



CHEAKAMUS ECOSYSTEM RECOVERY

C O M M U N I T Y U P D A T E

SUMMER 2006

MAKING RECOVERY A REALITY

Keeping you informed

The Cheakamus Ecosystem Recovery Community Update is a newsletter prepared by CN for residents of Squamish and nearby communities describing the ongoing recovery work underway on the Cheakamus River.

Committee oversees recovery plan

Shortly after the August 2005 derailment, a group was formed to identify restoration strategies to return the river to its pre-spill state. Known as the Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Technical Committee (CERTC), this group has met monthly to review expert advice and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. CERTC is made up of representatives from CN, District of Squamish, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Ministry of Environment, and Squamish Nation.

Recovery programs underway

CN has a number of programs underway to support fish recovery and habitat enhancement programs in the Cheakamus River.

Mile 49 Channel: Located along the former BC Rail tracks, this channel was constructed as a groundwater fed channel for coho rearing and coho, pink and chum spawning, and was severely damaged in the 2003 flood. In cooperation with DFO and Squamish Nation, CN recently completed a reconstruction including re-excavation of the channel, re-construction of a protective berm, construction of pools and riffles and installation of large woody debris structures to improve juvenile rearing conditions. This enhancement project will roughly double the fish rearing capacity of the channel and provide greater spawning areas for coho, pink and chum salmon. Additional fish usage may also be expected by sticklebacks, sculpin, rainbow and cutthroat trout.

Cheekye Bridge Fish Passage Modification: CN is currently awaiting agency approval for removal of the concrete apron and placement of riprap along the bridge abutments in September 2006. The work will be undertaken by CN crews under the supervision of an environmental consultant and is expected to improve the passage of migrating steelhead to the spawning grounds in Brohm Creek.

Wilson Slough Reconnection: Draft designs for the installation of a 1000mm by 72m culvert expect to be submitted to the environmental agencies for approval during August. CN anticipates completing this work on three railway tracks and two roads in 2006 with the cooperation of the District of Squamish. By facilitating controlled flow into Wilson Slough, water quality levels are anticipated to increase fish usage of estuarine rearing habitat.

Paradise Valley/NVOS Channels: During August, CN is undertaking fish habitat modifications to a number of channels in cooperation with DFO, Squamish Nation and Bridge Coastal Restoration Fish and Wildlife Program (BCRP). Proposed work will include the acquisition, installation and anchoring of large woody debris structures in the Mykiss Channel, Gorbusha East and West Channels, Dave's Pond, Moodie's Channel, and Eagle Point Connector and construction of new restoration channels.

Cheakamus Mainstem Fish Habitat Structures Risk Analysis: The fish habitat structures risk analysis report, by Kerr Wood Leidal Consulting Engineers, has been completed in draft and is currently under review. The study examines the risks and benefits of fish habitat structures and identifies suitable structure designs and locations for consideration. Based on the results of this study, options will be examined for potential installation in 2007.

Fish Culture: In 2005, CN funded hatchery propagation programs managed by DFO which resulted in the release of 560,492 pink salmon fry and 7,378 chinook salmon fry in spring 2006. The program will continue in 2006 with a target of collecting 100,000 chinook salmon eggs and will be operated again in 2007 for pink salmon. CN has also committed to funding infrastructure improvements at Tenderfoot hatchery to allow for on-site propagation of pink salmon eggs. A steelhead program is currently being implemented between CN and BC Ministry of Environment for 2006 and 2007 that will see the hatchery propagation of 20,000 steelhead smolts per year.

Other Ideas: Through CERTC and the Stakeholder Team, CN is soliciting proposals for projects that could be undertaken to increase fish numbers and improve habitat quantity or quality in the Cheakamus River or Squamish River Estuary within the boundaries of federal and provincial policies.





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COMMUNITY UPDATE

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Stakeholder Team brings local knowledge

Representatives from various organizations and others with local knowledge and experience with the Cheakamus River recently attended their fourth official meeting as members of the Cheakamus Recovery Stakeholder Team on July 6, 2006. At the meeting, the advisory group adopted Terms of Reference that will guide their work moving forward. The Team will continue to provide input into the programs that are being developed to monitor and restore the Cheakamus ecosystem. In addition, they will help communicate comments and recommendations from interested parties to the Technical Committee and receive updates from CERTC as information becomes available.

Public Information Session on August 17

The third public event to report on the progress of the Cheakamus Ecosystem Recovery is scheduled for:

Thursday, August 17, 2006
4:30 – 8:30 pm
Totem Hall
102 Baker Road, Squamish



During the open house portion (4:30 – 6:30 pm), information will be provided on recovery activities and the public will have an opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with the technical experts. This will be followed (6:30 – 8:30 pm) by a technical presentation and a question-and-answer session to deal with specific issues and comments that local residents would like addressed. Technical experts will also be available following the question-and-answer session. The last open house in February, hosted by CERTC at the Squamish Adventure Centre, was attended by 175-local residents. The community had an opportunity to review plans for river recovery, talk with CERTC members and other experts and learn of the various programs and initiatives underway and planned to restore the river.

Visit www.certc.ca for the latest recovery news

As new information becomes available, we will be providing further updates. For more detailed information on the programs underway and those planned, please visit the Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Technical Committee website at www.certc.ca

CN commits \$1.25 million to Squamish River Watershed Salmon Recovery Plan

In addition to the work CN is undertaking with CERTC and federal and provincial agencies, CN has contributed \$1.25 million to the Pacific Salmon Foundation for a five-year funding commitment in support of the implementation of the Squamish River Watershed Salmon Recovery Plan. The Pacific Salmon Foundation, with the support of the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund, completed the Squamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Plan in May 2005. For more information on the recovery plan, visit: www.psf.ca

Questions or comments

Your questions or comments about recovery of the Cheakamus River are welcome. Please email them to: comments@certc.ca. Questions and answers of general interest are available for viewing at the www.certc.ca website.



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