

News Release

FISH HABITAT MAPPING UPDATE

RIDEAU VALLEY, November 23, 2010 — Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) staff is well underway in the effort to map, organize and classify existing aquatic habitat information on streams in our area. The goal is to identify potential areas where fish species at risk may be present or where restoration activities would encourage their presence. The information will be used to identify restoration opportunities for future landowner and agency stewardship activities.

This project is moving ahead quickly thanks to a \$31,000 grant from the Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, an Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources program to provide funding and support to numerous projects aimed at the protection and recovery of species at risk. The targeted fish species at risk are the Bridle Shiner, the Pugnose Shiner and the River Redhorse.

RVCA aquatic habitat staff spent much of the August to November period out on the creeks and streams in the valley surveying watercourses, verifying existing information and filling in information gaps using an adapted version of the Macro Stream Assessment protocol. The survey assesses important fish habitat features such as channel shape, bottom type, instream vegetation type and abundance in each of many 50m sections. A habitat map is also generated for each section which highlights instream structures and bank conditions along the surveyed stream. The information is used to prepare a habitat map for each 50m section as well as highlighting opportunities for restoration or enhancement of the stream for fish species at risk.

To date, 71 sections have been assessed along Brassils Creek, 198 sections along Kemptville Creek and 61 sections on the North Branch.

With the data collected in the field, staff will now begin to refine their current understanding of the species habitat requirements, with focus towards more crucial habitat attributes. A final report will be made available on the RVCA website in early 2011.

For more information, please visit the RVCA web link at http://www.rvca.ca/watershed/aquatic_habitat/SAR_fish_habitat_mapping.html.

Fish are an important component of the province's economy. Ontario's fisheries sustain the sport fishing and tourist industries, as well as the commercial fishery. About 1.2 million anglers fish in the province each year. These anglers spend more than \$2.5 billion on fisheries-related products and services.

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