the tireless efforts of the men and women pushing for funding, the volunteers that collect the eggs, transport mature fish up stream and monitor the progress of the fish being reared at the hatchery, the fishery thrived.

For the past five years when the conditions were conducive, I’ve made it a point to drift sections of the river prior to the season opener. What I’ve observed is astonishing. For the past three years, the number of spawning fish upstream from Denny’s dam was extraordinary. In one 14 km stretch, while scouting during the third week of April 2009, I estimated 300 spawning fish. That is the number of redding fish that I could actually see and I know that I missed many. Over the span of suitable spawning area, I would guess that there were over 1000 redding fish during that period alone. I would also guess that that number represents only 10 to 15% of the fish that had *completed* spawning or had *yet* to commence. My conclusion, having observed the river through the years when the accepted number of returning fish was between 5000 and 7000 annually and getting a close look at the spawning activity over that same period, the current number of returning fish has to be between 50 and 75% higher than that of the mid ninety’s. Not bad for a bunch of unpaid volunteers. All of these figures have little scientific backing but are based on thousands of hours of observation, the journal that I’ve kept for the past 16 years, and keeping up with the what the Ontario Steelheaders have done over that time.

2011 saw what I consider to be the highest number of spawning fish to date in those same area’s upstream of Denny’s Dam but there’s more to consider than just that. Add to that the fact that much of the spring was unfishable, allowing the fish to get busy without interruption throughout most of the spawning season and then return to lake under near perfect conditions and I’ll go out on a limb and say that the years following and specifically 2014 and 2015 will yield record numbers. I for one am anxious see the day that the hard work of the Ontario Steelheaders comes to fruition. What is fruition though? To many it means the day that the Saugeen has a viable, self-sustaining steelhead fishery that requires less work to maintain and provides a meaningful contribution to the economy of the small towns that line the river. That day may be a long ways off or closer than we think but I have the feeling, regardless of the rivers current condition, that the Ontario Steelheaders won’t rest and will continue to be the driving force behind a river with the highest potential. Are we there yet? I’ll bet if you ask anyone involved, they’ll say that we still have a long ways to go but the future is defiantly bright indeed.

Work resumes April 2012

We will have a permit to transport up to 1000 adults upstream via the Steelhead Express tankers, and the LHFC will have up to 40 loads of yearlings ready for release. The Egg Collection program will be running as usual and we will need to collect additional eggs again next year. We need drivers with full size Pick-Ups or SUV’s and volunteers to work on the transportation aspect of our operations.

**Please contact Karl Redin and Al Frenette at:
webmaster@ontariosteelheaders.ca**

If you want get involved in transfer and release work.

Have fun and work safe!!

What Do You Know?

By Ron Plaskett

What do you know about where you are fishing on the Saugeen River?

You know there is Denny's Dam and that there was an old bridge nearby. You even know about Thorncrest Outfitters with all their canoes and kayaks stored beside their house. You especially know that the fishing is very good. But what else do you know about where you fish? Maybe this brief history will help you understand and appreciate the area.

Bruce County was shaped by the ice ages, semitropical seas, and weathering created the Bruce Peninsula with its distinctive limestone rock formations. Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre houses a large 9 inch tooth from a woolly mammoth found in Arran Township. The name 'Saugeen' is a corrupted form of a Native word meaning 'the entrance or mouth of the river'. Oral history from the Saugeen and Nawash First Nations suggests their ancestors have been living in the area as early as 7500 years ago. Hunters and gatherers of the Middle Woodland culture lived in the area from about 700 B.C. to about 800 A.D. The Huron Indian nation was in the area when the first French Jesuit priests arrived. Fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company then arrived and set up a trading post along the Saugeen River at what was to be the village of Saugeen (Southampton).

Norman Robertson, author of *The History of Bruce County*, states that there was a fur trader who settled at the south side of the Saugeen River mouth in 1818. Other sources put the date around 1812 and that the trader was a Frenchman by the name of Pierre Piche.

In the mid 1600's, the Ojibway (Chippawas) sent trading parties through the area and the Iroquois (Mohawk) often attacked them. The Ojibway and other native groups forced the Iroquois out and settled here for many generations.

Paul Kane, a famous artist, who lived from 1810- 1871, visited the area in the 1840's and wrote "The Indian village of Saugeen contains about two hundred Objiways. It is a former battleground between the Objiways and the Mohawks. Of this, the mounds erected of the slain afford abundant evidence in the protrusion of the ones through the surface of the ground." He also writes of the abundance of fish and deer in the area.

At the Treaty of Manitowaning in 1836, 1,500,000 acres were surrendered by the Objibway to British control to allow the influx of Canadian and European settlers. From this came The Queen's Bush or the Huron Tract. Queen's Bush was the title given to this area to distinguish it from the lands belonging to the Canada Company, the German Company and others that owned large tracts of land. The present counties of Perth, Huron and Bruce were created in 1849 from The Queen's Bush.

The remaining land of what is Bruce County became the Indian Peninsula and was deemed to be located above a line drawn from the mouth of the Saugeen River to the mouth of the Sydenham River. This land was primarily comprised of primeval forest. Later on, there were more land treaties that incorporated the lands of the peninsula into Bruce County.

At present, there are two First Nation reserves. The Saugeen First Nation is near the mouth of the Saugeen and the other, the Cape Croker First Nation, is on the east side of the Bruce peninsula.

In the early 1800's, few explorers and settlers had visited the area. Unfortunately, records were few and the settlers' presence was not noted very well. They came from many areas in Upper Canada, Lower Canada and the Maritimes. Many came from across the Atlantic Ocean, from Germany, England, Scotland and Ireland, according to census records. In 1851 there were 499 families (2,837 people) located in and around Saugeen and by 1861, there were 4,665 families (27,499 people) according to the Bruce Genealogical Society – County History. However, another source (saageenshores.ca – Saugeen Township)) states that there were only 200 people in 1851 with 130 people over the age of 20 and another 30 per cent under the age of 10. The Bruce County Museum and Cultural Center – Archives also says that there were 2,837 people in the area. I cannot explain the difference in the numbers.

Before the land was officially surveyed, the first settlers arrived. They arrived overland by walking on poor trails, by schooners on Lake Huron, and by rafts/ barges/ scows floating down the Saugeen River. The rafts were frequently heavy and unwieldy with one or two pairs of oars, and a long sweep oar at the stern. Settlers started off from Hanover or Walkerton to make the dangerous trek downriver.

A selection from the Paisley Advocate many years later (April 28, 1876) states: "On one occasion, early in the morning, a commodious raft passed where this village now is (ed. Note – Paisley). On one end was a cow with her calf, on the other along with considerable baggage was a cooking stove, in which was a good fire, and while the enterprising settler was attending to the navigation of his vessel, the good wife was busy at the stove getting breakfast ready. The smoke which streamed from the elevated pipe, gave the moving raft the appearance of a rustic steamer in motion."

In 1844, the Government sent out a party to explore the Saugeen River. Travelling along the Garafraxa Road, they reached the Saugeen River. They then travelled down the river by canoe and mapped the Saugeen River and its surrounding lands. (History of Bruce County; Robertson)

By 1851, the area had been surveyed and the Crown land was officially available to those who could make it here by land or water. Land cost two dollars an acre on July 30, 1852.

