



Jackfish Bay Area of Concern in Recovery

Newsletter 2014

Photo credits: Jim Bailey and Environment Canada

Monitoring natural recovery

Canada and Ontario continue to monitor fish health and sediment quality in the area of Jackfish Bay. The governments formally recognized Jackfish Bay as an Area of Concern (AOC) in Recovery in 2011. Water and sediment quality in Jackfish Bay has improved. Fish species such as lake trout and lake whitefish are abundant within Jackfish Bay and a growing brook trout population has been observed. These are good indications that fish populations are recovering within the AOC. The quality of wastewater from the area pulp mill has improved in recent decades and results will continue to be monitored. All recommended remedial actions have been completed and while the environment has improved significantly, it needs more time to continue to recover naturally.

Next steps

Natural recovery in this AOC is expected to take many years. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will ensure that the mill continues



to meet all of its requirements for wastewater treatment. The ministry will also work with Environment Canada to monitor conditions in the creek and the bay as part of a long term monitoring plan.

Environment Canada will continue to evaluate the effects of effluent on fish and fish habitat as part of its Environmental Effects Monitoring program, a requirement of the Pulp and Paper Effluent Regulations. The information is used to determine the effectiveness of pollution prevention and control measures.

When monitoring confirms that ecosystem health has improved such that locally-established environmental targets are being met, Canada and Ontario will engage the communities of Terrace Bay and Schreiber, local Aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders on whether Jackfish Bay should be removed from the list AOCs.

Background: Jackfish Bay Area of Concern in Recovery

Jackfish Bay is one of 43 AOCs (now 38 with five fully remediated) in the Great Lakes identified in accordance with the 1987 Canada-United

Photo credit: Environment Canada



States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Canada and the U.S. are responsible for working with partners to develop and implement Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) for each Area of Concern.

This AOC, located on the north shore of Lake Superior just east of the Township of Terrace Bay, includes Blackbird Creek, Moberly Bay, Tunnel Bay, and Jackfish Bay. Part of the AOC is within the proposed Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, which will be the world's largest freshwater marine protected area once it's established.

In Jackfish Bay, pollution from the area pulp and paper mill led to:

- unpleasant foam and odour in the creek and bay
- loss of fish habitat
- impacts to sediment-dwelling organisms

- restrictions on fish consumption
- fish tumours.

In response to provincial and federal wastewater regulations developed in the 1990s, the local pulp and paper mill improved the quality of its wastewater which resulted in better water quality, and improved fish habitat.

Cleaning up Areas of Concern

Canada and Ontario work together to restore Canadian and binational AOCs. That work relies on collaboration with conservation authorities, municipalities, Aboriginal communities, environmental groups, industry and the public. Working together, communities and governments develop and implement RAPs.

Of the 38 remaining AOCs in the Great Lakes, there are nine in

Canada, 24 in the United States and five that are shared by both countries. Three Canadian and two United States locations have been fully remediated and removed from the list of AOCs. Two Canadian locations have been recognized as Areas of Concern in Recovery.



For more information:

For more information on the Jackfish Bay Remedial Action Plan: www.northshorerap.ca

For more information on Areas of Concern visit: www.ec.gc.ca/raps-pas

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