



Aerial Photo of Grant Wetland and surroundings in the 1960's

New Discoveries at Grant Wetland

Setting up water monitoring sites at Grant Wetland has been full of surprises.

On our first visit, Meagan, Aiesha and I witnessed a pair of Downy Woodpecker mating in the sky above us and a mangy red fox trying to get past us and into the wetland.

The real surprise came when we got back to the office with some video footage Aiesha captured in the cold water creek. After careful study, our Stewardship Manager Dave Hawke concluded that it was a Trout Perch: a unique and ancient species dating back 55 million years which is the link between Trout and Perch before they split into two species. [See our video footage here](#)

The Trout Perch is rarely seen because it only inhabits streams at night, where they dine on nutrients unavailable in lakes. They swim for the lake in the daytime, transferring these

delicacies to the Trout, Pike, Perch, and Walleye who eat them. The Trout Perch we saw was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

We also ran into a young fisherman from Tallwood Drive, who said he fishes the creek for Brook Trout. Not what we were expecting in this urban, fragmented wetland!

There are two main tributaries flowing through Grant Wetland. One we've named "Bay Street Drainage" which tends to be nutrient-rich and very turbid and makes its way from the Northwest corner of Grant Wetland to the Southeast corner. The water in this tributary is warm, low in dissolved oxygen, and high in nitrates.

This is in contrast to the Fittons springs, which originate from several springs coming out of the hillside near Fittons Road. These springs deliver cold clear water which flows through Grant Wetland along the south end to merge with the Bay Street Drainage before entering Lake Simcoe. Fittons Creek is very high in dissolved oxygen, low in nitrates, and high in alkalinity, meaning it is capable of supporting a wide variety of aquatic life.

The aerial photo above is from the 1960's and gives you some idea of how the wetland has changed over the years. Despite all of the human pressure on it, Grant Wetland continues to survive, and Fittons Creek is one of the most significant features of the property. We will have permanent water monitoring teams at the site beginning in July.

If you would like to volunteer for the Conservancy's water monitoring project, please contact Dorthea dorthea@couchconservancy.ca (705) 326-1620.

Many thanks to staff and volunteers at the Orillia Public Library's Local History Room, for the photo and for information on Fittons Creek. [More information on Grant Wetland here.](#)