



News Release

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Redside Dace In Lynde Creek! Central Lake Ontario Conservation Studies Habitat for Threatened Minnow Species

Release Date: Immediate

Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA) is working, in partnership, with the University of Toronto and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) Species at Risk Stewardship Fund on a project to assess historic and current conditions in the Lynde Creek watershed. The primary focus of the project is to determine the extent of habitat for Redside Dace, an endangered minnow species found in this Whitby watershed.

"The tiny fish is considered a minnow and measures about 7.5 cm (3 inches) long," says Lindsay Code, the University of Toronto Masters student conducting the assessment. It's most distinguishing features are its large eye and mouth and an orange red band extending over the gill cover. Their preferred habitat is clear streams with a mix of deep pools, shallow riffles and overhanging vegetation. They spawn in the spring, seeking out gravelly stream bottoms for laying their eggs.



"Because Redside Dace has recently been added to the endangered species list," Code says "identification of Redside Dace habitat is a valuable watershed management tool." The OMNR and CLOCA mandates promote conservation, restoration and the management of natural resources to protect Species at Risk. "In order to ensure the long-term health of Lynde Creek watershed and this fish species, we need to understand how things have changed," says Lindsay. "Our intent is to establish monitoring stations on properties in the Lynde Creek watershed, that possess the right habitat conditions today and historically," she adds. To date, historic and recent aerial photography has been reviewed, taking into consideration the natural curving alignments of the creek and adjacent vegetation communities to determine potential monitoring sites. Twenty four properties have been identified and landowners have been contacted through the project, requesting permission to establish the monitoring sites for data collection in July and August.

"The data we collect includes stream depth, width, rate of flow and an inventory of adjacent bank vegetation," says Code. "Other than marking a tree with a strip of flagging tape to register the monitoring station with GPS coordinates, the monitoring is very non-intrusive," she adds. Information on historic conditions will be collected through short written surveys prepared by the landowners themselves.

The coolwater of Lynde Creek tributaries offers high-quality habitat for 13 fish species including Rainbow and Brook Trout. The biggest threat to Redside Dace in Lynde Creek is siltation from erosion and loss of habitat from vegetation removal. Things like construction of roads around creeks and mowing vegetation along the water's edge are examples of land management practices that negatively impact this fish species. Installing silt curtains and other erosion control measures at construction sites, naturalizing stream banks and removing fish passage barriers are just some of the ways to sustain and improve habitat for Redside Dace. "Even things like rain barrels to collect stormwater from homes and businesses, not using fertilizers on lawns, especially near water features, and planting native grasses – can all help Redside Dace in Lynde Creek," adds Ms. Code.

For more information on the Redside Dace Species at Risk Project, contact Lindsay Code at 905-579-0411, ext.120 or email: lcode@cloca.com.

What we do on the land is mirrored in the water.