Somewhere it was stated in my reading that a peculiarity about the survey being worked on in 1850 was a 'Marine Allowance' along both sides of the river. A "Marine Allowance" was not included in any other survey.

Probably, fishing was the first industry and the most important in Saugeen for many years. The first manufacturing industry in Southampton was a steam sawmill owned by Messrs. Line and Hamilton. It unfortunately burned down but was rebuilt by William Bondy in the form of a steam grist mill and distillery.

According to the edition of the Paisley Advocate of April 28, 1876, there was an article about navigating the Saugeen River: "When the first steam sawmill built in this county, was to be erected in Southampton, about 25 years ago, it became a question of how large a boiler could be brought to its destination, as there was no road through the county. The boiler was conveyed to Hanover, if we remember rightly, and left by the side of the Saugeen to wait the turning up of some genius who would invent some method of taking it further. It was decided to make an ironclad of it and float it down the river.

All the openings were tightly plugged, and with levers and handspikes, the huge boiler was started rolling at a very rapid rate down the steep bank into the deep river at the foot. The boiler, being very heavy, and going down with great force, it at once disappeared with a tremendous splash.

The experiment was deemed a failure and the costly concern was supposed to be lost, but while the disappointed navigators looked on with blank faces where their craft had disappeared, it came slowly to the surface, raising its black shape high above the water. The boiler,

which had started its way north without waiting for anyone to take command, was at once captured and a dry cedar log lashed to each side, oars were rigged and away went the strangest craft that ever navigated the Saugeen. The boiler was taken to Southampton." Mill privileges at the Indian Rapids (the area where we fish) were owned by Messrs. Lines and Hamilton in 1852 or 1853. The rights were transferred in 1854 to Messrs. Dalton and McNabb of Toronto who started to build a mill race in 1855. They also started to build a grist mill.

During 1856, the two men sold the mill privileges and the improvements to John Denny. It has been reported that Mr. Denny was a descendent of the Denny's of Dumbarton, Scotland who were famous ship builders.

A map dated 1857 shows a grist mill (Denny's Mill) up and working at Indian Rapids. He also built 2 other mills – a saw mill by 1859 and a woolen mill by 1865. Together they produced flour, lumber, woolens and barrels.

John Denny also cut a road through the forest during this time to bring his family to live on the site.

To obtain power to run the mills, John Denny built a partial dam which went across about mid-stream and funneled much of the water flowing in the river enough of a distance down a mill race to get the required flow to power the mills. While this was being constructed, labourers stayed/ boarded at the hotel.

It was a matter of public record by the tax collector of 1859, that the "total real and personal property or income" of John Denny was \$1354.00.

Eventually, John Denny owned the estate at the top of the hill, farmland, the store, the grist mill, the woolen mill, the saw mill, two houses for the managers of the mills and the Denny's Bridge Hotel. Denny operated the mills before retiring to Toronto.

After John Denny left, his farm was purchased by Andrew Ruxton in 1883, and then in 1910, Mrs. Joel Eby purchased the land. Dr. Chambers held ownership briefly before being sold to William and Ida Donaldson. In 1926 the farm was eventually purchased by William Donaldson's son who lived there with his family for 47 years. It is reported by Jean Mills that the house was sold in 1973.

It was during this time (1897) that the mill/water privileges were taken over by the Saugeen Electric Light and Power Company to produce Southampton's first electricity. Apparently, the idea of having electricity made people worry that it would cost too much so they voted the town council out of office but the machinery still arrived to be installed at Indian Rapids/ Denny's Mills.

It was in the early 1900's that a cement dam and race was built for producing hydroelectric power. The power produced serviced the electrical needs of Southampton, Port Elgin and Walkerton.

Ontario Hydro took over as the main power supplier in the late 1920's. According to Gordon Kidd, who wrote an article titled 'Old Powerhouse Humming in the 1920's', when Ontario Hydro took over, all the machinery for the creation of electricity was taken out as Ontario Hydro's mandate was to eliminate all small power houses. He also states that the dam was "blasted out of existence".

The Saugeen River Conservation Authority built the present dam in the early 1970's as part of controlling the water flow, controlling sea lampreys, and for a fish ladder.

John Denny's hotel/ inn was a stop- over for stagecoaches and travellers and was sold to John Buckley about 1860. The Buckley family kept travellers' horses in their stables to be looked after and to rest for the next day's journey.

The Denny's Bridge hotel became known as The Bull's Head Hotel due to William Buckley's family's coat of arms which had Saxon origins. The coat of arms had a bull's head on the upper part of the crest and three bull's heads on the main body of the shield; thus, the Bull's Head Hotel name.

Of course, the Inn keepers were gregarious people and entertained their guests with music and good food. The popular inn also had a bar for those who were in the mind to partake in some libations. Rooms were heated by wood stoves and water was obtained from a spring at the bottom of the hill. Water was also piped to the stable (not far from the hotel and by the road-side) and into a watering trough for the horses.

William and his brother Richard Buckley owned and operated the hotel until 1883. After William died, Richard took over until James Johns took over ownership of the Bull's Head Inn in the late 1890's. He also "owned Denny's dam and water power rights, and did milling at the dam." (John Weichel)

The Bull's Head Hotel was used for many years as a family home by a family called the Mathesons before being purchased by Tim and Janette Thorne. The couple own and operate Thorncrest Outfitters in downtown Southampton. It continues to be private residence since the Thornes began living there in 2003. There are plans for it to become a bed and breakfast once all renovations are completed. Since it is a private residence, no tours of the house are given.

Mrs. Thorne described the house/ former hotel as having two foot thick walls. The upper portion of the house had been closed up for many years before they moved in. The upstairs of the building has 11 bedrooms and there are 27 windows in the house to let in lots of light. The back part of the house has an upper servants' quarters and kitchen with the lower part being the owner's bedroom and kitchen. Water for the house is supplied by an artesian spring/well that came out at a spot higher than the house.

The house was in need of repairs when the Thornes moved in with many parts of the house being original, except for minor upgrades over the years like painting the wooden floors and wire electric wiring.

During the mid-1950's a bathroom was installed in the house and used water from the spring. (Jean Mills)

Mrs. Thorne also said that she believes that the house is definitely haunted. Visions and sounds of a cat have been seen and heard by both of the Thornes. (They do not have a cat.) Also, the sound of a foot dragging was heard in their first few years of residence but stopped after the downstairs renovations were completed.

John Benner took over the mill privileges around 1880 and set up another woolen mill a little upstream from Southampton where he manufactured blankets. He had bad luck with flooding on the Saugeen River and was forced to relocate the mill to Inglis Falls in 1884. By 1888, Denny's Mills were owned by the Routh brothers and employed 15 people. Unfortunately in October 1888, a fire destroyed the woolen mills and everyone was put out of work.

Going back to October 1865, before the Upper Canada government built a timber bridge over the Saugeen River at Denny's Mills or Indian Rapids (at an approximate cost of four thousand dollars including road improvements), there was a small, one-man ferry lower down on the river. According to an excerpt from one of John Weichel's books, *Forgotten Lives: Early History of a Coastal Town*, "The tariff for ferry use is as follows: Each passenger, 2 cents; Each vehicle with two horses or other animals, 6 cents; Each bag, barrel, or package with a team, 2 cents; Freight without a team, over 100 pounds, 2 cents; Freight under 100 pounds without passenger, 2 cents; freight with passenger, free; Each vehicle having paid twice in the same day to pay at half the cost."

