

Colquitz Watershed

Focus on Swan Creek and Goward Springs Creek

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In 2011, an oil spill into Swan Creek brought media and community attention to this urban Saanich stream. During investigations to determine the extent and remediation needed, we (Peninsula Streams Society) discovered a couple things. The oil spill occurred in November, at just the time of year that adult Coho Salmon were returning from the ocean to swim upstream to spawn. The female salmon, bellies swollen with thousands of eggs, had to wait their turn to spawn on what little gravel there was in the creek. Salmon dig their nests in gravel beds and Swan Creek was mostly a channel of clay and large shot rock. Fortunately, we also discovered that there were many concerned citizens who had long been interested in the creek and were eager to help restore it. Now, two years later, the Friends of Swan Creek Watershed is an active group that has undertaken stream/riparian restoration projects on several creek sections. Over four days in September 2014, Peninsula Streams Society and the Friends built six riffle/pool structures and salmon spawning habitat in three sections of the creek. If you walk along the path between Violet Avenue and the bridge behind the CRD pump station, you may just notice the gravel beds that await this year's spawning salmon.

Further north in the watershed, we've been supporting the Goward Springs Watershed Stewards in restoration of the riparian forest along the section of Goward Springs Creek which flows from Viaduct Flats through the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific and Vancouver Island Technology Park properties. Invasive species have been cleared, followed by extensive planting, mulching and watering of 540 trees. More than 620 hours of volunteer work have been contributed in 2014 so far, and volunteer work continues on select Saturday mornings.

We continue to liaise with the Municipality of Saanich and others towards developing an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan for the Swan/Blenkinsop Watershed, which will help guide future restoration plans.

Visit us at www.PeninsulaStreams.ca for more information.

