

BLUFFERS PARK WETLAND REGENERATION



PROJECT GOAL

The Dunkers Facility, located at Bluffers Park, is a series of four manmade wetland cells that have been built to naturally treat storm water runoff before entering Lake Ontario.

As a part of the area, a fifth cell has been built to act as a natural wetland, but it is not linked to the runoff facility. The goal of this project was to establish vegetation within a portion of cell 5 using the methods and experience gained through the Rouge River Marshes project.

THE NEED

More than 90% of coastal wetlands in the Greater Toronto Area have been lost to urban development. Since 1996, Ontario Streams and its partners have been dedicated to restoring Toronto's coastal wetlands. Cell 5 at the Dunkers facility in Bluffers Park provides an opportunity to restore a small section of coastal wetland in the Toronto area and create beneficial habitat for fish, bird, amphibian, and reptile species.

Cell 5 suffered from the effects of large numbers of waterfowl and carp including turbid (cloudy) water

that prevented aquatic vegetation from growing. Existing habitat in cell 5 was also not suitable for all the desirable species inhabiting the surrounding coastal areas. The available habitat features could be improved with increased amounts of rock, woody debris, and wetland vegetation. Resident fish would benefit from the new habitat available and new species of fish may also be attracted into the area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the fall of 2003, Ontario Streams' staff constructed exclosures surrounding two planting areas in cell 5. The exclosures consisted of page fencing attached to T-bars that had been driven into the clay. Sediment fencing was secured to the bottom portion of the fencing and buried into the substrate. Bird netting covered the top of the exclosures. Exclosures prevent species such as Canada Geese and carp from entering and disturbing planted areas, allowing new vegetation a chance to take hold.



Wetland cell protected from carp and cloudy water with sediment fence

Carp were also caught and removed from the exclosures. Staff then planted a mixture of native cattails, hardstem bulrush, softstem bulrush, sedges, and water lilies. The exclosures were left in place for several years to allow the vegetation to establish and grow without the destructive feeding activities of geese and carp.

PARTNERS

Ontario Streams worked in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the City of Toronto to complete this project.