

Cowichan Watershed Board – November 6, 2010

Sh-hwuykwselu Restoration Project



The Partnership

- This restoration project driven by the interest, involvement and commitment of Kokislah School students and staff
 - 10 year history of “streamkeeping” on this small tributary of the Koksilah River
 - Students have implemented a variety of projects including
 - Water quality sampling
 - Benthic invertebrate sampling
 - Trapping and bio-sampling salmon fry
 - Riparian Planting
 - Stewardship signage
 - etc.
- Supported by a broad and eclectic group of partners:
 - Cowichan Tribes
 - Ministry of Transportation
 - Living Rivers
 - DFO
 - Cowichan Valley Regional District
 - Cowichan Valley Naturalists
 - Local Business (Drillwell)
 - Pacific Salmon Foundation
- This major aquatic habitat restoration project was implemented September 2010 and has created 5,000 cubic meters of new aquatic habitat in an urban/residential setting.

The Fish

- This project has addressed two limiting factors to salmon production in this small system:
- Summer wetted habitat
 - Coho salmon spend 1 year in fresh water before migrating to the Ocean
 - Due to a variety of factors – mostly associated with land use – this stream dried totally above Miller Road in the summer – no habitat for coho
 - By excavating down into the ground water adequate summer habitat to produce 5000 coho juveniles has been created
- Winter “Off-Channel” habitat
 - In large storm events juvenile coho and trout get washed out of the river into the marine environment, where their survival is thought to be much lower
 - Traditionally they move “off channel” to protected areas, out of the main flow of the river
 - On the lower Cowichan/Koksilah much of these areas have been lost as a result of diking, filling, and linear development
 - The habitat created here will provide a refuge for thousands of juvenile coho every winter.

The Big Picture

- This project has forged partnerships and synergies that will continue to benefit Cowichan Valley in the future
- An example of what urban restoration can look like – the Cowichan is a mosaic of smaller sub-watersheds...
- Will also provide trail – safe passage for students walking to school (as opposed to railroad tracks...) – and interpretive opportunity
- Contributes to integrated floodplain management approach
- A piece in the larger puzzle of taking an integrated approach to stormwater management, sustainable urban development, riparian areas management

