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Trout Unlimited Canada



Greg Clark Chapter

For immediate release: 25 February 2021

## Wastewater Treatment Plant Spells Doom for West Credit Brook Trout

### Coalition asks Federal Government for Impact Assessment

The Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant (Erin WWTP) will discharge over 7 million litres of effluent daily, releasing a toxic plume of chloride, ammonia and decreased oxygen into the West Credit River, directly upstream of native Brook Trout spawning nursery and habitat, and endangered Redside Dace.

The Coalition for the West Credit River is calling on Johnathan Wilkinson, (Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada) for a federal review of the Environmental Study Report (ESR) for the Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant (Erin WWTP), under the Impact Assessment Act.

There is a growing movement by local citizens in opposition to the Erin WWTP, such as Ken Cowling's one man protest, the Road Rally for Residents and River, the over 16,000 signatures on the [Cut the Crap, Keep the Credit](#) petition, and a pending parliamentary petition.

The Coalition recognizes the need for growth in both villages; however, it must be reasonable and sustainable growth. The plan is to grow the population from its current 4,500 to about 18,873, which is widely considered to be excessive in light of the size of the effluent's receiving stream. With this significant increase in population will come an increase in hardened surfaces, commercial development, traffic, road salt and other pollutants, stormwater run-off, a major increase in groundwater usage, increased heat island effects, and all that comes with this increased footprint of urban development.

As much as the Mayor and Council have a clear desire to increase their tax base by ramping up residential, commercial, and industrial growth in the Towns of Erin and Hillsburgh, the West Credit River and its valued Brook Trout population, species at risk, and other sensitive aquatic species could pay a deadly price.

The Coalition completed a full review of the ESR, and it was deficient in several crucial ways. There was inadequate consideration of the cumulative effects of the expanded population growth and all that it entails, the effects of a warming climate on stream and effluent temperatures and failed to require crucial limits and design objectives for effluent temperature. The ESR also failed to consider the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve (Reserve), which is within 700 m downstream of where effluent will be discharged. The Reserve is home to several sensitive fish species, including the endangered Redside Dace and reintroduced Atlantic Salmon. The Town of Erin and Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) failed to exercise due diligence and provide a clear and transparent path to understand how many decisions were made.

This Class Environmental Assessment was flawed and narrow, whereas a federal environmental assessment would provide a thorough review of the available facts to ensure that Brook Trout

and Redside Dace have robust mitigation and protection, including comprehensive monitoring, adaptive management and stringent compliance limits.

Judy Mabee, President of the Belfountain Community Organization stated, “*Our Coalition developed a Briefing report identifying a long list of deficiencies in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process and the ESR. It revealed a lack of due diligence in key areas such as climate change, effluent temperature, cumulative effects, and stakeholder notification and consultation. The report provides details on these and other serious areas of concerns that, if left unchecked, will have deadly consequences on West Credit River Brook Trout.*”

Erin is located northeast of Guelph, in Wellington County. The main urban centers within the Town are Erin Village and Hillsburgh. Currently, almost all residences are serviced by individual private septic systems.

The Coalition for the West Credit River represents the following organizations: the Belfountain Community Organization, Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club, Ontario Rivers Alliance, Ontario Streams, Trout Unlimited Canada - Greg Clark Chapter and the [West Credit River Watch](#).

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