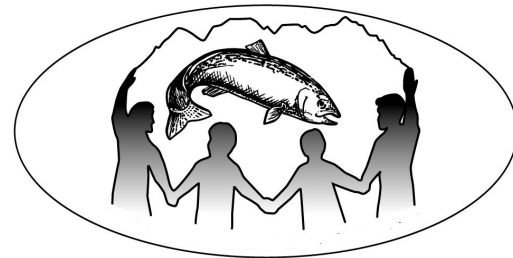


WATERSHED CONNECTIONS



FVWC Newsletter: 2010 Fall

2010 Issue 4

www.fvwc.ca

Message from the Coordinator: Rachel Drennan

This fall promises to be jam packed with tree plantings and once again we are asking for volunteers to help us to plant more than 5000 trees and shrubs! A **Big** thank you to all the volunteers who participated in last years plantings and hopefully we will see you this fall as well! A great way to stay up to date with FVWC's activities is Facebook, if you become a fan of our page you will receive weekly reminders and information on all of our plantings this fall. Just search Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition at the top of your Facebook page to find us. You can also check out all the planting details on our website, <http://www.fvwc.ca/index.php/volunteer/details/25-fall-plantings>.

There are opportunities this fall to learn some fish ID and information about water quality, by volunteering with me out at Silverdale Wetlands! Usually over the course of two days we will set fish traps and test the water at multiple sites on the wetlands. This is also a great time to see the restoration works that took place there this summer.

Enjoy our fall newsletter!



New Channel at Silverdale Wetlands.

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Upcoming FVWC Meeting Date

Date: October 21st 2010
Time: 7:00-9:00 pm
Location: Mission UFV campus Room 226C/226D
Presenter: Barry Penner
Topic: Species at Risk in BC

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Watershed Connections



Celebrating the Fraser River as a World-Wide Tourist Destination: Come Experience the Fraser

By: David Urban and Jennifer Hetherington, Fraser Valley Regional District

“Experience the Fraser” (ETF) is a two-year outdoor recreation and cultural heritage corridor planning project, that aims to deliver world-class recreation and tourism opportunities some 300 km along the North and South extents of the Fraser River, from Hope to the Ocean. Teams at the Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver are working in partnership to develop a plan for this extensive recreation and cultural heritage network, with the support of the Province of BC. The current funding is for the planning phase of the project, which includes planning and identifying lands along the Fraser River in order to create a system of inter-regional trails, river-based infrastructure and heritage features through the Lower Fraser River corridor.

The goal of ETF is to showcase the Lower Fraser River as a world-class recreation, heritage and cultural tourism destination, by focusing on:

- Outdoor Recreation



The Fraser River from Hope to the ocean.

Imagery Source: ESRI, i-cubed, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, AeroGRID, Getmapping, IGP

- Environment & Nature
- First Nations
- Agriculture
- Industry & Transportation
- Riverfront Communities
- Heritage & Culture
- Celebration

Additionally, this first phase of funding supports the completion of two Demonstration Projects, one in each Regional District, to symbolically initiate the project and provide the first short sec-

tions of the regional trails network.

The first of the two Demonstration Project was completed in May 2010, on the Mission Waterfront, in partnership with the District of Mission. The "Mission Spirit Square at Jack Poole Harbourside Park" sits on top of an upgraded dyke, and features a trail segment, seating along the river-front, as well as public art and a 14-foot cedar sturgeon carved by a local First Nation. The second Demonstration Project will open in the fall of 2010, in

Metro Vancouver's Derby Reach Regional Park. This project is being completed in partnership with the Trans Canada Trail Society, and will feature nearly 4km of new trail sections near the Fraser River.

In the coming months, ETF teams in both Regional Districts will be working earnestly to outline the details of the Experience the Fraser concept plan, due in the Summer of 2011, as well as a planning atlas which will feature the proposed short and long-term routing, points of interest, and

areas of opportunities for future planning work. The teams will also be developing an implementation strategy to guide the management of the project, as well as pursuing funding to bring the plan to fruition on-the-ground.

