

Enhancing fish habitat in Watts Creek, Ottawa

Streams

Streams and creeks collect water from rain, runoff, and snowmelt and carry them to larger bodies of water. The riparian vegetation that naturally grows along the edges of a stream plays many important roles including: preventing excess nutrients and harmful chemicals from entering the water, regulating the amount of water that flows through the creek, and providing habitat and shade for species that dwell within the stream.



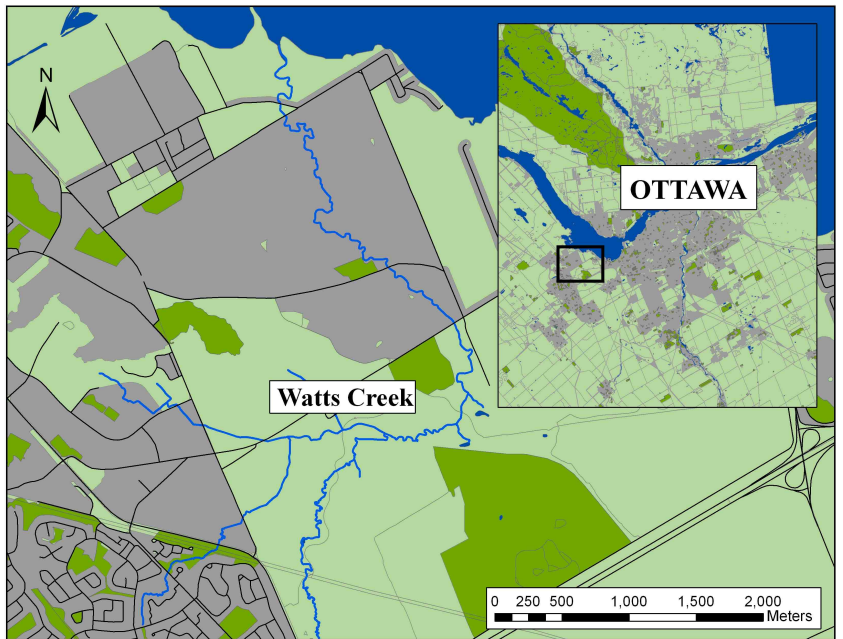
Banded Killifish



Longnose Dace

Watts Creek

Watts Creek is a highly modified tributary that flows from the City of Kanata into the Ottawa River. The system supports a diverse and ecologically important array of warm water fishes. The National Capital Commission (NCC) manages the majority of the Creek's watershed, which is primarily composed of two watercourses – Watts Creek and the Kizell Municipal Drain. NCC views Watts Creek as a valuable geological and ecological feature to the National Capital making protection and restoration of this important resource essential.



White Sucker



Watts Creek in the Summer

Location of Watts Creek

Challenges

Changes to the Watts Creek watershed have altered the natural flow of the water and removed its protective natural cover. The result has been increased erosion. Build-up of sediment and terrestrial material caused by erosion has the potential to block upstream migration of fishes and alter their remaining habitat. Removal of trees along the riverbank (that normally provide shade) has resulted in warmer water temperatures that may preclude some fish species. The NCC and the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund (Province of Ontario) have generously provided support to Carleton University to undertake restoration work in the Watts Creek watershed.



Brook Stickleback

Restoration Goals

Overall: Improve the amount and availability of fish habitat in Watts Creek.

- 1 – Plant native vegetation along the river banks to reduce erosion, increase shade, and reduce water temperatures
- 2 – Remove in-stream barriers, such as logs and beaver dams to increase fish movement
- 3 – Improve in-stream habitat to increase spawning and fish populations

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Riparian Planting



Removing Barriers



Stopping Erosion

