



AREAS OF CONCERN **JACKFISH BAY**

Efforts in Jackfish Bay are undertaken in a partnership between the Government of Canada, other levels of government and non-government groups, including members of the public.

Undertaking environmental restoration requires a large amount of scientific and technical expertise, local knowledge and hard work. One agency or group cannot engage in such a large task on its own without the help of others.



© Environment Canada

As of May 2011, Jackfish Bay was officially re-designated as an Area of Concern (AOC) in Recovery, signifying that a long-term monitoring plan has been implemented to track and confirm environmental recovery.

Why was it listed as an Area of Concern?

Jackfish Bay was designated as an AOC because a review of available data indicated that water quality and environmental health were severely degraded. When the pulp and paper mill in Terrace Bay began operations in 1948, there were no environmental regulations, and no controls on pollution. Uncontrolled mill operations resulted in poor water quality, contamination of sediment, and fish and fish habitat destruction, along with impairment of populations of sediment-dwelling organisms. Mill wastewater effluent produced brown, foamy water and a strong odour that negatively affected the natural beauty of the area. In addition, overfishing and the presence of sea lamprey, an invasive species, contributed to a decline in lake trout populations.

What have we accomplished?

Major accomplishments have been realized in the Jackfish Bay AOC as a result of the implementation of federal and provincial pulp and paper regulations. With the source of contamination controlled, the environment started to improve significantly. The waters of Jackfish Bay are no longer toxic to fish, and the health of the local fish population has improved. Surveys indicated the presence of brook trout and fathead minnows in Blackbird Creek, which flows into Jackfish Bay, and suitable spawning, nursery and foraging habitat for many fish species in the Blackbird Creek system.

A natural recovery plan was adopted to address contaminated sediment in Jackfish Bay. Through natural processes, such as the stabilization of sediments by expanding the plant community and covering existing sediment with clean material, the contaminants have been effectively isolated from the water column and food web.

What is left to do?

A natural recovery plan and long-term monitoring are in place for the Jackfish Bay AOC in Recovery. The recovery of the Jackfish Bay ecosystem will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. Natural recovery requires maintenance of high standards of effluent quality. The Governments of Canada and Ontario will continue to monitor fish health and sediment quality over the long term, and will continue to enforce regulations to ensure the pulp and paper mill complies with the federal and provincial regulatory requirements.

Outlook

Jackfish Bay will remain an AOC in Recovery until such time as environmental monitoring indicates that the five remaining impaired beneficial uses have been restored. Once restoration of these beneficial uses has been confirmed, Jackfish Bay will be delisted.

Where can you find more information?

Environment Canada e-mail:
greatlakes-grandlacs@ec.gc.ca

Environment Canada web site:
www.ec.gc.ca/raps

InfoSuperior:
www.infosuperior.com

PARTNERS

Ontario Ministry of the Environment
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
EcoSuperior Environmental Programs
Public Area in Recovery
Review Committee
Township of Terrace Bay
Lakehead University
Public Advisory Committee (former)