

Metro East Anglers receive some timely help

In an effort to sustain what existing conservation projects they have on the go, the Metro East Anglers sought some assistance.

While any additional manpower is always welcomed, what they really required was some financial support. Just recently, the non-profit conservation group, which has close to 100 members primarily from around the Greater Toronto Area and some from even as far away as Wellington, had their wishes answered.

Stepping up to the plate were three corporate concerns in The Toronto Sportsmen's Show, Normark/Rapala, a well-known fishing tackle manufacturer, and most recently, The Toronto Dominion Bank through their Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Bruce Burt, a Metro East Anglers spokesman, noted the financial assistance they received was for a five-year term and totalled close to \$40,000.

"This is definitely a big help for us," Burt said. "Without (financial support) we couldn't keep going."

Citing they have an annual operating budget of close to \$60,000, Burt said the additional funds would offset some of their biggest expenses.

The majority of which occurs at the Ringwood Fish Culture Station where they assist primarily in the rearing and releasing of coho salmon into Lake Ontario feeder streams.

On a smaller scale, the group raises and releases brown trout and rainbow trout into the Rouge River watershed along with other Lake Ontario stocking locations, as agreed upon with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

With the Metro East Anglers operating the Ringwood facility for at least one more year as per an agreement they reached last year with the ministry, Burt said the biggest expenses incurred are with electricity, to provide heat for the building, and fish rearing food.

Burt was quick to note the hatchery does not require water pumps since the facility, located on some 100 acres of land, has an existing artesian well supply.

That alone, saved the hatchery a considerable amount of money.

To a lesser extent, Burt noted funding is utilized in two other projects they are involved with.

One of which has taken place over the last 15 years on the Rouge River watershed.

Working in conjunction with the ministry, club members assist them at the Milne Dam fish ladder by weighing, measuring, tagging and if possible, collecting mature eggs from migratory rainbow trout to be reared artificially at Ringwood and returned into the Rouge River as yearlings.

The other project where some funding is utilized is in the operation of four chinook salmon pens in Lake Ontario at Whitby Harbour, Oshawa Harbour, Darlington Marina and Bluffers Park Marina in Scarborough.

Currently in its fifth year of operation, this project sees club members care for chinook salmon fry in pens for four to six weeks so that they can acclimatize and imprint upon the local area where they are to be stocked.

Burt noted without financial assistance, all four pens, which were subsidized by the Central Lake Ontario Sportsmens Association through a \$1,000 donation, would not operate smoothly.

While elated in receiving the additional funding, Burt was quick to note one fear they have stems from what might result with the recent provincial budget.

Citing the government is in a deficit and will be looking for ways to reduce it, Burt speculated one such mean would be by selling a portion of the 100 acres which Ringwood sits on.

"The people we deal with such as the Ministry of Natural Resources would like to keep (Ringwood) going.

"But the budget will be critical," Burt said.

