

Visiting Manitoulin?

This Growing Island:
Come and visit 'Almost Heaven'
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Come on back to school
—Island style!
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Prov Bay Fair ambassador
Who will she be?
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The owl family grows up
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The MANITOULIN EXPOSITOR



FISHING • YACHTING • CAMPING • HUNTING

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Jasmyne Galley, Jordanna Dedman, and Ronnie Wakegijig are all smiles as they settle in for their ride to the skies with pilot Lloyd Richards during a Young Eagles event at the Manitoulin East Municipal Airport.

photo by Michael Erskine

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Manitoulin Streams rehabilitates Mindemoya River, Meldrum creek

Sand blockage at Prov Bay among future issues to tackle

by Jim Moodie
MANITOULIN—Lunkers, root wads, weeping weirs.

Strange as these terms might sound, they're increasingly becoming part of the local lexicon as the Manitoulin Streams Improvement Association extends its reach across the island, schooling many in the language of river rehab along the way.

As for the schools of fish that congregate in waters off Manitoulin, looking for passage inland and upstream, these words might not mean a whole lot on the page or when spoken out loud—even if fish understood English, they kind of lack ears—but when it comes time to spawn, salmon and trout understand these things in the most practical and instinctive of ways: each improvement means one less impediment in their path.

Put another way, each is an enticement—in the same sense that a paved shoulder will attract a cyclist, or a deep harbour a boat. Fish really like these lunkers (bank cavities in which to hide), root wads (also providing habitat,

plus stabilizing the shoreline), and weeping weirs (which enhance flow and create deeper pools). They also apparently take a shine to "imbricated rip-rap," but we won't get into that here.

This summer has been, yet again, a busy one for Manitoulin Streams, which formed about 10 years ago with a focus on the Man-

itou River and Blue Jay Creek, but has since expanded its scope to include other tributaries.

Both Bass Lake Creek in Sheguiandah, and Norton's Creek, which feeds Lake Manitou, were tackled in 2008, with work continuing at the latter site in 2009. This year, the focus shifted

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All-Ojibwe language radio on-air next week

M'Chigeeng-based legacy of Carl Beam

by Michael Erskine
M'CHIGEENG—Manitoulin Island's Ojibwe language radio station, is now scheduled for to make its first broadcast in the M'Chigeeng area on August 23 for a three-week period.

"We are beginning our test broadcasting on Monday August 23, and having a station open house/BBQ/giveaway on Wednesday August 25 between 3 pm and 6 pm," wrote Anong Beam in an email to the Expositor.

The celebrations will include a barbecue, music and giveaways and both Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing MP Carol Hughes and the NDP's Andrea Horwath are scheduled to attend the inaugural broadcast ceremonies.

The Ojibwe radio station will operate under the name Gima Radio—call sign CHYF 88.9 FM—and it is located at 53 Corbiere Road in M'Chigeeng. Anyone experiencing any interference during this test period is requested to contact the radio station at (705) 282-8955 or anongbeam@rocketmail.com.

This initial broadcast by Gima Radio brings the culmination of a dream of its founder Carl Beam, Ms. Beam's late father, a world-renowned artist who aspired to the creation of a radio station dedicated to the Ojibwe language.

The radio station has secured rights to broadcast Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) language lessons and expects to broadcast primarily in that language.

Lake Huron's cisco population stages comeback

by Jim Moodie

LAKE HURON—A small, slender fish that once made up a third of the commercial fishery on Lake Huron is now making a modest resurgence after a period of near-annihilation.

The lake herring, or cisco, as it is more properly called, may not be the most glamorous catch for a recreational angler, or the most profitable target for a commercial harvester, but it is a native species and its return is being welcomed by fisheries managers as a promising trend.

"Historically cisco was a staple for predators like lake trout and walleye," said Arunas Liskauskus, a biologist with the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). "We can look at it as a harbinger of good things, and we have an opportunity now to see if it can reestablish itself with some prominence."

While you won't find lake herring on too many menus these days, or lining too many fish

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Lighthouse legacy group begins inventory of repairs

by Jim Moodie

MANITOULIN—While there remains something of a national panic over the fate of lighthouses from coast to coast, recent events suggest the future looks bright for Manitoulin's beacons.

The most graphic of these indicators came last week in Manitowaning, as a Coast Guard crew made yet another unannounced visit, this time with scrapers, lots of paint, and several days to spend on spiffing up the weathered edifice.

"They came yesterday morning out of the blue," said Dave Smith of the Assinack museum board on Friday. "I went to the church

(St. Paul's Anglican) to water the outside flowers, and there were six or eight guys there."

Earlier this summer a similar maintenance squad arrived aboard the Coast Guard's massive Griffon icebreaker, but after tending to the Kagawong lighthouse, decided there wasn't time to properly repaint the Manitowaning tower, as its peeling shingles required more work than had been anticipated.

On this occasion, it was the somewhat smaller Samuel Risley

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Members of a Coast Guard maintenance crew braved muggy conditions last week for a sprucing up of the Manitowaning lighthouse.

photo by Rob Maguire

...Manitoulin Streams rehabilitates Mindemoya River, Meldrum creek

...continued from page 1 west, with projects undertaken for the first time on both the Mindemoya River and Mill Creek in Meldrum Bay.

