

Peninsula Streams Society Newsletter

April 2020 Edition

Dear Readers, Thank you for reading the Spring edition of our newsletter, where you'll find updates on our activities and our upcoming schedule. To learn more about our Projects, Programs and Volunteer Opportunities, please SUBSCRIBE at: <http://peninsulastreams.ca/subscribe-to-our-mailing-list>
Wishing you all good health, PSS Staff and Board of Directors

Attention Members & Volunteers: Due to Covid-19, to ensure physical/social distancing and protect the health and safety of our staff and volunteers, **all volunteer events are cancelled until further notice**. We will provide updates when we are able to begin scheduling volunteer events.

CHANGES TO UPCOMING EVENT SCHEDULE:

- 1) **Creatures of Habitat 2020 - Postponed until further notice**
- 2) **BEACH Initiative - beach surveys & cleanups postponed until further notice**
- 3) **Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Postponed until further notice**
- 4) **Senanus Island Work Party - Postponed until further notice**

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Millstream Fishway Project

In Millstream Creek, fish passage is blocked by a barrier culvert under Atkins Rd at Mill Hill Regional Park. In 2018, PSS had planned to construct a fishway (fish ladder) to give fish access to an additional 7 km of spawning and rearing habitat for Cutthroat and Coho salmon. However, due to a busy construction season and increased engineering and construction costs, the project was postponed for 2020. Although we were able to raise funds for some of the added costs, more is needed for engineering and biological management costs.

This past March, trees were felled to build the equipment access road. Fishway construction was planned to begin on June 15th. Unfortunately, we are uncertain whether we be able to construct the fishway this summer. The project will depend on whether

we receive additional funding and the progression of Covid-19 into the summer. We are hopeful and optimistic that we will be able to construct this fishway to help support greater populations of Cutthroat and Coho salmon in Millstream Creek.



Colquitz River Restoration Project

In 2019, we partnered with the District of Saanich (Natural Areas and Creeks & Waterways) to restore a 120 metre section of Colquitz River adjacent to Copley East Park in Saanich. The restored site provides spawning and rearing habitat for Coho Salmon and Cutthroat Trout, as well as other fish and wildlife. When we first visited the project site in 2011, we were struck by a couple of observations. For one, the creek bed was almost completely devoid of key structural features including spawning gravel, rock riffles, large rock, woody debris and rearing pools all of which are vital components of salmon habitat. Secondly, the soil in the riparian area along this section of creek was extremely compacted, likely from decades of foot traffic and other recreation activities. The success of the 2019 phase of this project made way to expand our restoration efforts downstream.

This summer, PSS and the District of Saanich aim to restore a further 80 metres of instream and riparian habitat to create overall 200 metres of continuous high quality habitat for fish and other wildlife. Along the stream bank, invasive plants will be removed and replaced with native species. In the stream, we will construct riffles with gravel additions to provide spawning platforms. Pools, boulders and large-woody debris will create complex fish habitat. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, there is some uncertainty whether the project will go forward this summer as planned. However, right now we expect this restoration project to go through, and are operating accordingly, with some modifications to our outreach and communications plan to ensure social distancing.

Gr. 6-7 Education Program - "Creatures of Habitat"

Unfortunately, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, school has been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. Therefore, Creatures of Habitat 2020 is postponed until further notice. We hope to reschedule Creatures of Habitat for the Fall after children are expected to return to school. However, this will depend on the Government of B.C.'s decision to open schools.

Our sincerest thanks to all who had registered to volunteer this year. We will provide updates when we have rescheduled our Education Program.

2020 will mark the 12th year of "Creatures of Habitat." To date, over 5,500 students have participated in our program, contributing their time and energy to stewarding the environment through garbage clean-ups, invasive species removal, planting native species, and salmon fry releases. This is a shared accomplishment that we take great pride in.



To volunteer in the future:

Contact us at

PeninsulaStreams@gmail.com

Water and Sediment Quality Monitoring

We continue to monitor water quality in the KENNES (Hagan) and Tetayut Watersheds. However, to protect the health and safety of our volunteers, we will no longer be sending volunteers out to collect samples until further notice. PSS staff will continue to collect water samples, sediment samples, and field measurements to ensure the program is maintained during the Covid-19 pandemic. Once there is no longer any risk of Covid-19 transmission and we can ensure the health and safety of our volunteers, we will once again ask for volunteers to help monitor water and sediment quality in both of these watersheds. We will provide updates when more information is known.

Beach Education and Conservation of Habitat Initiative (B.E.A.C.H.)

Since 2018, PSS has supported local citizens in beach stewardship through organized beach cleanup events and forage fish egg beach surveys. We train volunteers to develop a forage fish habitat monitoring network throughout the Capital Regional District. To date, we have held over 40 training events to provide introductory training to over 100 volunteers to conduct forage fish egg beach surveys and cleaned over 32 kms of habitat.

In 2020-21, we hoped to organize 8 more cleanups and continue to build a beach monitoring network across the CRD. However, to protect our volunteers, we must postpone all activities. **Please note: All volunteer beach surveys and clean-up events are cancelled/postponed until further notice.**

Tetayut Creek Stewardship

In 2018, PSS undertook the Tetayut Creek Patricia Bay Culvert Remediation Project at the Saanich Historical Artifacts Society (SHAS), which gave fish access to the upper reaches of the creek for the first time since the 1980s. The culvert under the Pat Bay Highway culvert had previously impeded fish migration up the creek. A riffle was constructed to enable fish passage, with a great level of support and cooperation from Highways Ministry. Another riffle was built downstream to further enhance fish habitat in Tetayut Creek. With the success of this project in 2018, it is crucial to initiate a stewardship group to ensure the long-term success of our restoration efforts.

The District of Central Saanich is in the process of selecting a contractor to build the Adam Kerr Park Stormwater Detention/Habitat Pond. PSS will work closely with Central Saanich for stewardship development around this habitat feature that PSS has had on its planning horizon for 11 years.

This summer, PSS planned to develop a stewardship initiative for Tetayut Creek. We had hoped to reach out with local schools, SHAS, local community groups, and the community at large. Initially, outreach activities were planned to consist of presentations, door-to-door inquiries, brochures, websites, social media, and news media. However, to practice adequate social distancing during the global pandemic, we must adjust our outreach methods. We plan to mail out a project flyer providing detailed information to key stakeholders and to recruit community members to join the Tetayut Creek Stewardship group. Eventually, volunteer stewards can be trained during a Streamkeepers workshop to monitor their creek and determine opportunities to improve creek health.

Thank you to our Thrifty Foods Smile Card holders for supporting PSS by using your Smile Card! We have almost reached our fundraising goal. We have raised \$3,393.00, and our cap is set at \$3,750.00. Our deadline to raise the remaining amount is April 25th. Please consider loading your cards and using them to purchase your groceries. Every dollar counts and is appreciated!

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Thank you for your continued support and hard work to help us reach our goals. Wishing you all health and happiness.
We hope to see you all again soon!