



News Release

For Immediate Release

The Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), and the Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society (NLPS) are pleased to announce an Agreement to work together to preserve the natural and historical legacy of Nottawasaga Island. Nottawasaga Island is an important bird rookery for common and rare bird species, and is also the site for one of the oldest and historically significant lighthouses in Ontario.

June 11, 2021

Saugeen Peninsula

Saugeen Ojibway Nation, Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society

Nottawasaga Island is a 5.26 hectare island located only 5 kilometers Northwest of Collingwood. Although the island is small, it is very important from a historical, cultural, and ecological perspective. The island is currently owned by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and the Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society (NLPS) wish to see the island returned to the SON, as the lighthouse is no longer in use. Both parties have worked hard together over the last two years to create an Agreement on how to protect the ecology and history of the island. We look forward to our collaborative partnership and to the restoration of the lighthouse and island to its former glory.

This island is part of the Mary Ward shoal which is a valuable spawning ground for lake whitefish; a species of great cultural and commercial value to the SON. Staff from the SON sampled fish around the island, as part of the SON's and the NLPS' work to protect the island. Gentle sampling revealed tens of thousands of small fish such as shiner and minnow species; demonstrating the high productivity of this site. The Nottawasaga Island is of strong importance to breeding birds including cormorants, great blue herons, great egrets, black-crowned night herons, and various gull species. This island is one of only four great egret breeding colonies in Canada and contains three percent of Canada's black-crowned night heron populations.

One of the key issues that needs to be addressed is the heavy metal soil contamination directly around the lighthouse, from years of use. The parties are united in their desire for the DFO to clean up the site, preventing damage to the surrounding vulnerable ecology.

The lighthouse is one of six imperial towers built by John Brown of Thorold, Ontario in the 1850s. First lit November 30, 1858, it was in operation until 2003 when a lightning strike caused the outer wall to fail. Unfortunately, the lighthouse is in serious need of rehabilitation and is in danger of collapsing if immediate intervention does not take place soon. The SON and the NLPS are unified in their desire to preserve this historical lighthouse for future generations.

Quote

"We have had a very productive working relationship with the Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society and our Agreement is a demonstration of what we can achieve by working together for the benefit of all. We eagerly await a commitment from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to remediate the soil contamination on the island and to see the island returned to our care"

Ogimaa Lester Anoquot, Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation

Ogimaa Greg Nadjiwon, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation

“The Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society has worked with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation to find common ground to allow us to move forward with our restoration plans for the historic lighthouse. We have done so by respecting that the Nottawasaga Island is part of SON’s traditional lands and the waters around it are their traditional fishing areas. The NLPS looks forward to our continued partnership to ensure the restoration of the lighthouse and island.”

The Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society

Related Links

[Fisheries Assessment Program – Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation](#)

[Saugeen Ojibway Nation Fishing – Information and Insight into the Fishing Tradition of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation \(sonfishing.ca\)](#)

[Fisheries | Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environment Office](#)

[Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society](#)

[A look inside the Nottawasaga Lighthouse](#)

[CTV News Barrie November 2018](#)

Contacts

SON
Ryan Lauzon
Fisheries Assessment Biologist
Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation
nawash.fisheries@gmail.com

NLPS
Robert Square
Vice Chair-Government Relations
vicechair@nlps.info
www.nlps.info

Or

Stephen Emo
Chair
chair@nlps.info
www.nlps.info