For additional information and updates on Experience the Fraser, check the project out online at:

www.fvrd.bc.ca/InsidetheFVRD/RegionalPlanning/Pages/ETF.aspx

Cycling the Fraser River: The Wild Salmon Express

By Daniel van der Kroon

The Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition deserves kudos for being an appropriately named organization. Think about it. The Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition. *Watersheds*. Did you know that there are many people who don't know what a watershed is, and if asked to take a stab at defining the term, might conjure up notions of a large rain-barrel, or some such visual?

The term "watershed" gets at the heart of what it means to be alive on this planet. It is literally the area of land that gives us our water, and without water of course, there is no life. You could say that watersheds are what sustain life, creating entire ecosystems of

fish, birds, trees, insects, and more. So to be part of an organization whose name reflects the term for the sustenance of life as we know it is something to be proud of. (But we are glad you took the word "Regional" from the organization name!)

We live our lives in watersheds of varying scale nestled inside of one another like a Matryoshka doll, where a smaller doll is inside of each larger doll. Here in the Fraser Valley, we are part of the Fraser River watershed that stretches across BC, covering almost ¼ of the province. Inside the Fraser River Watershed, we live in and around the smaller Sumas, Chilliwack, Harrison, Chehalis,

and Coquihalla watersheds among others, though these are some of the largest.

The Fraser River flows for 1400km from Mount Robson to Vancouver. In August, Michelle Nickerson and I relay cycled through out the Fraser River Watershed, each of us cycling a distance equivalent to the full length of the Fraser. We wanted to use the gifts of a wonderfully functioning physical body to understand how we could understand and help reverse the impacts that our society is having on the Fraser River's salmon stocks – evidenced by 2009's 90% reduction from the estimated run size of returning sockeye salmon. Fol-

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lowing in the footsteps and paddle strokes of biologist Alexandra Morton's GET OUT Migration and the Rivershed Society of BC's "Sustainable Living Leadership Program" we set out to better understand people's relationship with the ecological values of the Fraser River Watershed. We met with concerned and active citizens in the communities we cycled through and listened to what they could teach us about what is happening in their streams and the land that makes up the watershed, and we promoted an ongoing campaign to eliminate the threat that BC aquaculture poses to wild salmon – part of which is Bill C-518. This bill, introduced by M.P. Fin Donnelly, would protect wild salmon by mandating that all aquaculture occurs in a closed-containment system.

A postcard to support the bill can be viewed, and download for printing at www.salmonaresacred.org under the "What you can do" menu.

We joined First Nations people from all over the Fraser Basin, to learn about their culture and historical relationship with the land. We learned of both the Canim people's devastation after the smallpox epidemic brought by white settlers,

as well as their struggle to assert forestry control over the lands they historically inhabited – after



The Simpcw First Nation conducting a traditional salmon harvest with a fish weir.

having the fish stocks of their community waterway nearly wiped out due to impacts of sewage from nearby 100 Mile House, and ongoing ranching activities.

We had the opportunity to observe the Simpcw First Nation conducting a traditional salmon harvest with a fish weir – which



Daniel speaking with people from the Liberal Express, including Michael Ignatieff.

had been vandalized by those who disagreed with the right of the Simpcw to harvest fish as

they had done for thousands of years. This constituted a "terminus fishery" - a fishery that occurs at the mouth of a river allowing individual, flourishing stocks to be harvest-

ed, and leaving those stocks in danger of extirpation alone; something that conventional main-stem river or open ocean fisheries are hard pressed to accomplish.

In the final week and half of the trip, we cycled through Yale, Hope, and the Fraser Valley. By

this time, it was clear what a bounty this year's sock-eye would provide, with millions upon millions of fish in the river. Aside from jokingly labelling our journey an immediate success based on the millions of fish in the river (!), we felt

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good about joining wild salmon advocates in Lillooet, in Yale, in Cheam, in Chawathil, and then in Katzie to enjoy freshly caught wild sockeye salmon.

Our Wild Salmon Express arrival in Yale happened to coincide with the passing through of the Liberal Express – as federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff was in town to speak about his great grandfather's work as a surveyor with the CPR in the late 1800's. We donned the Georgia Straight Alliance's awesome salmon costumes, and were able to speak with Ignatieff for about 15 minutes about M.P. Fin Donnelly's Bill C-518 and how it would address many of the impacts of open-net salmon farms.