Unfortunately, the ferryman was out of a job when the bridge was completed as were his two daughters who also ferried people across the river.....Continued on page 25.

Thankless? – Perhaps Not

This past spring was more like the winter that would never end - Cold, Wet & Windy. Some of the volunteers and I had just finished the last of the smolt transfers and we stopped at a restaurant to have ourselves a well-deserved cold one. Today, the Fish Gods must have smiled down on us, as this was the only day that we didn't do this work where we were soaked through and through from all the rain, sleet, wind and snow. Not unlike what all the other volunteers endured throughout this season, the weather really wasn't our friend. At times it feels like back breaking, bone jarring work, but somebody's gotta do it –right? Don't get me wrong, we aren't complaining, it's just this year it seemed to hurt more than previous years.

As we were having the first sips of our ice cold beer and sit down, we can't help but notice how nice the Ontario Steelheaders "Steelhead Express" fish tankers looked in the parking lot of the restaurant. They really are quite impressive and they were true work horses this season. The guys that worked on them sure did a great job.

Shortly after we sat our weary bones down to ponder the work just completed a young gentleman approached us. He introduced himself; Darryl Cartwright, and shook our hands while repeatedly thanking us for the work of the Ontario Steelheaders. He was acknowledging all the efforts put forth by the volunteers, noting that he and his sons have been fishing on the Saugeen for years and have really noticed the difference over this past couple of years. Darryl explained that he was part of the Walkerton Struttin' Toms club and from one conservationist to another he wanted to express his heart-felt thanks to us volunteers. I gotta tell you, listening to this young man go on and on about how appreciative he was of our efforts, I could feel my aching bones bouncing back.

Darryl excused himself momentarily and he went to speak with someone on the phone. He returned to us after a few minutes and produced a cheque for \$500.00 made out to the Ontario Steelheaders – WOW I thought, this is incredible! Darryl explained that the organization he is part of is dissolving, and they were looking at how they were going to disburse their funds. It turns out that when he excused himself from our table, he had left to phone the President of their club and he obtained the approval to donate \$500.00 to the Ontario Steelheaders. Since it was turkey season, Darryl didn't have a lot of time to spend with us, as he had things to do, people to see and turkeys to hunt so off he went but not after shaking our hands and again thanking us for our efforts.

I spend much of my time at Denny's Park, with my children, and now their children. We all really enjoy fishing the Saugeen River. Since I retired, I am able to spend more time volunteering and never thought about receiving any recognition or thanks for the work that I or any of the volunteers do. We just get up early each morning regardless of the weather, and do the work that has to be done. Like I said, some years it is more difficult than others but we all support one another and there is a great sense of community amongst us volunteers. We can spend many days, sometimes week stretches away from the comforts of home and our families. I am able to see the positive effects on the fisheries, that us volunteers are doing, but having a complete stranger come up to us and thank us repeatedly and then to provide a donation to help further our efforts, really made me smile.

I wanted to write this article to share this story with ALL OF YOU, not to tell you about the work that I do, but to share with all the volunteers a BIG THANK YOU. People in the community really do appreciate it and you all deserve the same warm feeling I got when this young man shook my hand.

Pete Gilles Sr.

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From Madeline's Membership Desk

There's Power in Numbers

I am sure many of you have heard the old adage 'There's Power in Numbers', well this also holds true for us. It has been a year now since The Ontario Steelheaders elected its current Board of Directors. I can assure you all, that your Directors have been working hard over the past year on many projects to move this club and the fisheries in a forward direction. Your membership support has, and will continue to make this work possible.

Please keep in mind that all membership revenue is 100% directed to the Ontario Steelheaders to fulfill their goals and objectives. The revenue generated from membership fees, combined with donations, grants and bursaries from businesses, government organizations, as well as, other community group funds gives us the ability to really make a difference in this fishery. It is also in our best interest as concerned anglers, for our organization to show a wealth of supporting members on the roster. The power is in the numbers, as it demonstrates to government agencies and various organizations that we have a committed (and large) group of people who continue to renew their commitment, and support the objectives of the Ontario Steelheaders. In other words, it's not just about money. The OS needs your support in many ways.

In the spring of this year, we had many members renew their memberships and also had the additional support of new members. There are still several memberships that are due for renewal, so please check with me to determine your renewal period. Please note that our membership dates run from May to May. **As a special offer to new supporters, and in an effort to streamline renewal dates, any memberships received after September 1st 2011 will not be due for renewal until May 1, 2013. Please take advantage of this one time offer, and show your support. Join, or renew your membership with the Ontario Steelheaders and help us reach our goals!**

Our membership roster is well over 145 members, but could easily top 200 if we could get everyone to renew. Please take advantage of this renewal offer, it will permit you to continue to support the organization as you have in the past, and increase our active member list tremendously!

I would also like to point out that Rob Heal owner and operator of "**The Home Pool**" Guiding and Fly Fishing Center, www.thehomepool.ca is offering a membership drive on our behalf. Rob is offering to include in his daily fee, the cost of a single Ontario Steelheaders membership for anyone that books with him for the months of October and November and again for April of 2012. Thanks again Rob for believing in and supporting this organization!!

I take the responsibility of Membership Director very seriously. I share the role of ensuring our members receive the information, handouts, memos, updates etc. that our directors prepare for us. You should note that the most recent membership application form provides an option for those of you who wish to opt -out of receiving mail through Canada Post and only receive email communications. I realize that for some of our members continue to depend on receiving our communications through Canada Post and this will continue. However for those of you who have selected to opt out and receive email communications only, I thank you, as this does reduce our overall operating costs. However, regardless of how you wish to receive your communications please ensure that I have received your most up to date contact information including valid E-mail addresses.

I continue to ask for any and all of your input regarding any suggestions that you may have, as this is YOUR organization and YOUR input is valued. Please send your comments to: membership@ontariosteelheaders.ca, or include them with your membership renewal.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you again at the fall derby on October 15, 2011. I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead of us in the coming year. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions regarding your membership or club communications, and I would be only too happy to assist.

Madeline Walker

Membership Director

Ontario Steelheaders

membership@ontariosteelheaders.ca

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Fisheries Report Cont'd... From page 8

Fantastic News Flash!

Maple Hill Finally Gets A New Fishway By Darryl Choronzey

Okay, here's something that we can talk about now, but have been keeping under wraps until we got it done. Again, special thanks again to Shawn Carey and Jody Schiefley for this magic act.

There's a brand new fishway now installed at the Maple Hill Power Dam and if that's not great news, then you don't know the Saugeen River or the steelhead that swim up it. For the past two months, it seems that I've spent more time at Maple Hill than I have at home meeting with Schiefley, engineer Jeff Graham and a corps of dedicated contractors that have been installing forms, pouring cement and installing strategically placed steel guide racks and stop logs.



This passageway is a new modern design located on the opposite side of the river from the generating plant. It is actually the complete opposite of the more common vertical slot and Denil fishways. It's comprised of two large 'container' passageways that trap water from the top of the dam above and form pools for the steelhead and salmon to migrate over the dam. It is a totally 'free' swimming fishway that operates whenever water is flowing over the dam, which is 95 percent of the time. During low water conditions we can adjust the control boards across the top of the dam to direct water into the new fishway.

