

# Species at risk will have limited impact on Howson Dam project

Jun 20, 2017| By Kelsey Dunbar

NORTH HURON – The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) stated that they did not have concerns with the proposed work to the Howson Dam, in regards to the species at risk found to be living in the Maitland River.

“In both cases, it appears that the presence of the black redhorse sucker fish and mussels would have limited impact on project work depending on the scope and approach to construction work proposed,” Jeff Molenhuse, director of public works, wrote in a report to council on June 19.

In November 2016 species of fish and mussels at risk were identified in the Howson Dam project area. The species are regulated by the MNRF and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and both required preliminary work to determine if the activity would impact the species.

“At the time of reporting to council in late 2016 and early 2017, it was unclear how the presence of these species would impact any of the options presented within the environmental assessment,” Molenhuse wrote.

Preliminary information was submitted to the MNRF and DFO earlier this year.

In response the MNRF commented that, “if no significant changes to the approach to complete the work were made, there was no concern with the preliminary work submitted, and therefore no further SAR permitting would be needed.”

Informal feedback received earlier this month from the DFO stated that any changes in water level that would impact mussel habitat would require additional fieldwork for detailed surveys. Staff are still waiting formal feedback from the DFO.