Go to www.findonnelly.ca to download, print, sign, and mail (free) the postcard to support this important piece of legislation!

The Fraser River Watershed sustains awe-inspiring fish populations – salmon, trout, sturgeon, oolichan, and others. There are many things that we as human beings do in the course of day-to-day life that endanger the wild salmon that we depend on for food, for agriculture, for healthy ecosystems; we farm, we produce energy, we travel, we consume extensively - all of these have varying degrees of impacts on the land that sustains us, so our challenge is to admit when

the enjoyment and satisfaction that we get out of an activity is not worth the damage to the land and the oceans that it causes. This requires us to be more aware of our impacts, and to show greater restraint in what we consume.

Too often, we prioritize short-term economic success over resource conservation, which of course puts long term economic foundations in jeopardy while simultaneously devastating the other species that rely on intact

ate from year to year, ranging from supporting political initiatives to fundraising, to disseminating information and raising awareness about key issues.

If you would like to be involved with this exciting venture next year, contact Michelle (michelle@ripplerelay.ca) or Daniel (daniel@ripplerelay.ca).

For more information, visit www.ripplerelay.ca, or search Facebook for The Ripple Effect or The Wild Salmon Express.



The Wild Salmon Express!

tracts of wilderness.

This year's Wild Salmon Express was the 2010 version of the Fraser River Ripple Relay. Each year, there will be a length of the Fraser River journey, by bicycle, on foot, or by kayak/canoe. The journey's specific purpose may fluctu-

From Abbotsford's Downes Creek watershed, this is Daniel van der Kroon of the Fraser River Ripple Effect, wishing you happy cycling and good fishing!

Incentives and Markets for Agricultural Land Stewardship: An Example from Whatcom County

By: Detmar Schwichtenberg

Detmar has a background in journalism and a masters degree in resource management. He is currently vice-chair of the FVWC.

A state-funded program in Whatcom County, just south of the border, is paying landowners for land committed to riparian buffers. This annual payment is about double the prevailing market rent for similar types of land in the area.

Called the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), this initiative also pays for the planting of riparian buffers, the removal of invasive species, animal fencing and years of maintenance. So far the program has enrolled 1880 acres, for a period of 10 to 15 years, and planted almost 900,000 trees and shrubs along 121 miles of stream

The CREP initiative was one of several presented at a September 23rd workshop put on in Bellingham by Whatcom Farm Friends, which looked at how incentives and environmental markets can be used to protect watersheds and farmland.

Central to the discussion was the idea of paying landowners for the 'ecological services' provided by riparian buffers and other environmentally sensitive areas. Ecological services include filtering

runoff, preventing soil erosion, improving water quality, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. The idea is to create a market for ecological services, in which landowners could sell their 'credits' to other landowners, developers or industries.

Presenters were quick to emphasize that markets and incentives were no 'magic bullet', and would be used in conjunction with existing regulations, which provide a baseline of what landowners must do. The plan is to reward landowners who go above the baseline.

Presenters also highlighted the importance of landowner participation in promoting these programs and initiatives. Don Stuart, regional director of the American Farmland Trust, urged farmers to 'get involved' or lose out in the battle between regulation and incentives.

That is what Whatcom Farm Friends has done, gathering a membership of farmers – mainly berry, dairy, cattle and nurseries – as well as agriculture-related businesses and individu-

als. The Farm Friends then created a Natural Resources Management Working Group to research market-oriented policies suited to their region.

In Whatcom County, what has drawn many farmers to the table is uncertainty over rights to surface and groundwater they need to run their businesses. The objective is to secure water rights, in return for riparian buffers and water saving measures. That in turn protects farmland because it makes agricultural production viable in the long term. To read the NRM Working Group report, called Towards a Natural Resources Marketplace in Whatcom County, visit Whatcom Farm Friends at www.piersystem.com/go/doc/1579/562199/, The lead on the working group is Heather MacKay, who can be contacted at mackayyh@gmail.com. More information on the CREP program can be found at www.whatcomcd.org/CREP.