

Newfoundland and Labrador Conservation Corps

Glovertown Green Team
Stream Surveys 1995

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Beginning the second week of July, the Conservation Corps consisting of four university students from Glovertown, began conducting stream surveys on the section of Northwest Brook flowing above the Trans Canada Highway. The members included Stephen Brooking, team leader, and Renee Perry, Norman Byrne and Andrew Riggs, team members. It was the first experience for the team doing stream surveys, and all members were anxious to begin work. Being outdoor enthusiasts, a summer working on Northwest Brook was very well received, although the flies were annoying, the heat was bothersome, and the terrain was quite rugged. It took approximately fifteen working days to reach the destination, Gull Pond. The team would begin at 7:00 am each morning, and at 2:30 pm would head back to the Alexander Bay-Terra Nova Development Association to finish writing up daily surveys, and when 4:00 pm arrived the members would conclude the work day.

The following is an in-depth description of the experiences over the course of the summer.

The first thing that comes to mind when one thinks about Northwest Brook is the great number of obstructions that impede migration for several species of fish. There are numerous beaver dams and houses- especially close to the Trans Canada Highway. These range in size from small, narrow, seeping dams, to wide, solid, impassable dams. There is debris (alders, dried aspen) littering many portions of the brook, that, at this point in time, may not impede any migration. However, eventually this debris may build up and could prove to be a barrier to fish. On some parts of the brook, just below large beaver dams, the brook overflows and it was hard for the team to locate the main stream channel. If these dam/obstructions were removed then we are positive that the water would flow in a deep, fast running channel rather than by overland flow.

The second thing that comes to mind when we reflect back on the brook, are the beautiful, deep runs and pools that are found throughout the entire brook's length. In parts there is shallow, slow running water with lots of hang-up debris. Yet in other places, there are beautiful, deep pools and swift flowing runs which seem suitable habitat for fish species. It seems the large obstructions located just past the highway stop any migration upstream that a fish may have to the beautiful, deep pools. We also came across five or six small flats and the same number of steadies ranging in size from 50m x 15m to 200m x 60m. These flats and steadies were subject to heavy siltation, and for the most part, they were relatively shallow. Lily pads and large boulders are characteristic of these areas. Also much of the brook contained rubble to cobble sized rock. Large and small boulders were common throughout the brook's length, with lots of instream vegetation growing on and around them. In some areas we came across excellent spawning beds consisting of gravel and small cobble substrate. Unlike the high percentage of riffle and runs encountered, sand was hardly ever seen. The water level of Northwest Brook fluctuated from low to medium levels all summer long. In some areas where obstructions were present, the water slowed to a trickle. However, the water ran swiftly and the channel width was fairly wide; it also seemed the temperature of the water remained relatively cool during the summer.

Undercut banks can be found on nearly all portions of Northwest Brook. The overhanging

and canopy cover was very heavy, approximately 60% of the time. Much of this consisted of alder and hardwood. Soft woods were rarely seen along the brook's edge. Without question, there is an abundance of shady areas. Small ferns and shrubs grow frequently along the brook's edge. When we came across flats and steadies we always had to trek across wetland and boggy terrain. Also, nearly all of the brook had some sort of instream vegetation growing in it.

Everyday we noticed countless small trout swimming up the brook. Most of them were spotted in pools or runs hiding underneath some shade. Even though we came across many beaver dams and obstructions, we never once saw a beaver.

We spent only two days doing surveys on Boatswains Brook. Starting from the Trans Canada Highway, we quickly reached Boatswains Pond as the brook was much easier to walk up and survey. It was quite different from Northwest Brook. The water was much more shallow and there was little debris lying on any portion of the brook. The water ran swiftly in most places, besides the few steadies and flats we encountered.

There seemed to be fewer runs and pools found on Boatswains Brook, yet the substrate seemed more suitable to migrating and/or spawning fish.

Although Northwest is carved with countless obstructions and debris, we all feel that it is worthwhile to remove these potential barriers. There are simply too many pools and spawning bed/nursery areas that would otherwise go to waste should the many obstructions not be removed.