

# Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen

Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen website

## ROTARY PARK POND ECOSYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

### MUNICIPAL PROFILE:

POPULATION: ~4,530 (2016 Census)

LOCATION: A city in the Regional Municipality of Halton at the northwestern end of Lake Ontario. Along with Milton to the north, Burlington forms the west end of the Greater Toronto Area

SIZE: 542.7 km<sup>2</sup>

TOTAL PRIVATE DWELLINGS: 2,015

GREAT LAKES WATERSHED: Lake Ontario

### BACKGROUND

The Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen has long viewed the pond in Rotary Park as a defining feature of their community, and one of its most prized natural environments. The Rotary Park Pond located at Rotary Park is an area where residents can enjoy the pond, picnic areas and soccer field all in the natural outdoors. Recently, the Township has begun hosting an annual fishing derby for children at the Rotary Park Pond and has obtained a licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources to stock fish in the pond for the event. In recent years, however, the health of the pond has been jeopardized by low water levels leading to increased turbidity and scum. The Township is concerned that if work is not undertaken, a changing climate could exacerbate the decline in the pond's health, threatening both the wildlife that make their habitat in the pond, and also the community members and visitors who use it for recreational purposes.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen seeks to conduct dredging within a pond known as the 'Rotary Park Pond' on a piece of municipally owned land. Dredging will reduce the scum that has built up over the last number of years due to low water levels and reduce the threat that climate change poses to the wildlife that rely on this pond's natural habitat. It is hopeful that the Township may also hit a natural spring within the pond that could potentially assist with a healthier shoreline maintaining water quality and providing vital habitat. The area to be dredged is roughly 430 m<sup>2</sup>, while the pond itself is much larger.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were fourfold:

- Reduce turbidity and scum;
- Increase the health of the habitat for local species;
- Improve the use of the pond for Township residents; and visitors
- Make the revitalized pond a focal point of the community.

### PROJECT PLANNING

The project was formalized in early 2017 and by April the goal was to begin looking at the agencies whose approval was required for the project to proceed, and the requirements for the various permit applications. At this time, the Township's contractor performed a site visit in order to determine specific location of the dredging.

By end of April it was clear that applications would need to be submitted to Crowe Valley Conservation Authority (CVCA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). The Township expected that their application would take 6 to 8 weeks to process and that field inspections—if required—



Rotary Park Pond



2017 and will be undertaken in 2018.

#### FUNDING

Funding for the project was supported by the \$7,000 grant from the MOECC for participating in the Collaborative Implementation Group project. These funds were matched by cash or in-kind contributions on behalf of the Township. Although the Township had limited funds to support this project, they were able to find a contractor who would perform the dredging within budget. However, the high cost of dredging meant that there would be an insufficient remainder of funds with which to procure and install native species plants/grass along the shoreline, or for educational signage about the project. The Township plans to ask Council to fund the signage requirement using funds from the Parkland Reserve Funds.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

At this point in time, no formal partnerships have been established with other organizations.

#### CHALLENGES

The primary challenge encountered during this project had to do with the process by which all permits were secured. Site conditions also created challenges for the project. If the required permits had been in place, it is still likely that wet conditions would have made it impossible for the dredging to take place before the October 1 deadline. Similarly, work cannot proceed in 2018 until July, once the fish spawning season has ended.

#### POSITIVE OUTCOMES

This project has resulted in several positive outcomes. First, it allowed the Township to identify, celebrate, and seek to improve an important natural asset in their community, and to begin having conversations about the permitting processes involved in this type of work and better anticipate regulatory and logistical challenges in future projects.

could take place as early as June 15 to assess the potential effects on ecological integrity.

May was spent collecting the appropriate information requested in the MNRF work permit application, and in June the Township had a meeting with the contractor to discuss the creation of sketches/drawings, as these were required for the permit application. It was expected that these drawings would take a few weeks to deliver and that the MNRF application would be submitted by mid-July, which it was.

By mid-July, the project team had started to reach out to the Crowe Valley Conservation Authority to determine the requirements for their permit application. At this time it became clear that the unusually wet summer might mean that even if the permits were acquired in a timely manner, that work could not proceed on the wet ground surrounding the pond.

The Township received approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and was given a work permit to conduct the dredging of Rotary Park Pond, however the permit was only good until October 1, as no work in water is to be undertaken after that time of the year. The Township received an approved permit from Crowe Valley Conservation Authority on September 25, however the approved permit specified that the Township must meet all Department of Oceans and Fisheries (DFO) requirements. This condition prevented the Township from being able to have to pond dredged before the MNRF deadline of Oct 1, 2017 as there was not enough time to complete the DFO application.

Due to delays in the permitting process, and the unusually wet ground, the project could not proceed as planned in



## MEASURING OUTCOMES

The project team plans to measure the success of this project using the following indicators:

- **TURBIDITY:** Baseline data will be the turbidity of the water before dredging occurs. Photos will be taken by project staff before the dredging begins, and at various stages after the dredging has occurred.
- **WATER LEVEL:** Baseline data will be the current shoreline level before dredging occurs. The water level will be measured as the distance of the shoreline and middle of the pond in more than one area before the dredging begins. The project team will record the water levels of the pond at various stages after the dredging has finished.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Township is in the process of completing the DFO permit application and plan to submit it in advance of the anticipated dredging date of July 2018.

Other alternatives to improving the Rotary Park Pond were discussed for future projects when funds become available. These include planting more native species plants and grasses, and removing any invasive species plants.

The Township also views the pond improvement project as a first step in a longer process that aims to increase the beauty and functionality of this special and uniquely attractive park in the area.

## Acknowledgements

This project was made possible by the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, under the Canada-Ontario (COA) Respecting the Great Lakes.

## The Great Lakes Adaptation Project Collaborative Implementation Groups

The Collaborative Implementation Groups (CIG) project targeted 12 municipalities throughout the Great Lakes watershed to identify and implement an adaptation initiative in their community over the period of one year (January 2017 – December 2017). The CIGs came together at various stages to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities on such items as measuring progress through indicators, project financing, budgeting, scheduling, evaluation, monitoring, and reporting. Ultimately, the CIGs were an opportunity to bring together practitioners struggling with implementation challenges to create a peer support network that brings these individuals together (both online and in person) to collectively work through the implementation of an identified action and share the resulting experiences.

**Author: ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability Canada Office**

**January, 2018**