Remember also, there is already one fishway installed on the opposite side of the river near the power plant. Now the fish have a choice of moving up and over the dam at two separate locations.

Again, this latest project was imperative to getting the returning adult steelhead spawning in the Beatty Saugeen. Think about it. Less than a year ago we had two barriers on the Saugeen between Walkerton and Hanover preventing steelhead movement to our prime target waters.



Today, those barriers have been made passable due to our working co-operation between our club, the Owen Sound office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the owner of the dam. To say I'm surprised is putting it mildly. Once again, a hell of a lot of meetings and labour went in to getting this accomplishment completed

I personally would like to once again thank Shawn Carey, Jody Schiefley and the crews and contractors that Jody has put in place to complete these manmade marvels.

Sixty-five Thousand Fall Fingerlings Added to the Saugeen

by Darryl Choronzey

Approximately six months ago I asked for a meeting with the District Manager of the Ministry of Natural Resources Shawn Carey and also Dave Reid the Upper Great Lakes Manager for the Ministry of Natural Resources. The reason for the meeting is discussed under the next title in this newsletter, but before we get to that subject, let me first say that the Ontario Steelheaders have entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources to give the Saugeen River steelhead enhancement program a 'little' additional injection of rainbow trout for the coming year.

To complete one objective, it was suggested that the Ontario Steelheaders also take 'advantage' of the opportunity to rear additional rainbow trout to the fry or fingerling size. Now again, for the last time, I don't like raising fish to waste fish. I don't believe in stocking fry or fingerlings of any species or for that matter stocking them in the wrong locations, but I believe we came to a mutual and satisfactory compromise in this 'one time' only stocking project.

After the meeting I contacted our president Karl Redin and got the go ahead to move further with this proposal. From there I met with Al Wilkins the Lake Huron Fishing Club president. The following program is now well underway and will be completed by the second week of November.

Here we go with a brief explanation. Yes, we took up the opportunity to expand our program for this year only. We have entered in to a one time only project of raising and releasing an additional 65,000 'advanced' fall fingerling rainbow (steelhead) during the first weeks of November, with all fish being released into a 50 mile stretch of the Beatty Saugeen between Hanover and Highway 6.



Above: Port Elgin hatchery manager with the new advanced fall fingerling arrivals...they'll be 6 inches long when stocked in mid-November.

These fish are being released into some of the finest trout-suitable waters in the province. Water temperatures are fairly constant with little over-winter freezing and related winter mortality. These fish will grow, smolt, imprint, and know how to get home when they mature and return from their stay and maturing in Lake Huron. Ten locations have already been picked on the Beatty for fingerling release, which will maximize survival of the young fish.

Thanks are extended at this time to Al Wilkins president of the Lake Huron Fishing Club, Gary Biederman the hatchery manager of the club's Port Elgin fish hatchery, Grant McAlpine and his crew of tireless workers at Denny's Dam.

This one year only program will not only enhance the river and lake fishery, but will also significantly increase the number of spawning adults in the future to our target site...the Beatty Saugeen.



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MNR Targets the Saugeen with Trout Stocks

by Darryl Choronzey

Now for the icing on the cake... and I couldn't really disclose the following until I sat down at the computer a few hours ago and to be honest, I never really thought it had much of chance of happening.

Now remember, it's been a long time since the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has carried out any stocking of their own of rainbow trout on the Saugeen River and I don't believe their program consisted of any actual upstream 'imprinting.'

At the meeting I suggested that it would nice if the MNR complimented the volunteers' efforts for their work over the past five years. The question was asked, just what was I suggesting?

The answer was simple. I suggested the Ministry of Natural Resources also match a similar number of rainbow trout for the Saugeen River that would be reared from Saugeen River eggs at a ministry hatchery and also imprinted in a similar manner already being carried out by the volunteers.

Well, this morning I received confirmation from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that starting in the spring of 2012 we will supply the Ministry of Natural Resources with 100,000 eggs that were in the past allocated to our now closed down Mildmay hatchery. These eggs will be isolated, incubated and raised at the government's Chatsworth hatchery facility. These additional yearlings will be ready for spring release in 2013 to compliment the program presently being carried out by the volunteers of Ontario Steelheaders and Lake Huron Fishing Club. The MNR complimentary program is to be run in conjunction with the volunteers' project for a term of 3 to 5 years. It definitely will add an additional boost to our goal of transforming the Saugeen into the finest trout stream east of the Rocky Mountains.



The Saugeen is one big, big river. It offers more than 100 miles of excellent trout fishing water and over 70 miles of prime spawning and nursery habitat.

The steelhead is a target species for not only the river fisherman, but as a much sought after Great Lakes species. Our strides have proven themselves and are being recognized throughout the province.

Let's keep working together as clubs and individual sportsmen. It can only get better.



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Take out & Delivery

Georgian Triangle Anglers Association Follows Our Lead

I received a phone call a few months back from the Georgian Triangle Anglers Association over on Georgian Bay to come and speak to their membership on just exactly what has made the Saugeen River an overnight sensation. They wanted to know why returning trout numbers were exploding and how we did it.

When we met I explained to them that the answers were simple. Raise quality fish to the proper size and stock them far up the river for maximum imprinting. I emphasized the fact that we were collecting quality wild eggs and milt from quality wild fish. I also explained that the Lake Huron Fishing Club was rearing quality yearling smolt to the proper size. I noted that our stocking sites were many miles upriver on the Saugeen, as matter of fact more than 50 miles from the river mouth.

I also compared our success to failures with other clubs that failed to raise fish to the proper size and simply dumped their fish near river mouths.

It came as a surprise that the MNR's Jody Schiefley had passed the same message on to the membership a few weeks before.

It did not surprise me that starting this past spring the Georgian Triangle Anglers Association have reduced the number of eggs they take from returning wild fish, and are raising their trout to yearling smolt. They have also been given approval to stock their yearlings farther up the Beaver River for better imprinting.

Needless to say their rainbow trout fishery is about to improve substantially in the years down the road.

Congratulations to the members of the Georgian Triangle Anglers Association.



Coming soon to a river near you...if you do it the right way

Finishing Thoughts

Now this has been one hell of a year. Here's what we have accomplished:

- One great working relationship between the Ontario Steelheaders, Lake Huron Fishing Club and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- 65,000 amazing steelhead smolt stocked again in the Saugeen River
- 1,000 adult steelhead transferred to the Beatty
- the new improved Walkerton Fishway completed
- the all new Maple Hill Dam completed
- 65,000 advanced fall fingerling steelhead to be stocked in November in the Beatty Saugeen River
- 65,000 steelhead presently in the Kincardine Hatchery for spring yearling release in 2012 in the upper Saugeen
- the transfer permit has been received for autumn adult steelhead to the Beatty
- An all new MNR Chatsworth Complimentary stocking program for 2013-2016 of 50,000 yearlings annually

This joint program is more than just working. It's really something that has never happened that I know of anywhere in Ontario.

That being said, the Ontario Steelheaders need more young members to help assist in these endeavours. Some of us may not admit it, but we need to refresh our membership with new members.



That being said, the Ontario Steelheaders need more young members to help assist in these endeavours. Some of us may not admit it, but we need to refresh our membership with new members.

Please sign up some of those young guys that visit the river or troll the lake so they can enjoy the fruits of our labours and help carry some of the load.

