

# Mill Creek Restoration Plan



*A plan to restore, protect and maintain the coldwater fishery of Mill Creek, rising in Oro-Medonte and flowing through Orillia to Lake Simcoe.*



Prepared by

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## **Executive Summary**

Mill Creek is a small coldwater stream that rises north west of the intersection of Line 14 and Old Barrie Road in Oro-Medonte Township and flows south east into the City of Orillia before discharging into Shingle Bay, Lake Simcoe. This report was initiated by the Twin Lakes Conservation Club (TLCC) in response to their concern about the deterioration of the health of the creek.

The purpose of this Restoration Plan is to provide a snapshot of the present health of Mill Creek, to identify areas of degradation and decline, to outline actions required to restore, protect and maintain the coldwater fishery in the creek and to foster a sense of stewardship among the landowners and the community through education and involvement in the restoration and protection of the creek.

Electro-fishing and benthic data were collected by OMNR and LSRCA staff respectively. The creek was toured by Jack Imhof, Trout Unlimited Canada and Bob Bowles, TLCC and Sandy Agnew, EcoMedic and conditions were assessed and recorded with the conclusion that, although no brook trout were found, Mill Creek could support a healthy coldwater fishery.

There are a number of actions that will have the greatest immediate benefit to the creek:

1. Highest Priority
  - a. Continue to advocate with Oro-Medonte and Orillia for protection of surface water, ground water and habitat from agricultural, industrial and commercial sources of degradation.
  - b. Remove Smith dam structure and reconstruct channel to allow fish migration.
  - c. Dewater the old mill pond, reconstruct the stream channel and plant the area.
  - d. Monitor and manage blockages at culverts.
  - e. Prepare an action plan and timetable for implementation.
2. High Priority
  - a. Prepare temperature profile.
  - b. Prepare and implement habitat assessment and enhancement plans for various sections (8) of the creek.
  - c. Mitigate small dam and off-line pond.
  - d. Acquire landowner permission to assess upper headwater area above Line 14.
3. Priority by Opportunity
  - a. Mitigate perched culverts and blockages above Old Barrie Road.
  - b. Monitor and manage woody debris blockages.
  - c. Control invasive species such as purple loosestrife and crack willow.
  - d. Plant native trees and shrubs at designated sites.

Other site specific recommendations are outlined in the report.

A preliminary budget estimates that the cost to implement the recommendation is \$31,000.00 plus many hours of volunteer labour. Additional costs will be identified as specific habitat enhancements are planned. Various partners and funding sources are suggested with the TLCC being the lead partner. LSRCA should be the lead agency in overseeing the technical aspects of implementing the restoration plan.