



Hello Fellow Streamkeepers:

We are coming out of a rough winter in many ways, with wildly varying weather and Covid restrictions hampering our ability to meet and work together. Regardless, we have made some progress over the past months and have planned a number of activities for the spring and summer.

Here are some highlights :

Grandon Creek

The riparian area below Hoy Lake Road is in steep, high bank terrain and has been impacted by winter water events and increasing loss of again red alders. The November 15 storm brought unprecedented high levels of water, resulting in more bank erosion and movement of large woody debris downstream. The water rose over the top of the lower culverts, which were partially blocked with floating logs. The older culvert suffered extensive damage and will need to be repaired. In late January, several Board members met onsite with senior Town staff to discuss future options for habitat improvement, in coordination with ongoing Town work to improve the walking trail and water management. In the spring we will be downloading data from the level logger to produce several more years of data on stream flows. We will also continue with invasive plant removal, particularly ivy and lamium, and develop a plan for a selective fall planting of appropriate conifers along the creek.

Beach Creek and Marine Spit

The recently constructed marine spit at the outlet of Beach Creek came successfully through the January storms that caused significant damage to neighbouring properties on the waterfront. While the waves rose over the top of the spit, erosion was minimal and the protected channel was unaffected. The channel has improved the access and safety for salmon moving upstream in the late fall and for smolt moving out to sea in the spring. We have been in contact with the Town to offer our input for the planned interpretive signage to be installed at the spit. A new level logger was installed over a year ago on the creek in the Heritage Forest, with financial assistance from the RDN and technical support from the BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF). SK volunteers have been gathering the water flow data necessary to interpret the data from the level logger, for which we have a newly purchased laptop. (Thanks to MVIHES for the loan of their flow tracker!)

Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area

For the past 8 years we have been working with the BCCF to plant a variety of native species along the estuary spit. The work has resulted in several hundred trees and shrubs being placed in a dozen irrigated enclosures to get them started and protected from grazing animals. A large number of invasive plants, primarily broom and blackberries have been removed. A work party is scheduled for Saturday, February 19th to remove the remaining roots. Later in the spring, the RDN which is responsible for the area, will be developing a new 5 year plan. We will be participating in partnership with other stakeholders including the BCCF, Guardians of the Mid-Island Estuaries, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited.

Fish Counts & Forage Fish

We communicated about our August 2021 fish counts which yielded quantities of Coho and Cutthroat from the Golf Course pond, and pools in both Beach and Grandon Creeks. The numbers were higher than we expected given record high temperatures and high peak water flows. We plan to carry out a second fish count this coming September, which will be a good opportunity for volunteer participation. In addition a small team has been carrying out monthly visits to look for spawning activity and eggs by forage fish like surf smelt and sand lance. These fish are an important part of the food web - feeding other fish, birds, and mammals.

Water and Wetland Monitoring

The 2021 Fall Flush monitoring of the Little Qualicum River, and Beach and Grandon Creeks took place in November 2021. This is the 11th year of this program in conjunction with the RDN and the Ministry of the Environment. In addition, we are working with the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Research Institute and VIU, on quarterly wetland monitoring. They are focussed on 6 different forested sites and the one we are involved with is just off Laburnum Road on the east side where it turns the corner at the top of the hill.

Seaside Nature Park/Faye Smith Memorial Pavilion

If you haven't already, be sure to check out the artwork by Qualicum First Nation Carver, Jesse Recalma, installed in March of 2021, that reflects First Nation knowledge and history relative to the natural world surrounding us. We will also soon be working with the QB Town Staff to do a spring cleanup of the planted areas around the site that represent the different ecosystems in the area. Our thanks to Lynne Brookes and the Arrowsmith Naturalists for their expertise and ongoing involvement. On a related note, the Town has been successful in obtaining a grant for the installation of a public washroom at Seaside Nature Park, which was a recommendation of ours at the time of the pavilion design

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 19th at noon - Blackberry Removal at the Little Qualicum Estuary, more details coming soon

Saturday, April 2nd at 1:00pm - Streamkeeper led Tour of the Little Qualicum Estuary as part of the Brant Festival

Sunday, July 17th - "Beach Day" returns after a 2 year absence, for its' ninth year. We are involved in the organizing committee and in the activities, including the always popular "beach seining" for forage fish with biologist Dave Clough

AGM - We are planning for a guest speaker and our 2022 AGM when "covid conditions" permit.

Many thanks to all our supporters and volunteers.....

David James -On behalf of the Board of the Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers Society