Darryl Choronzey
Fisheries Liaison Officer
Ontario Steelheaders

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Well, it's getting to be that time of year when seasons swing us to cooler temperatures. I trust, we all for some time at least, got to enjoy the warmer, sunny days of summer. For those of you whose acquaintance I have not made, my name is Harold Curtis. I am Secretary/Treasurer for the Ontario Steelheaders.

We would like to take this opportunity to let our membership know how our collective funds are being used.

Dec. 12, 2010 - \$ 2000 for work on the Traux Dam Fishway in Walkerton

April 24, 2011 - \$ 2000 for L.H.F.C. to help with the cost of rearing 2011-12 yearlings.

July 4, 2011 - \$3000 to L.H.F.C. to help with the cost of rearing enhanced fall-release smolt.

Sept. 6, 2011 - \$5000 towards new Maple Hill Dam Fishway.

In less than one year, we've injected **\$12,000 into fisheries enhancement projects**. We also have had numerous smaller expenses we have incurred in the day to day operations of the Ontario Steelheaders.

I would also like to share with all of you folks a list of friends of the Ontario Steelheaders who have made donations to assist in our efforts:

Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows Ltd.

Sauble Men's Club

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Local Union 785

John Topp

Strutin' Tom's Turkey Club of Walkerton

John Campbell

Hammond Power Solutions Inc.

Sobey's Milton

I personally, as well as the rest of our members would like to express our gratitude for the generosity shown to us by these groups and individuals.

A special note of thanks, to the families and friends of Dave Bartholomew and Bertha Mills for the donations made to us in their memory.

I will continue to visit the post office and bank, and keep our books up to date. See you all out there sometime!

Regards,

Harold Curtis

Secretary/Treasurer
Ontario Steelheaders



FEED THE FISH!!!

Chances are you've been approached by one of our members with draw tickets for prizes, 50/50's, merchandise and so on. The proceeds from these draws go directly to fund the hatchery operations and are used to purchase fish feed, pay for electricity and other expenses. Many thanks, to the folks who have been working hard to sell the tickets and raise funds. This work, and your generosity, is critical to the enhancement of this fishery, and a vital lifeline to the fish!

Please support these and other very important fundraising activities now and in the future!

Trippin' down the Beatty

By Josh Choronzey

Like you (or like you should be!) I am an Ontario Steelheaders member. I put in my time to volunteer for the greater good of our steelhead fishery on the Saugeen River. Whether it's helping out with fish lifts at Denny's Dam or pulling a fish tanker full of yearling stockers, I take great pride in helping out. So, it was natural for me to accept the task put upon me from some of the Steelheader's brass this past spring. My good friend and fellow member Dan Gravel and I were asked to verify the presence of beaver dams on the Beatty Saugeen River. This became an adventure we wouldn't soon forget.

For those of you that don't know the Beatty, it is a major spawning tributary to the Saugeen proper. The Beatty is born in the wooded wetlands of Southgate, east of highway 6. This cold water stream becomes a small river over the course of its 46km stretch before entering the South Saugeen in the town of Hanover. The cold, spring fed Beatty is a fish producing "super trib", rich with invertebrates, forest covered banks and pristine spawning gravel; it is also the major destination for adult steelhead that are transported by the Ontario Steelheaders "Steelhead Express" tankers some 60km from Denny's Dam during the spring fish transfers. Here, in this beautiful creek, these steelhead (as well as many others who made the journey the hard way past the man-made dams) pair-up, and lay the seeds for future generations of Saugeen River steelhead. Without a doubt, the Beatty is the major contributor to wild produced steelhead throughout the entire Saugeen system.

Our adventure started in April 2011, when Rod Jones and my father were discussing the rumour of multiple beaver dams in the lower Beatty which would impede steelhead migration. This became a great concern, since ease of access to spawning water is important. These two fine men suggested they send me and Dan down river in a canoe the following week to explore these beaver dams. Not wanting to disappoint, we eagerly agreed. Although the Beatty has an extended spring closure (no fishing till the end of May), we thought it would be a great idea to bring our shotguns along and possibly harvest a turkey or two on the stretches of Conservation Lands that border the river. My father offered us his finest fiberglass canoe and a free ride to Concession 16 where he would drop us off. We neglected his choice of watercraft and brought Dan's rugged aluminum canoe knowing full well that the journey may be rough. We met Mr. Choronzey in Hanover with canoe in tow and reached the drop off at Concession 16 at 10:30am. He informed us that the trip would only take a few hours and we would be in Hanover no later than 4pm. A quick look at Dan's handheld GPS told us a different story and we launched the canoe and turkey gear with some doubt in our senior members' assurance of a quick and easy trip.

The first concession of our paddle turned out to be hell. We never found a beaver dam here. However, we found eight giant log jams that required us to portage the canoe around the masses of lumber. This took considerable amounts of time, not to mention the river had more bends and winding than a coil of garter snakes in a hibernation den. We did however; see dozens of large steelhead hiding in the log jams, obviously not impeded from beaver dams down river! Concession #1 took 2.5hrs to paddle, with no turkeys to be seen or heard.

Dan and I were happy to be out of the slow oxbow section of river we experienced in the first concession of our trip. The second concession was more exciting. Some areas of faster water made for a quicker ride down river. Here we found beautiful sections of spawning water that were occupied by steelhead paired up and making aquatic nookie. We also slammed the canoe into a few logs and boulders, but we were no worse for wear. NO BEAVER DAMS again in this stretch, but we still had to portage around 3 large log jams. Concession #2 took 2hrs to paddle.

Now, at 3pm we are at Grey Road 3 bridge, still 2 concessions from our destination with about 4.5hrs of good daylight ahead of us. This next stretch of the Beatty proved to be a wicked adventure. For the next 2 hours we pounded the canoe around and into sweepers and through rapids (yes RAPIDS), slammed into boulders, nearly flipped, took on water, and managed to explode our carefully packaged soft cooler of silver beverages. My shotgun was sitting in 3in of cold stream water in the bottom of the canoe and any thought of killing a turkey was gone. Finally after nearly 3 hours, we completed the 3rd concession, soaked and bruised, but still paddling. The only benefit to this stretch of the trip was being able to witness the most intense mayfly and then caddis hatch I have seen on the Saugeen. Juvenile steelhead and resident browns were lighting up the surface, filling their guts with these flies. It was like something from a western fly fishing movie, surreal to say the least.

Finally, we had one more concession to traverse before we reached the take out point. The final leg of our journey proved to be the worst few hours in a watercraft I have ever experienced, and I have seen a lot! We passed some beautiful riverside homes, whose resident's proclaimed we were crazy idiots for canoeing the Beatty. One lady even offered to help us off the river and back to town. We neglected the offer and tried to explain we were in search of BEAVER DAMS. About half way through the final concession we met our match. Here, the river split into a section of 3 braids. Dan (in the rear) suggested we go left, I however paddled us to the right and off we went tumbling down a whitewater staircase, putting the canoe on its side and taking on water fast. Dan managed to jam his paddle down into the riverbed to prevent a total capsizing. We immediately pulled up on shore and proceeded to walk the canoe down the remaining 400yds of whitewater, inadvertently spooking adult steelhead everywhere throughout the stretch. It was nearly dark and we had no idea how much further the pick-up destination was. We managed to paddle down river for about 5 minutes before we were greeted to fast water again and more hair pin turns. We repeated the above scenario two more times. Yes, I said two more times... ughhh! Not taking any more chances, we walked the canoe through the final bit of nastiness and found our take out point within eyesight. Mr. Choronzey was not there (of course). He had dropped the vehicle off for us at the bridge (thanks Dad!) and returned to his trailer at Denny's Park where he was in the company of the Steelheaders' brass who brainstormed this idiotic adventure, laughing I am sure.

