

# Credit River fishery plans involve public

Natural Resources Minister John Snobelen, representative from Credit Valley Conservation and more than a dozen community based organizations in the Credit Watershed launched a year long effort to develop a new fisheries management plan for the Credit River, at a meeting last Wednesday, March 25.

The Credit River Watershed is undergoing so much change that we need a plan for the natural resources within it," said Watershed Planning manager Charley Worte. This plan is not just about fish but about the water and the land that supports human, animal and fish life." Fairy Lake in Acton and the Black Creek and Mann's Creek are part of the system.

The Credit River is the most fished river in Ontario and still boasts a wide and diverse range of fish species. The river also supports the Lake Ontario fishery by providing one of the best spawning grounds for migratory fish species. Over \$10 million annually is pumped into the economy from the fishery. A new management plan that will address the concerns and interest of the public, the Ministry and Credit Valley

Conservation is needed to guide the management of the resource into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, officials say.

Why is the Credit River fishery being reviewed? Some important changes have taken place in the Credit watershed since 1989. They include:

- some barriers for fish, such as the dam at Georgetown, have been removed and species that compete for food and habitat are able to intermingle.

- New knowledge about certain species, such as Atlantic salmon, and habitat conditions is now available.

- some groups are asking to put more effort into managing certain species,

- urban development is occurring at such a rapid rate that it may affect the future health of aquatic habitats.

- changes in the Lake Ontario fisheries management plan will effect the management of the Credit River fishery.

What issues will the Credit River fisheries management plan deal with? They include:

- Do we have enough information to make management decisions?

- What species do we



want in the watershed and where?

- After ensuring the fish population will sustain itself, how do we allocate the rest?

- How can we maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem in the face of urban development which is now at 16 per cent of the land base and is expected to increase to perhaps as much as 40 per cent by the year 2020?

- How can we improve public access to the river and

its tributaries and maintain a healthy resource?

- How do we ensure that regulations coming out of the plan will be enforced?

- How do we ensure that the good ideas from the planning process and public review are implemented?

- The Credit River fishery is valuable because it is the source of eggs for chinook and coho salmon stocking in all Canadian waters of the lake Ontario watershed. The ministry's

stocking activities support a multi-million dollar lake fishery.

- In spite of the heavy urban development in the Greater Toronto Area, the upper reaches of the Credit River have healthy populations of self-sustaining (non-stocked) brook trout that reproduce naturally; brook trout are an important species whose presence confirms that the aquatic system is healthy.

Fish are a resource that belongs to the people of Ontario. The directions that come out of the Credit River fisheries management review will require actions and efforts on the part of many groups and individuals.

How will the public be able to participate in this fisheries planning?

A steering committee made up of volunteers representing interest groups, in-

cluding the two regional municipalities in the Credit River watershed, is guiding the review. Each of these steering committee representatives will give regular updates to its membership and ask for feedback. These meetings are open to the public. Anyone may contact the Credit Valley Conservation office at 1255 Derry Rd. W., in Meadowvale, Ontario L5N 6R4 Tel: (905) 670-1615 or the Ministry of Natural Resources (Aurora) at (905) 713-7400.

The final plan recommendations will be presented to the Minister for review by the spring of 1999.

The Ministry of Natural Resources manages this resource on behalf of the people of Ontario in partnership with other agencies, such as Credit Valley Conservation and the Federal department of Fisheries and Oceans.

## More ice time...

Continued from Page 12 as long as they have fun, but supports more ice time for the girls teams.

"They (girl's teams) need as much time to play and learn and grow. Everybody should have equal access to the ice time," Edwards said.

Co-chair of the girls league Bill MacGillvray, said they are looking for Acton parents for their executive

next season and hope to draw more Acton players. He also hopes that ice use can be evaluated fairly.

"We're going to have to share to maximize use of the three rinks, because it's obvious that some associations have proportionately more ice time than we have, and for development we all have to practice," MacGillvray said.

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