

Site Visit to Camp Veselka with Steve Ostafichuk  
Sunday, January 6, 2019

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Introduction:

Steve Ostafichuk approached a number of people at the IWFFC at their December meeting to discuss the possibility of working with the Club and others to explore the uses that angling and conservation groups might make of Camp Veselka. Camp Veselka was established as a Ukrainian Youth Camp 65 years ago by immigrants from the Ukraine. It was originally used for social events and to provide a location for summer camps for children of these new Canadians.

Details and Observations:

The Camp is on the Fourth Line, Acton, northeast of the town (See Figure 1). The property is approximately 100 acres in size with rolling, gentle hills as well as two small streams (tributaries of Black Creek) that join on the property (Figure 2). The Camp has a new activity centre with kitchen facilities as well as two sets of cabin/dormitories that can sleep up to 150 people in basic conditions. In addition there is parking space as well as a commercial sized barbecue area with seating for over 100 people and a stage for outdoor concerts.



Figure 1: Location of Camp Veselka near Acton.

I walked the property with Steve to examine the facilities as well as the streams and the ponds on the property. The activity facility can easily support modest sized weddings, presentations and workshops with attached kitchen facilities as well. We also walked and looked at the small streams on the property and the ponds.

There are two tributaries of the small stream that joins Black Creek downstream of Acton. The stream that comes directly from the north into the upper pond is very small. On the day I walked the stream, it appeared to have a flow of perhaps 2-3 litres/sec. The other tributary comes in from the west of the property and begins at the northwest corner of the Erin-Halton Townline and 4<sup>th</sup> Line Acton. It flows



Figure 2: Veselka Camp near Acton.

from there, south through a former trout hatchery site and then crosses under the 4<sup>th</sup> Line and into the Camp property. The stream is substantially larger than the other tributary and appeared to have a flow of about 15-20 liters/sec.

The larger stream on the property has well established banks and a gravel/cobble substrate. Steve mentioned that the streams do not freeze in the winter time and maintain at least the same discharge as I observed. I lifted a rock from the stream and noted a *Leuctra* sp. Stonefly and a *Stenacron* sp. Mayfly as well as numerous stone pupal cases. Steve also thought that the main stream has brook trout in it. I mentioned that I can find out from the CVC if they have records of brook trout from this area.

The stream flows south adjacent to the ponds and the ponds are fed both by the minor tributary directly and the major tributary by a by-pass channel that allows water flow from the stream to enter the upper pond.

There are three, longish ponds on the property. The upper two ponds appear to be fairly shallow and have filled with sediment. The lower-most pond is more round in shape and has an apparent maximum depth of about 4m. Steve mentioned that one of the older gentlemen that came to the camp used to catch fish in the pond. Given that these streams seem quite cold, these fish may have been brook trout. The riparian area around the ponds is stable with mixes of trees, shrubs and grasses. The ponds can be considered by-pass ponds since the main stream does flow on the west side of the ponds, separated by a berm. It is possible to manually adjust how much water flows into

and through the ponds and how much flows in the stream. This might be important in the summer to reduce any thermal concerns in the stream for fish.

#### Considerations:

Steve mentioned that he is exploring the possibilities of how the camp could be utilized by others to help keep it being used and useful. He discussed the possibility of hosting fund-raisers at the Camp, workshops, courses on fly fishing and fly tying as well as many other activities.

From a Trout Unlimited Canada perspective, this may be a very nice venue for our ongoing Stream Rehabilitation Training Workshop series. The facility hall can easily accommodate anywhere from 20 – 100 students and with adjacent kitchen facilities and the opportunity to put-up people at the camp, it could be very attractive. In addition, the venue would lend itself to various, low-key fund-raiser ideas such as a barbecue/concert or music evening.

I also noted that the small stream on the property could do with some rehabilitation work and this might be a great location to teach basic rehabilitation techniques or at least to have a workday or two with our Chapter and the community.