

Medway River Salmon Association Quarterly Report

June 2012

Over the past several months, as your new President, it has been quite a learning curve. I have had many e-mails, telephone calls, meetings, attended several conferences on understanding what programs are available, water testing, fish ladders, culverts, and open-pen fish farms to the Southern Upland recovery program.

Dan Thompson from Nova Scotia Power held a meeting at the McGowan Hatchery in the spring to discuss the fish ladder. He stated that they will not be repairing the turbine, but will increase the water flow near the fish ladder as a temporary measure before they build a new ladder at the diversion dam. Our suggestion would be near the dam where there is lots of water flow and the holes are deep. Over the next few months, they will inform all interested stakeholders on the actual location.

Another meeting was held at the camp with Shane O'Neil's group to discuss the smolt wheel. As we have no plan for the coming year, we declined the current offer but stated that we would be interested in the following year as we are working with the Bridgewater Community College on a plan that would include the smolt wheel.

A meeting was held, along with approximately 25 other interested groups, in Bible Hill with Amy Weston (Adopt-a-Stream) about projects for the coming year. We also met other groups doing similar projects and received information on how they got started.

We have also had several meetings at the Milton hatchery with John Whitelaw to advise us of what programs they are involved in and how we may provide assistance to them in the future.

Our Environment Group has been working with The Nova Scotia Community College in Bridgewater on several projects this spring: they have plotted all the salmon pools on the Medway with a GPS and provided a map of those locations. They also helped our group with clipping the trout and releasing the trout fry into our brooks. Check out our web site and see some of the programs our students are helping with. They have also agreed to help in the fall with any projects we have.

Several weeks ago, I attended a meeting in Dartmouth on the Recovery Program for Salmon on the Southern Uplands. It would seem, if our salmon stocks are endangered, the main source will be to restock. However, just before this meeting, the Federal Government announced the closure of the Milton hatchery in 2014. I have e-mailed and spoken to our Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, Provincial and Federal governmental representatives, and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association. I have also asked the Chamber to spearhead a round table discussion on this matter.

Fish Friends is a great project with 4 schools up and running. Each school has their own aquarium with salmon eggs from the Mersey Hatchery. When the eggs hatch and the fish move to the surface; the fish are removed and placed in the Medway River by the students. This program is great for students, teachers and parents to see and participate in the life cycle of our salmon.

Over the past several months we have installed 4 liming wheels in some of the brooks on the Medway. We are looking to improve the ph balance, insect growth, river flow, culvert repair, blocked areas by beavers and more. As we move forward, we are starting to get support on how to implement this project. Ashley Shelton from Saint Mary's University has agreed to work with our group. They are seeking between 1-3 volunteers who have one day available to go out in the field and conduct quality testing side by side with certified water professionals. They will provide online training to all volunteers and hopefully have a great day of sampling. They will come to the Medway River, so no traveling is required for our volunteers. The dates are July 9 and 10, 2012.

Over 40,000 trout eggs from the McGowan Hatchery were raised at our hatchery in Mill Village and released into the brooks and streams on the Medway. Over the past 5 years we have released 50,000 clipped trout and over 120,000 trout fry. Without the support of our volunteers and Mike at the Provincial hatchery this would not be possible.

Open-pen fish farms are a major issue this Association will have to monitor very closely in the future. Hopefully they will stay away from the entrances to our rivers and limit the number of pens until we are sure no harm will come to our salmon!

Over the past several months we have witnessed more people fishing than ever before. We have also noticed the mess they leave behind. Sometime in July or August, I would like to see a river bank clean-up and educate the fisherpersons on keeping our roads and banks clean of garage.

This is your Association, let's continue to grow and be proud of a treasure we can share with others.

Horace Macpherson

MRSP