

Harbour City Rivers Stewards

The following are the notes that **Harry McLeod, IWFF representative**, took at the last meeting of the Harbour City Rivers Stewards. This group evolved from the work done to install, then follow up on, the Bowen Park Millstone Bypass Channel in 2007. Since that time they have been watching and working on projects for other streams in Nanaimo.

Tagging Coho:

John Morgan reported that several were caught and tagged a few weeks ago in the railway tunnel. One subsequently dropped out of the river system. Another had a clipped adipose fin. John said that there had not been any pulse of dirty water to move them upstream thus far. There was no mention of the need for assistance from our club in catching, tagging and tracking coho this fall. I got the impression that VIU was not expecting there to be many coho in the Millstone River this fall. DFO now has a second receiver if needed.

Coho Returns

Charles reported that there was one redd above the lower culvert below the duck pond. Eleven jacks and three adult coho seen up until a week ago. Water has been exceptionally low until last night (21st). He estimates 300 chum on Beck Creek but no coho yet. John Morgan said that there was very little sign of coho in the Englishman River. Brian Banks reported that swim counts on the Nanaimo River by hatchery staff have found about 2000 coho in that river and that this was on the upper side of what they had found there last year.

Workshops

Charles has been busy conducting workshops/ tours on the Millstone for school groups and the public. Unfortunately, no spawning salmon were there to show them yet.

Streamkeepers

Jean-Michel said that people take the streamkeepers course but there is no follow up with anything for them to do. He is thinking that there may be a need for an event to bring together those who have taken the course, and see where we go from there.

Webcam

A meeting will take place for the first time between Ian (DFO) and VIU to see what is needed to hook into VIU's system. A live camera will not likely come about this year.. Not much to see most of the time and movement through system takes place at night anyway. Viewing clips is more practical, especially those from last year.

Lake Stewardship

Peter Law said that besides there being Streamkeepers, there is also a Lake Stewardship Group (BC Lakes Stewardship Society) which can be found online. There are about a dozen lake groups on Vancouver Island, one of which is Long Lake. John Morgan's group monitors Westwood Lake. Brannen Lake has a water- milfoil issue. It was mentioned that the groups are not very active.

Habitat Assessment Report- Darrough Creek and Millstone Side Channel

John said that a report is due from his students on these areas on December 5th. Lower Darrough Creek looks to be good habitat for fish but absolutely none were found. There may be water quality issues.

Northfield Creek

This Creek is situated at the south end of Departure Bay and passes through Beach Estates Park. Al Brown said that only a few pink salmon went upstream there where historically there had been many. He and Wayne Harling felt that there must be water quality problems there and that some testing for same should take place before any stream enhancement work is done.

Chase River Logjam/ Chum Counts

Charles T. has been aware of this blockage to fish migration for some time . Apparently, it was like this a year ago. I first found out about it when I looked at it with Charles on October 14th. It was brought up at this meeting as an urgent matter but that trailed off into "well maybe we should get some volunteers". I phoned Bernie and he looked into land ownership and got word that DFO was going to look after it afterall. This proved to be false information, and so myself, Bernie, Charles, and Jean-Michel armed with saws, ropes, and shovels spent several hours on October 22nd making a channel through the debris and were rewarded by seeing chum making their way upstream as soon as the water had cleared. Without that, no chum would have been able to use the recently completed Chase River Culvert project upstream. We have subsequently learned that the chum have now made it up to the far reaches of the Chase and Catstream. Dan Fox reported that at least 3000 chum had made it as far

upstream as John Barsby Park. Dan said that 40 years ago, chum had made it up the catstream. I naively asked the group what government agency was responsible for making sure that streams were kept open. After a few stares of disbelief, I was told that it would be the Ministry of Lands that would issue a section 9 of the Water Act for approval to work in and about a stream. Gone it would seem, are the days when government actually did these things.

Wayne Harling said that the Nanaimo Fish and Game Club could take the remaining blockage on as a project as a lot of their members have heavy construction equipment and trucks. He thought it would require only some money for fuel and would look into a bit of funding for that.

Neck Point Fish Pens

This would be the third net pen intended to bring back pinks to a general area. Brian Banks from the Nanaimo Hatchery told the group that they would have to construct a pen as existing pens available are too big. Around 10x10 (Ft?) would work. He estimates that it would take about \$10-15,000 to get the project underway. They would try to get 100-200,000 pinks up to a gram. The fish would have to be hand fed every day for a month, so some local volunteer able to do this would cut costs considerably. He said that it would be difficult to get this underway by next spring.

Beck Creek

Charles has submitted an SEP project for baffles(\$7000) in the four foot culvert. This would help coho to access 700 meters of stream above the culvert. As it would now seem that the city is going to replace the culvert in the near future, and the culvert bottom is rusting out, he now thinks it best to not pursue this further.