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A Collaborative Program to address fisheries issues on the Capilano and Seymour Rivers.

NORTH VANCOUVER: Living Rivers – Georgia Basin /Vancouver Island is currently collaborating with Metro Vancouver Regional District on developing innovative long-term solutions to address fisheries issues in the Capilano and Seymour Rivers associated with the operations at Cleveland and Seymour Falls dams. To do this requires an improved understanding of the salmon and steelhead populations and their habitats in both rivers.

A portion of the annual Coho salmon and Steelhead runs are transported above Cleveland Dam each year where they are released to spawn in the high quality habitat of the upper Capilano River. After hatching, young fish remain in the upper Capilano River from one to two years and then as smolts attempt to migrate to the ocean. Past studies have shown that a very high percentage of the fish die after going over Cleveland Dam's spillway and the long drop to the rocky pool at the base of the dam. The BC Ministry of Environment has classified the summer and winter run Capilano Steelhead populations as an *Extreme Conservation Concern*.

As a result, a collaborative program was initiated in 2008 and is being continued this year to trap young smolts and transport them downstream past the Cleveland Dam in an attempt to increase their rate of survival. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Capilano Hatchery staff, consulting biologists, Squamish Nation technicians, and Metro Vancouver staff operate the program. In 2008, 24 percent of the salmonids from the upper Capilano Watershed were captured and released in the lower Capilano River. Additional trap nets and other adjustments should allow a higher percentage of the fish to be captured and passed safely by the dam this year.

To augment the Capilano downstream trapping program and to improve understanding of the productivity of both rivers below the dams, rotary screw traps (RSTs) are being installed the week of May 11th, 2009 below the Marine Drive Bridge on the Capilano River and Twin Bridges on the Seymour. Metro Vancouver and BC's Living Rivers Trust Fund are jointly funding this project. During late April early May, juvenile salmonids begin their out migration journey to the open ocean. Al Lill, Manager Living Rivers-Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island says it's the best time of the year to get an indication how many Steelhead and Coho salmon have survived their first (two) years in rearing habitats. "These two new traps are being installed as a pilot this year to test the feasibility of using RSTs at these locations. The objective is to provide a more reliable annual estimate of wild and hatchery salmonid productivity from these rivers." Said Lill.

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Contact:

Al Lill - Manager,
Living Rivers – Georgia Basin /Vancouver Island
BC Conservation Foundation
778-338-4366 Cel 778-686-4366
alanlill@shaw.ca