



**AQUATIC HABITAT TORONTO**

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June 9, 2009

Aquatic Habitat Toronto (AHT) represents a consensus based partnership between agencies with a vested interest in the improvement of aquatic habitat on the Toronto Waterfront. Partners include Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Natural Resources, Toronto and Region Conservation, Waterfront Toronto with key participants from Environment Canada and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and in consultation with the City of Toronto. Aquatic Habitat Toronto is responsible for the implementation of the Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (TWAHRS) a strategy developed to guide the aquatic restoration of the Toronto Waterfront. In 2008 AHT won an Award of Excellence at the Public Sector Quality Fair for their achievements in working as a collaborative to facilitate and expedite the approvals process for waterfront projects.

Waterfront Toronto is building a series of boardwalks and bridges spanning the slips of the Central Waterfront creating a 3 km length of public space. These walkways will create a vast pedestrian esplanade enabling people to enjoy the waterfront. Since the bridges and boardwalks will be shading out some existing aquatic habitat they could negatively impact the existing habitat so new habitat will be created in the harbour to compensate for the potential loss.

Last year 2,500 square metres of new aquatic habitat was installed under the new public space of the Spadina WaveDeck. The next slips to receive their grand WaveDecks are Rees and Simcoe. The designs for these WaveDecks are a bit more daring in their style, however, their potential impact on aquatic habitat is the same... they could potentially negatively impact aquatic habitat. As a result the creation of aquatic habitat to compensate for the potential loss was required. The aquatic habitat created will invite fish and other aquatic life to inhabit the area. To create aquatic habitat in this deep water, sea wall environment a variety of different measures were used... boulders, smaller aggregate, and root balls among other things all providing lots of spaces for fish to hide. Now aquatic plants will be able to root in amongst the habitat features providing both food and shelter. This is another important step in creating a healthier waterfront environment.

The Grand Opening of the Simcoe Slip is an exciting event taking place to celebrate the completion of the new wave deck at the foot of Simcoe Street. Located under the wave deck is brand new aquatic habitat –providing an environment for fish to reproduce, forage, live, and grow. This project demonstrates the partnership between agencies with an interest in ensuring healthy, sustainable aquatic ecosystems in Toronto.