

LAKEHEAD REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Shore Steelhead Association Partners with Conservation Authority to Enhance Fish Habitat on McIntyre River

An erosion control project, about to get underway on the McIntyre River, will include an innovative habitat enhancement component.

The McIntyre River, near Central Avenue and Riverside Drive, suffered significant erosion following a major storm in June, 2008. The on-going erosion will eventually threaten the stability of Riverside Drive; therefore, measures to slow the deterioration of the riverbank are being undertaken by the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA).

To control the erosion the bank will be re-graded to stabilize the slope, armoured with rip-rap (large blast rock) and covered with soil and an erosion control blanket. The affected area will then be seeded and planted with native shrubbery.

As a pilot project, the North Shore Steelhead Association (NSSA) is partnering with the LRCA to include a fish habitat enhancement component to the project. This involves embedding cedar tree trunks into the river bank leaving the root ball partially exposed along the rivers edge. The root ball will provide immediate fish habitat, while reducing the velocity in the river and future erosion along the bank.

The North Shore Steelhead Association has donated \$16,000.00 to the Conservation Authority to fund the fish habitat enhancement component of the project. \$3000.00 of this total was donated by the Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council to the NSSA, specifically for this project. Volunteers from the Stewardship Council and NSSA will be involved in the seeding and planting component of the project.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to have ‘Fish Friendly’ enhancements added to this project.” says Tom Whalley, President of the North Shore Steelhead Association. “The McIntyre River has long been a high profile Rainbow Trout fishery, utilized by large numbers of Thunder Bay residents, and measures such as this will help ensure a viable fishery is maintained. We anticipate that this project will be the first of many erosion control projects that will incorporate the latest techniques for fish habitat protection and enhancement, while ensuring civic and private property are protected from erosion due to flooding. This project is a ‘win’ for all parties, fish included.”

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“The Conservation Authority is extremely pleased to partner with the North Shore Steelhead Association on this project,” says LRCA Chairman Bill Bartley. “The Authority has a history of partnering with the Steelhead Association on significant habitat improvement projects, such as the fish ladder at Boulevard Lake, and this latest project is great example of how our two groups are able to work together for the mutual benefit of the environment.”

Bartley says the project will address erosion control while enhancing fish habitat within one project.

Work is to begin in late July or early August and be completed by early fall.

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