

Town will begin cleaning up pond

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

The weed-choked Mill Pond is a step closer to getting a major facelift.

After a community-driven effort to get to the bottom of the pond's demise, the Town has confirmed its plans to dredge the historic Martin Street landmark in an estimated \$700,000 restoration project.

Expected to begin late next month, the work will get underway with the draining of the pond and re-location of fish, according to a press release issued by the Town Friday.

The plan of action means good news for bringing the pond back to its normally eye-pleasing state, said Pat Duignan, chair of the Milton Mill Pond Committee, which initiated the project.

"I'm pleased with the Town's response and willingness," she said.

Over the last few years, the pond has been overcome with weeds and sediment. Originally five metres deep, it's now only two metres at its deepest point.

Fish populations are depressed, amphibian life is largely absent and native aquatic plants have been taken over by the invading Eurasian milfoil, according to the press release.

Now the major aquatic plant in the small lake, the Eurasian milfoil is like purple loosestrife on land. It takes over and chokes out the native species.

"The aesthetic nuisance is severe, with plant densities so thick they limit fish reproduction and spoil viewing and educational opportunities," said the Town's director of leisure services, Jennifer Reynolds.

"The pond ecology can, however, be rebuilt and that is the goal of the Milton Mill Pond Committee and the Town of Milton."

Technical testing of the pond's sediment will follow the draining of the pond, according to the Town, and then options for restoration will be explored.

Dredging will begin after that to allow for the rebuilding of fish and wildlife habitat.

Ms Duignan said the committee plans to launch a major fundraising drive to keep the Town's cost for the project minimal.

The committee will start as early as this week by setting up information booths at



Jennifer Reynolds

local events to promote the project, she said.

Another option may be to seek community members willing to provide free labour in exchange for a charitable tax receipt equal to their work, Ms Duignan said.

"We know what we're going to do, now we have to decide how we're going to do it."

Ms Duignan said it will be interesting to see what's at the bottom of the pond. Rumour has it a team of horses fell through the ice in the 1930s.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Family affair

Mom Ness Kuhn-Ornelas tempts daughter Hannah, 3, with some ice cream and berries during the annual Milton District Hospital Strawberry Fair Saturday. Meanwhile, older sister Emma, 5, enjoys her own bowl. The hospital fundraiser was another great success. See another photo on page 9.

NEWSLINES

Woman burned

A badly burned Main Street woman fled her home for help after accidentally setting her clothes on fire Friday night.

The 46-year-old woman, who doused the flames in her bath tub but not before suffering burns to 40 per cent of her body, was taken to hospital by a passing motorist.

She had called 911 from a pay phone at Main and Bronte streets before the help came along, Halton Regional Police said.

The woman was cooking when her loose-fitting clothes caught on fire at 9:45 p.m.

She was transferred to Hamilton General Hospital and treated for burns. Her condition had improved from serious to fair at press time yesterday.

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