

Restoration  
Great Lakes Initiatives Corp  
- invasive species -  
sept / Feb grants

IX Joint  
International Water Level  
Regulation Commissions  
soliciting public opinions

plan 2014

Call Jake  
TILT

Timeline  
on  
Restoration 607-753-9334  
Scott Schluter  
Fish + Wildlife Service  
Cortland

Sarah -  
585-683-6764  
sfleming@ducks.org

Within Call Josh T.  
TILT

Glaro/DU  
734-623-2000

# Project to increase river fish habitat

## CHIPPEWA BAY: Ducks Unlimited plans to cut channels, potholes through cattail

By AMANDA PURCELL  
JOHNSON NEWSPAPERS

HAMMOND - A tunnel connecting one side of the St. Lawrence River channel to the other could lead to more fishing in the area.

Ducks Unlimited, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife habitats, is building a tunnel that will connect both sides of a point east of Chippewa Bay.

Ducks Unlimited regional biologist Sarah K. Fleming said the goal of the Ferguson Point project is to provide spawning habitats for northern pike and to open the area to marsh birds, waterfowl and other wetland species.

"Lake Ontario has seen a drastic loss of marsh-meadow habitat, which is a required habitat of spawning northern pike," Ms. Fleming said. "The loss of marsh meadow and increase in non-native cattail has reduced available spawning areas."

Cattails acted as barriers, and with reduced marsh meadow, northern pike were unable to spawn in historical locations along Lake Ontario.

"The fish need marsh meadow habitat in order to spawn," Ms. Fleming said.

As a way to curtail the problem, Ducks Unlimited is implementing a restoration project to help increase channels and potholes that the fish can use for spawning.

"They cut channels and potholes in the cattail to allow them to access areas that they are no longer able to reach due

to the dense stands of cattail," Ms. Fleming said.

The project is one of many taking place along the St. Lawrence River to increase fish populations.

"We have recently completed a similar project on private land in Alexandria Bay and the French Creek Wildlife Management Area," Ms. Fleming said. "Those two projects are also through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and in partnership with NOAA, NYSDEC and SUNY-ESF. SUNY ESF is monitoring the site conditions and making sure the restorations are functioning and the fish, birds and plant communities are thriving."

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, has monitored plants, fish and birds post-restoration, to ensure the site is functioning as designed and benefiting the targeted species.

So far the results have been positive.

"SUNY ESF students are already capturing juvenile pike in potholes only months after construction was completed, which is really exciting," Ms. Fleming said.

The project will cost a little more than \$75,000, and will be completed as early as March, pending permit approval.

Ducks Unlimited will work with a local contractor, and use a long-reach excavator to cut channels and potholes within the cattail.

The channels and potholes will be placed in locations that mimic historical conditions.