

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS

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Ontario Conservation Centre

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On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), its 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 725 member clubs, I would like to thank the City of London's Civic Works Committee for the opportunity to voice our concerns regarding the repair of the Springbank Dam on the Thames River:

River impoundment causing water quality degradation

- When in operation, the Springbank Dam created a water impoundment that showed significantly elevated levels of total phosphorus and fecal coliforms (i.e. *E. coli*) which exceeded provincial water quality targets (D'Amelio 2007).
- The pond created by the dam promotes thermal loading of the river water leading to higher water temperatures. That in combination with high levels of nutrients creates an ideal habitat for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae).
- Seasonal opening of the dam gates would re-suspend these macronutrients and contaminants and flush them downstream.
- The Thames River was one (1) of only two (2) Canadian rivers that were identified by researchers from Environment and Climate Change Canada as being a significant contributor to the large cyanobacteria blooms in Lake Erie affecting the drinking water of millions.

Current improvement of water quality indicators

- In the absence of a functioning Springbank Dam, there have been noticeable increases in the abundance of pollution-intolerant species of benthic macroinvertebrates. There has been a documented expansion of popular game fish species (i.e. Muskellunge) in reaches of the Thames that did not support them when the dam was in operation and there have been observations by UTRCA staff of several species of extremely rare, at-risk aquatic organisms including Unionid mussels (i.e. Wavy-rayed Lampmussel) and turtles (i.e. Spiny Softshell).
- Should the dam be repaired and resume operation, the habitat that now supports these organisms will be destroyed.

Citations:

- D'Amelio, S. 2007. Preliminary Water Quality at Springbank Dam, Thames River, London, Ontario. Trout Unlimited Technical Report No.: ON-020

Again, thank you the opportunity to present our concerns,

Yours in Conservation,

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