

**For Immediate release**  
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**Water will once again be flowing into an important side channel of the lower Goldstream River following maintenance work this summer.**

VICTORIA: Work is scheduled to begin next week in an effort to improve salmon spawning conditions in an important channel of the lower Goldstream River near Victoria.

Goldstream is a major salmon producing river in the Capital Regional District. A variety of factors, including global climate change, have resulted in changes to the salmon habitat in the Goldstream. Higher winter freshet flows can result in lower egg-to-fry survival in the gravel as a result of scouring, while low summer flows result in less available wetted habitat for juvenile coho and steelhead trout.

In order to address these limiting factors, Tsawout First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and BC Parks entered into a partnership to construct a side channel in the late 1980's. This side channel provides well over a thousand square meters of wetted habitat for salmonid juveniles.

Tom Rutherford, Living Rivers First Nations Legacy Strategy (LR-GB/VI) says the channel had been highly successful.

“When properly functioning, coho juveniles were observed in high densities throughout the channel and over a thousand chum have been observed spawning there.”

He added, “However, after 20 years the intake for water into the channel has failed resulting in the loss of natural production associated with the channel as well as the possibility of stranding juvenile salmon as the channel dries up in the spring.”

A partnership between Tsawout First Nation, DFO, Living Rivers, BC Parks, Pacific Salmon Foundation and the Goldstream Volunteer Salmon Enhancement Association has been formed to work towards replacing the failed intake with an infiltration gallery that will provide a reliable supply of water to the side channel year round.

Work will be carried out during the second week of September. Vehicle and trail access will not be impacted by the construction although a very small area of Goldstream Provincial Park will be inaccessible for two or three days.

The project partners plan to monitor the productivity of the restored channel via both juvenile and adult assessments including foot surveys and a downstream trapping program.

Goldstream coho are used as an indicator stock by DFO. Tsawout First Nation Fisheries Manager Dan Claxton added Goldstream chum are of key importance to the Tribes. “The chum are harvested annually for food, social, ceremonial and economical purposes. Keeping Goldstream stocks healthy is vital, not only to Tsawout First Nation but to everyone if we want to ensure there are Salmon around for future generations.”

Added Claxton, “This project is also important in another way as it helps solidify relationships between Tsawout First Nation and other organizations such as Living Rivers, Goldstream Hatchery and DFO.”

Approximately 100,000 people flock to Goldstream Provincial Park every salmon season.

Rutherford adds, “This initiative represents a great example of First Nations, Government Agencies, ENGO’s and grassroots stewardship groups working together towards a common goal – healthy and sustainable salmon populations in the Goldstream River.”

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