

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE - FALL, 2017

Now that the summer is over and the rains of winter are upon us, it's timely to look at our activities of the past season and our plans for the coming months.

Highlights - Spring and Summer

- For the first time, we constructed, installed and operated a smolt counting fence on Grandon Creek over a period of two months. Our objective was to establish a baseline for assessing coho salmon production in a small, urban stream on which Streamkeepers have worked for over then years. We learned a good deal about the challenges of maintaining a fence during high water levels and counted approximately seventy coho smolt, An intriguing development was the entry of a number of spawning chum salmon into the creek, which was the first time in our experience.
- Canada 150 tree planting: we decided to commemorate Canada's 150th birthday by planting 150 native trees and shrubs in local watersheds, including Grandon Creek and the Little Qualicum River estuary.
- Over the hot and dry summer months, which were even more intense than usual in 2017, we undertook six work parties on the Little Qualicum River estuary to water the newly planted native trees. Each work party involved four to six volunteers with a gasoline powered pump and six hundred feet of hose over a two hour period to look after almost 200 plantings. The new trees and bushes are showing positive results as they become more established and we are encouraged by the survival rates.
- Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers have been invited by the Town of Qualicum Beach to participate in an advisory committee on the redevelopment of the outlet to Beach Creek, as part of the Phase 3 Memorial Upgrade project. One of our Board members, John Phillips, is our representative. We are looking forward to providing advice around the improvement of fish habitat on Beach Creek and working to integrate smolt counting and pond water level management into the design.

Fall and winter plans

- Planning for the second year of the Grandon Creek smolt fence is underway, with a modified fence design which can better handle the kind of peak water flows on a steep and short streambed. We will be installing the fence in April of 2018.
- A meeting of the key stakeholders on the Little Qualicum River estuary project will take place early in 2018 to assess the results of the past three years of

work and put in place revegetation plans for this critical fish habitat area in the future.

- The regular salmon carcass toss on the Little Qualicum River is being scheduled for mid November, if the chum salmon numbers are sufficient to support the project.
- Water monitoring testing has started and will run for six weeks from late October to the end of November.
- A “kitchen table” input session into the water management aspects of the Official Community Plan for Qualicum Beach involved a dozen Streamkeepers in late October, resulting in several key ideas for consideration in the OCP.
- The increasing peak water levels on the two streams are of concern. Looking at the recently completed study of Shelly Creek carried out by our MVIHES colleagues, we will be working towards carrying out a similar assessment of the future of our watersheds
- Finally, we are working towards constructing a salmon and wildlife interpretive site on the Qualicum Beach waterfront in memory of our friend and colleague, Faye Smith. The plan is to open the facility on Earth Day, 2018, on April 22. We will be erecting a sign on the site very soon to promote fundraising. Over \$20,000 has already been raised, structural engineering design and landscape planning is well underway with the support of the Town of Qualicum Beach, and applications for funding sent to several potential sources. Watch our website for further updates!

David James
President

Website: www.qbstreamkeepers.ca