Beginning on July 15, a variety of improvements were carried out at a property that spans the Mindemoya River at its intersection with Monument Road. Work included "grading the banks to reduce steepness," which makes the soil more hospitable to plant growth, as well as "reinforcing the banks with stones and boulders to stabilize it from further erosion," explained media coordinator MaryEllen Shain.

Later in July, a crew of Ontario Stewardship Rangers, comprising a group from Manitoulin and counterparts based in Killarney Provincial Park,



A stewardship ranger and her crew leader from Killarney Provincial Park construct rock weirs in Mill Creek near Meldrum Bay.



Cedar rails to build fences along the Mindemoya River are toted across a property at Monument Road by members of an Ontario Stewardship Ranger team.

photos by MaryEllen Shain

were on hand to plant cedar and white-ash trees on the property, and construct fences made of traditional cedar rails.

"The reason we use those is the natural preservative in the cedar, which makes them last 100 years," said Marcus Mohr, acting project coordinator for Manitoulin Streams. "They're also easier for the landowner to repair, and wildlife is less likely to get caught in it than page wire."

Another detail of the Mindemoya River enhancement was a cattle-watering ramp, which provides the animals with "access to water while restricting them to one point on the river," according to Ms. Shain. The ramp consists of geotextile fabric and cobblestone, which is "uncomfortable for livestock to stand on for long periods of time, deterring them from lingering in the stream," she added.

The project location is one of "a chain of high-priority sites" along the Mindemoya River, said Mr. Mohr. Part of the reason it was chosen first is that the landowner has an Environmental Farm Plan—a program administered through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs—that will partially fund this type of work.

The streams organization would also like to address the issue of sand buildup at the river's mouth, which impedes the ability of fish to enter the river, although doing so will be "tricky," said Mr. Mohr, as "it's a dynamic shoreline there, and the sand is



A volunteer from the Dawson's Citizen Improvement Association and acting Manitoulin Streams coordinator Marcus Mohr move root wads into Mill Creek to provide stream cover and organic material for the invertebrates to eat.

always moving."

The acting coordinator attended a meeting of Central Manitoulin council last week to outline some options for remedying the problem and engage their support. Excavating sediment from the site would seem a logical course of action, but this would require a complicated set of approvals and might ultimately prove futile, as the river could simply change course and the sand, which continually swirls around in Providence Bay, could plug it up again in the future.

"We had some site designs done for it, but we're not going forward with them because of the intricacy of how the beach moves," he said.

A less immediate, but probably more sustainable, solution is to simply pursue further improvements upstream that would boost the volume of water entering the bay. "Eventually, by decreasing the width of the

river, you increase depth and flow," pointed out Mr. Mohr.

Next summer, additional projects will be pursued at the same Mindemoya River property that was a target of this year's activity, said Mr. Mohr, while other locations are pencilled in for attention at a later date.

In Meldrum Bay, the Mill Creek got its very first makeover, with members of the Dawson Citizen Improvement Association chipping in on the restoration project.

A spring-fed stream that empties into Meldrum Bay, the artery has seen "historical use as a natural spawning ground," noted Ms. Shain, but previous landowners had unfortunately "excavated the streambed." Beavers had also wreaked some dam-building havoc, turning the creek "into a marshland with very little tree canopy cover," she added.

To restore the stream's original character, sand-

bagging was the first line of attack, while three large pools were carved out of the limestone bedrock, with Paul Sheppard of Sheppard and Son Construction donating his excavator for a few hours. "We also added rocks to the banks, which decreased the width and increased the depth," said Ms. Shain.

Stewardship rangers were again recruited to install root wads and boulders, as well as eight weeping weirs, which Ms. Shain described as "half-moon-shaped structures that span the width of the stream," with a gap in the centre that allows water to flow freely, while the rocks on either side hold water back. This has the dual effect of providing "deeper water upstream, and fast-flowing, oxygen-rich water downstream," she explained.

Bass nests were additionally constructed in Meldrum Bay itself, while four cubic metres of spawning gravel were

spread in the creek and among the bass nests. High-bush cranberry plants and white ash trees, meanwhile, were planted along the sides of the stream.

Remaining projects for this year include a new spawning pool for Bass Lake Creek, and a series of improvements for two new sites on the Manitou River.

The Bass Creek addition is needed to further enhance the walleye-spawning potential of the stream, according to Mr. Mohr. "The area dries up after the spring freshet, and we want

it covered so the eggs don't dry up," he explained.

Both projects slated for the Manitou are "upstream of the Case Side Road," he said, and involve a variety of rehabilitation techniques, including an erosion-free access ford (where vehicles cross the river), several excavated pools, bank grading, lunkers, deflectors, and more.

Both the Bass Lake Creek project and the two on the Manitou River are expected to be completed by the end of the summer.



**SANCTIONED
MOTOCROSS RACES**

Sunday, August 22
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Practice starts at 9 am sharp
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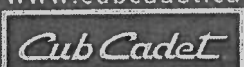
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