We left the Beatty at 9 pm that evening. Sore, bruised, broken and bug bit. The canoe looked like a car hood from a demolition derby. It leaked, severely by the time we pulled out. Our guns, soaked. We had managed to spot more than a hundred adult steelhead, and probably floated over 100's more. The amount of juvenile trout was astonishing, as was the mayfly hatch. We never saw or heard a turkey. And last but not least, we NEVER FOUND A SINGLE BEAVER DAM. I would like to thank those who made a point to bringing the existence of these imaginary BEAVER DAMS to attention of the Ontario Steelheaders, you owe these two members a new canoe and a beer! I do not promote the Beatty as a canoe trip for anyone. It is not listed as a paddle route and should not be used as one.

If you want to access the Beatty, do it from shore! *Josh.*

O.S. Merchandise



Hats



Tee Shirts



Hoodies & Jackets

We will be taking orders and selling merchandise at the Fall Derby on Oct 15th, so be sure to bring your cash or cheques to the derby and get yours while it's hot...It won't last long!! We have also added some smaller, children's sizes this fall for our Junior Steelheaders. Merchandise is sold at a minimum margin and proceeds are used to fund conservation projects.

What do you know?

...Continued from page 14

After the bridge was built, the people of Saugeen did not like having to go so far out of town to cross the river. Also, the southern part of Saugeen was growing slowly while the north side was only accessible only by boat. After Denny's Mills Bridge was built, businesses in Saugeen discovered that many people who crossed the bridge continued on to Port Elgin instead of stopping in Southampton. This started a movement to have another bridge built closer to the mouth of the river. The town council of Saugeen at the time decided that "the sum of five pounds be given to any person who can furnish the best and most satisfactory plan of a bridge to be built over the Saugeen River somewhere between the Steam Saw Mill and the mouth of the Saugeen River at the most suitable place, for the least possible expense." The founder of the town of Saugeen, Captain John Spence, received the contract but due to lack of money, the project was cancelled.

The Saugeen River has been crossed by bridges ever since 1865 except for one period of three months. The bridge at Denny's Mills was built in 1865 but the spring flood damaged it numerous times. For example, it was washed out in 1907 and rebuilt in 1908. In 1909, an abutment was washed away so that closed the bridge. While it was being repaired in 1909, two workers repairing the bridge fell into the river and drowned.

During 1889, a second attempt to build a bridge at Victoria Street in Saugeen was started. This bridge became to be longest bridge in the county at a length of 430 feet. In 1891, the bridge was found to be unsafe and was ordered to be taken down and rebuilt. Alas, in 1909, the Victoria Street Bridge was again deemed unsafe to be used so once again an attempt to fix it was started.

During the building of the Victoria Street Bridge, a Cross of Lorraine was found and is believed to be from 1773 – 1809. These crosses were made in Montreal and distributed to the North West Company and other fur traders.

Spring floods in 1912 took out both the Denny's Dam bridge and the Victoria Street bridge at the same time. Travellers and townspeople needed a boat to cross the river from April to June while a temporary bridge was put into place. In late 1912, Denny's Mills bridge was reopened to traffic.

Southampton was incorporated as a town in 1858, but remained being called "Saugeen" or "The Mouth" or "Sahgeeng" for many years. It was actually named after Southampton, Hampshire, England. At one point in its history, it vied for becoming the county seat with Walkerton.

Port Elgin was incorporated in 1874 but was originally known as Normanton.

During Southampton's first year of incorporation reports show that there were thirty houses, three businesses and weekly mail. The Chantry Lighthouse was completed in 1859.

Bruce County was named after James Bruce Earl of Elgin who was Governor General in 1849 when the Queens Bush was divided up into Perth, Huron and Bruce.

When Bruce County was finally incorporated in 1867, a Bruce County tartan was announced, registered in Edinburgh and patented in Canada. The archive section of Bruce Museum and Cultural Center says that the tartan is "Steeped in history, the red, yellow and green depict not only the Bruce clan tartan but the beautiful foliage of millions of trees that cover the area. The white and deep blues represent the glistening waves washing the 367 miles of shoreline bordering Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, as well as the many fresh water streams throughout the area."

There have been several archaeological excavations/ digs in the area of Denny's Dam. Pieces of broken pottery, flint projectile points and bone fragments have been found. Even some evidence has been discovered of an ancient cemetery according to Jean Mills in an article titled "Life by the River".

During a dig in 1960, archaeologists found evidence of inhabitants for both Spring and Summer fishing encampments. This dig was formally called 'The Donaldson Site' and further study of the artifacts in 1971 show that this site dated back to 500 B.C.

Jean Mills goes on to say, "At the present time, the riverside property where the archaeological explorations took place is managed by the Ontario Steelheaders Association, allowing fishermen to camp there, for a minimal fee. The rest of the property grows weeds."

An internet site posted by the Saugeen First Nation about the well-known amphitheater states that "On the far shore of the Saugeen, the bones of warriors lie on the ancient battlefield known as "The Mound of Skulls". The church is the site of the signing of an Indian treaty. The footpath running alongside the amphitheater was used by long-ago hunters to travel from the hilltops to the traditional river hunting grounds. Close to today's parking lot lays an ancient burial ground."

According to the Ontario Steelheaders – Saugeen River website, "In 1996, the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (ed. note. – who own the property) announced that Denny's Dam Park would be closed to the public. The possibility existed that the park may even be sold".

The Ontario Steelheaders approached the Authority with an offer to lease the park. The offer was accepted with the Ontario Steelheaders at a cost of \$8,000 a year with the Ontario Steelheaders paying for the lease, insurance, maintenance of the washroom facilities, garbage disposal grass cutting, and signage. Due to these costs, a modest day use fee and camping fees (daily or seasonal) are in place. Many anglers use this park for camping.

