**Summery of St. Mary’s River Association stock enhancement, telemetry efforts and habitat work**

* Total habitat restored to date from 2014 to 2021 is approximately 25 linear kms / 660,000 sq meters of habitat restored.
* By 2016 our Association raised over $400,000 for habitat restoration on our West Branch and had completed over four kilometers of river restoration. During the summer of 2016 three sites were worked on between the Upper Caledonia Bridge and Trafalgar with the addition of some work on the Sutherland’s Brook tributary.
* 2017 was our 4th year of river restoration work. In total since 2014 we raised and spent 900,000 with approximately 11km of restored river.
* Total of 80 Hectares limed on our West branch during the summers of 2020 and 2021
* In the spring of 2016, 55 kelt were collected: 35 were required for our kelt rejuvenation project and 20 were used for a one-time stock enhancement effort. For this one-time effort, the salmon were spawned out at the hatchery and their offspring reared to fall fingerling size and then released back into the river.
* During the Fall of 2016 30 sea trout were collected. These sea trout were brought to the Frasers Mills Hatchery where they were spawned out with a hatchery strain of sea trout originating from the Musquodoboit River. This was done because wild females introduced to captivity do not survive well in this environment. We want to keep the St. Mary’s strain of sea trout as close to original as we can while maintaining healthy stocks in the river. As a result of these efforts there were 21000 unfed fry introduced to various brooks flowing into the St Mary’s during 2017 Spring. We released about 200 with our local Girl Guides which they used as a means to earn their conservation badge.
* Our salmon stock enhancement efforts started in 2014 although 2014 was very much a learning year for our team.
* In 2015 we purchased 4 large, insulated tanks for transporting fish. Our team changed our angling strategy a bit and our kelt capture efforts resulted in the retention of 15 fish. These 15 fish were reconditioned at the Cold Brook Hatchery and spawned out. Their prodigies, 25,000 unfed fry, were released during the spring of 2016 in the West Branch of the St Mary’s river.
* Spring of 2016 we captured 300 smolts for gene banking. Gene banking is way of helping to insure we have stock for the future. These fish are also held at the cold brook Hatchery. This has been done in the past and when the smolts mature they are returned to the St. Mary’s River.
* 55 kelts were collected during 2017 which would have been our 3rd year for this special fishery. These kelt were also reconditioned at the Cold Brook Hatchery and spawned out. Their prodigies, 60,000 unfed fry, were released into brooks flowing into the St Mary’s during the spring of 2017.
* DFO has committed to spawn our smolts with our rejuvenated kelt for unfed fry release in the spring of 2018
* (2016 to 2022) each season DFO return approximately between 25K – 365K unfed fry to the river as a result of our partnered Kelt stocking project.
* 275K unfed fry were returned during the Spring of 2021
* 364K unfed fry were returned during the Spring of 2022. 186K were returned to the West Branch and 178K were returned to the East Branch
* DFO Coldbrook team returned 300 adults in 2021 and 177 adults in 2022
* 2021, 23 Kelts were collected from the river for our DFO lead stock enhancement program based out of the Coldbrook hatchery. No Kelts collected in 2022 for stock enhancement purposes.
* (2015 to 2022) approximately 25k sea trout returned to the river each Spring by Inland Fisheries as a result of our joint Sea Trout enhancement stocking project based out of the Frasers Mills Hatchery.
* Kelt tagging and tracking efforts both last season and this season have been very successful. 2021 DFO tagged 24 kelts with both satellite and acoustic tags. 2022 DFO also tagged 24 kelts. 2021, 95 smolts were tagged. 2022 265 smolts were tagged. Interesting to note we are seeing substantial increases in smolt numbers this Spring (2022).
* From our observations, there has been a 6 – 8 times increase in salmon spawning activity at the restored sites in the West branch of the river as compared to other locations where no restoration was done.