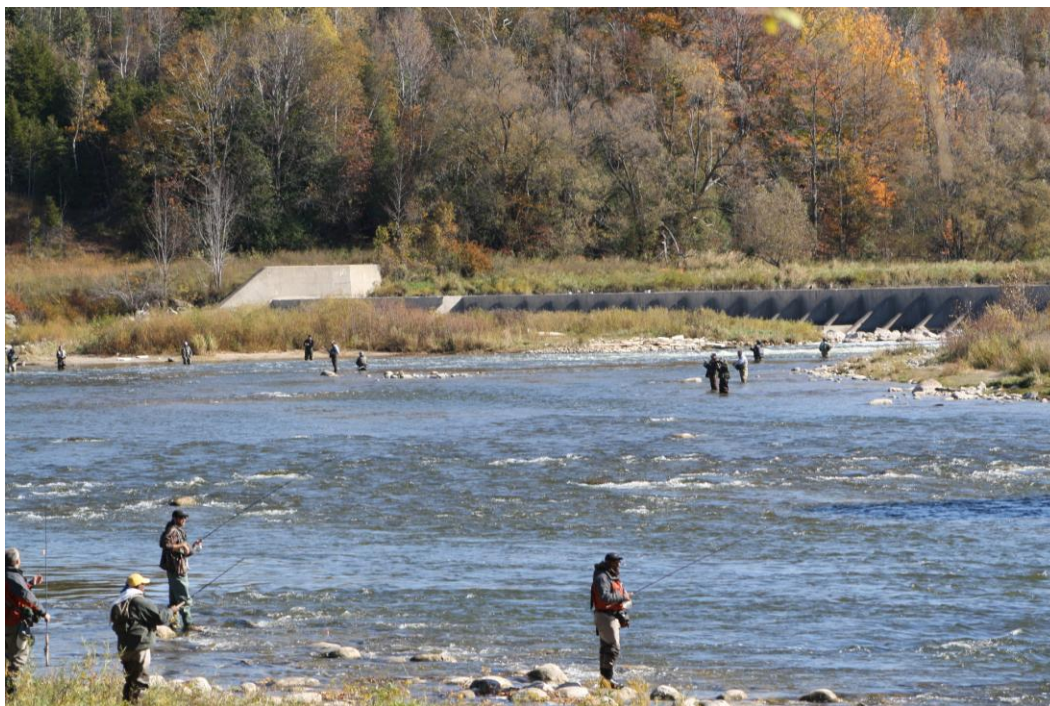
The Saugeen River Conservation Authority says on its website that "Denny's Dam Conservation Area is located 5 km north of Southampton. The area is accessible via Denny's Dam road just off Highway 21, north of Southampton.

This conservation area is roughly 1.5 km upstream from the mouth of the Saugeen River. The property includes approximately 1.5 km of river frontage and is well known for its fabulous fishing. Fish species include salmon and trout.

This park is maintained and looked after by the Ontario Steelheaders Association. Facilities include privies, parking, and a picnic shelter. Some camping is permitted at this park and fees do apply". For those interested in camping at this park, there is no source of water (river excluded) and there is no electricity available. Across the river is Denny's Dam which is owned and operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources. There is no cost to use this area daily. There is no camping allowed at this site. It is an excellent place to use as a canoe/ kayak drop or pick-up for the upper Saugeen River. Boundaries of this area are unclear from the last report I could find. Also, near Denny's Dam is the original cemetery for Southampton and area. It is on top of the hill near the present day cemetery. Over the years, it has become overgrown so a memorial area was created to honour the early settlers. Here, some of the headstones have been collected from the original cemetery (1200 feet deep and 500 feet wide) and installed in a fenced in area to preserve the stones. To the north of Denny's Dam and along highway 21, a small park and Saugeen River access point for fishermen, a plaque was erected to the memory of Grant Ferris, in honour of a great fisherman, conservationist, environmentalist, educator, and mentor to many fishermen. This was done by members of the Grey-Bruce Outdoors on April 16, 2008. Today, the Ontario Steelheaders and the Lake Huron Fishing Club have joined together in a joint fish stocking effort to have the Saugeen River become the premier fishing destination for salmon and rainbow trout in Ontario. This ongoing project is already showing good results as the result of the many volunteers who help with the egg harvesting, work at the two hatcheries, and those who help with the stocking.

And there you have it – some area history in a nut shell. Some dates etc. are conflicting and may be argued but are as accurate as I can find in books and in the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre in Southampton. Various authors often do not agree on dates, but I would be happy to share my research sources on request.

Ron Plaskett -- September 2011



The waters we fish and the lands surrounding Denny's Dam and Denny's Dam Conservation Area are steeped in history.

Denny's Conservation area itself is believed to be an ancient fishing encampment.



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FUNDRAISER REPORT

Supporter Decal program going strong!

The storefront Supporter Decal Program is a real hit with tackle retailers, restaurants and other businesses. These supporting businesses donate 200 dollars towards our Fisheries Enhancement Fund. In return the Ontario Steelheaders are supplying the stores and businesses with a storefront "Supporter" decal to display, as well as an advertisement spot in this newsletter. The funding generated from this project will go a long way to improve our fishery. Every member of the Ontario Steelheaders is encouraged to present the program to someone they know. **Please do your part and keep the program and our fishery moving forward.**



The license plate sized Supporter Decal can be seen on storefront windows across SW Ontario. "If you know of a business who would like to make a contribution, and advertise with us in this newsletter, please contact us at: webmaster@ontariosteelheaders.ca

Please thank our partners for their support !!

Hello everyone, hope you all had a great summer! We had a garage sale to benefit the Ontario Steelheaders in July. It was held in the parking area across from the grocery store in Southampton. Many thanks to those who donated items for the sale and especially to those who helped to set-up, tear-down and keep shop during the sale. We managed to raise over eight hundred dollars towards our bottom line!

We also held a few 50/50's in the spring which also went very well. Special thanks to those who donated their winnings to the cause also...every bit counts!

We will start collecting the "Saugeen Steelheader" Rod Draw tickets starting the first week of November, so please make sure you offer them to anyone you feel may be interested before handing them in. The draw takes place at the end of November, so get your tickets soon!! Anyone wishing to view the Rod and Reel can contact Karl Redin. Thanks to everyone for selling them!



*ABOVE: Darlene Munro presents Karl Redin, President of the Ontario Steelheaders with a cheque from **Hammond Power Solutions**. These funds are channeled directly to fisheries enhancement projects.*

We have lots of ideas for upcoming fundraisers, and we're always open to new ideas, if you have any suggestions or wish to donate prizes for our draws, please contact me.

Don Power

Director of Fundraisers
Ontario Steelheaders

SAUGEEN STEELHEADER Rod and Reel Draw
Ends -- November 26th 2011.

Get your tickets soon!

Ontario Steelheaders 2011 Annual Fall Steelhead Derby

Please join us on **Saturday Oct 15th** 2011 at Denny's Conservation Area (Denny's Park) for our annual Fall Steelhead Derby & River Appreciation Day.

**Cash Prizes +++ Great Food+++ Draw Prizes +++
Trophies+++ Camping+++ General Assembly**

Chairman's address: *"Hi everyone! I would like a chance to thank all the people that showed up for the Spring Derby. A lot of fish were caught, and a good time had by all. A really Big Thanks goes out to all that helped out with the planning of the meal, I wouldn't have been able to do it without your help. Great job, let's do it again!*

Another thanks goes to the shops and people that donated prizes for the derby, the list is long and thanks for your support. A special THANKS to Hammond Power Solutions of Guelph for their hefty cash donation of \$1500 to the club. Way to go Bill Hammond!

Hope to see you all at the Fall Derby, Oct. 15. Come on out, bring the kids and have a great day with some new friends. "

Dave Munro.
Social Events Director

Anyone wishing to donate prizes to the DERBY please see Dave or Dar Munro at Denny's Park, or call at home 519-651-8109. All Prizes Welcome!

Bring the kids!! Join us for a fun day on the river. Take in the sights and sounds of the Saugeen River and join us for **dinner** and a get together afterwards. Registration is available at Denny's Park. Look for the signs..!! Dinner will be served at the Rod Jones Pavilion, where we will have **draw prizes, merchandise, club updates,** and the derby **prizes and trophies** will be awarded. Please join us for a great day of socializing with members, important information updates and a cozy campfire afterwards. Overnight camping and day use at Denny's Park is available for appreciation day participants and their families. **Membership** applications are also taken at the ceremonies.

- **Entry fee: \$10.00 adults -- \$7.00 junior**
 - **Weigh-in deadline: 5:00 PM**
 - **Everyone Welcome!**
- **Please observe all Ontario Fishing Regulations**



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Coming to a Dam near you SOON!

By Ron Plaskett

On September 8, 2011, I attended the fall general meeting of the Lake Huron Fishing Club of which I am a member. The guest speaker was Dr. Chris Bunt of Biotactic Inc. who delivered a fascinating presentation about his Biotactic fish and wildlife research services.

Due to fact that I listened much of the time instead of writing information down, I am going to mainly use direct quotes from various parts of his website. These excerpts will be noted.

Biotactic Incorporated – Dr. Christopher Bunt, Founder

Biotactic's mission statement: "We strive to develop and provide holistic, realistic solutions and strategies for fish protection and conservation based on experience and cooperative understandings: Biotactic services and specialties include but are by no means limited to the following fields of scientific research, outreach, and ecological conservation in relation to conservation of fishes, their habitat, and everything that affects them worldwide:" Please see their website for further explanation.

However, in the case of Denny's Dam, I think most of the research will be directed at fish migration and passage studies, underwater fish monitoring, fish ways or fish ladders in the areas of design and operation, and remote fish passage monitoring/ research.

To be more explicit, "We have seventeen years of experience monitoring fish passage and the effects of dams and weirs on fish and other wildlife. We use remote monitoring techniques such as radio telemetry, acoustic telemetry, physiological telemetry as well as overhead and advanced underwater videography to unobtrusively observe animals." In addition to studying fish, "we design and install wildlife safety rafts that allow animals such as frogs, turtles, raccoon, squirrels, skunks, groundhogs, deer, and other small to medium-sized vertebrates to escape from drowning in steep-walled reservoirs, and leave an area of danger by their own volition."

Demands for this technology have been worldwide. The company did research monitoring and recording spawning behaviour of fish on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. The data that was collected will help design and locate marine protected areas. Korea is currently investigating this technology for use in their country.

In North America, 10 sites are currently being studied. They are referred to as BRAVO node 1- 10. The Denny's Dam site will be called BRAVO node 11. BRAVO nodes 12-18 are currently being developed but their locations have not been announced. Please check their website for a map of the specific areas being monitored and researched. Each site is host "for a combination of streaming and archived video, fish movement and water temperature data."

On some sites, the rate of flow of the water is also noted.

The closest spot to the Saugeen River is on the Beaver River at Thornbury, Ontario. At that site, the researchers are monitoring rainbow trout and salmon and are doing fish counts. It has been online since April 4, 2011.

Available to anglers online (at the Thornberry fish ladder) are the total fish passing through, the number of Chinook salmon passing through, the peak time, the peak passage rate (fish per hour), the peak passage rate (salmon per hour), and the water temperature. This information is updated daily.

As of September 8, 2011, three Chinook salmon passed up the Thornbury fish ladder at a peak time of 7 a.m. However, as Dr. Bunt noted, the time it takes a fish to go up the fish ladder will vary. It depends on many conditions like water flow, temperature, how long it rests in the staging area, how long it takes the fish to actually find the fish ladder, etc.

The recording units that Biotactic Inc. uses are called BRAVO and are basically "underwater fish monitoring systems for fishways and open habitats." The website states that they "are ideal for monitoring fishways and any other artificial or natural underwater habitat. These units are self-cleaning and designed for long-term, semi-permanent or permanent installation in freshwater and marine environments. Typical hardware and software configurations consist of 1-4 live underwater streaming video camera/ sensor pack systems that automatically filter, collect and transfer novel and interesting fish activity for outreach, education and research." Video of the fish are as clear at night as in the day due to an infra-red lighting system that does not disturb the fish



"The video collected by the BRAVO system is particularly useful for long-term research objectives related to inter-annual variation in fish migrations pattern, migration patterns, migration timing and habitat utilization and reproductive behaviour. The system has also been proven to be useful for monitoring and observing behaviour of benthic organisms such as mussels, crayfish, diving ducks, turtles, various spawning behaviour and a wide range of fish and aquatic mammals such as otters." Please see the website for more information.

The BRAVO camera system can actually sense the difference between fish species. It can also recognize individual fish as they swim past the camera so that they are not counted twice (or more) as the fish passes the camera. The data recorder also notes whether the fish are of small, medium or large size.

The camera is a little larger both round and longer than a can of pop.

So, what does that mean for those anglers who fish at Denny's Dam or below the dam? Well, it means that from your home, wherever that is, you can check the water temperature, the daily history of the days before, and the live-feed videos from the fishway at Denny's Dam and then decide whether to drive to Denny's Dam to go fishing. If you are camping at the park and have access to a computer and the internet, you can check the website and then decide whether to go fishing or stay in bed. Going fishing is always the best option. I think...

It takes some concentration and interpretive watching when the river water is turbid but most videos are clear from what I have seen.

BRAVO node 11 (Denny's Dam) is not up and working as yet but Dr. Bunt is hopeful that we can see what is going on in the fish ladder by the end of September.

The BRAVO system that Biotactic Inc. uses was created and developed by them and it is a world-wide industry leader. The Ontario Steelheaders and all anglers should be overjoyed to have this system installed at Denny's Dam. I am sure that it will be beneficial to our fishery.

Biotactic Inc.'s website is www.Biotactic.com . Please visit the site and see what is going on at the other BRAVO node sites too. Be sure to check out the online live-time videos of all sites



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BATTLE OF THE CREST

Some of you may or may not know my wife Madeline is the Membership Director for the Ontario Steelheaders. I have been a member of the Ontario Steelheaders for many years and was very proud of my wife for stepping up to the plate to help out an organization that I actively enjoy taking part in. When Madeline started her role as Membership Director, they had special commemorative crests made that were provided to all who signed up as members. I was pretty excited, as it was a very nice crest and I wanted to have it proudly displayed on my fishing vest for all to see when I'm on the river – screaming FISH ON!

When she first started her role with the Ontario Steelheaders, they had, at the time, less than 40 members, and as such they weren't sure how many crests to order. Well the support from the angling community was huge to put it mildly, and sure enough there weren't enough crests to go around. Every time a new member signed up, she would go and take my crest so that she could send it to the new member. They would keep ordering more crests but like I said, these things were going faster than a spawning steelhead trying to get up the ladder!

You would think that with my wife being the Membership Director, I would at least get my own crest when I signed up for my membership – NOT! Too make a long story short; I finally got my crest with a new batch that was ordered later that season. As soon as I got my hands on it, I didn't wait for my wife to sew it onto my vest, as I knew that I would run the risk of never getting the crest onto my vest. Instead I left with my vest and crest tight in hand, and went to a seamstress and had her sew it on the back of my vest.

I'm proud to be part of the Ontario Steelheaders and want to show my support to all my fellow fishermen and women wherever I fish. Join the Ontario Steelheaders campaign to make this fishery awesome!

Oh, and If you happen to receive a vest in the mail with a nice new O.S crest on it... I want it back!

Yours Truly,
Ian Walker
member

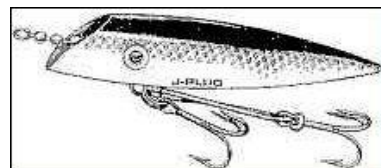


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