

A new mural showcases stream restoration work

A wonderful new mural has emerged on a building on Bewick Avenue in North Vancouver beside the Mosquito Creek estuary. Overlooking the aptly named Spirit Trail, the colourful mural depicts wildlife and the beauty of nature, with a focus on salmon habitat. The design is based on more than 1,000 drawings created during free 'Discovery Day' workshops offered to local elementary schools across the North Shore by the [Coho Society of the North Shore](#) and a host of collaborative partners including Environmental Damages Fund (Government of Canada), North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission, Artist for Kids, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, North Shore Stream Keepers and DFO. North Western Hydraulics LTD supplied the 90' x 30' wall.

Artist and salmon conservation volunteer Ron den Daas is the driving force behind the mural project as part of the Coho Society's innovative art and science programming. He commented that the program underlines the importance of "protecting and enhancing salmon habitat to ensure the



Ron den Daas

survival of wild salmon populations on the North Shore in the future." The goal is to introduce students, and ultimately the community at large, to a number of exciting salmon conservation initiatives that have been implemented in the local area. Examples include community projects such as the Mackay Creek Hatchery, habitat remediation work along Mackay Creek and the Mackay Creek Wetlands, and estuary restoration



on Mackay and Mosquito Creeks, as well as many other estuaries along the North Shore.

Estuaries in Burrard Inlet provide critical habitat for North Shore salmon. A study conducted by the Seymour Salmon Society demonstrated how dredging a stretch of the Seymour River resulted in a staggering 78 per cent fatality rate for salmon. These estuaries provide a place of refuge for the salmon, a highly sought-after meal item for seals and birds of prey. As all salmon stewards know, the water in the estuary is brackish, allowing salmon to acclimate to salt water before leaving. The process also imprints fish with the chemical signature of their home river, assisting them on their return to complete their life cycle. Protecting these areas, and ultimately functioning wildlife corridors in general, are critical to the future survival of wild salmon populations and everything, as an icon species, they represent. The Seymour Salmon Society has worked to add large debris structures to the estuary area to create the hiding spots salmon need. Similar projects are being undertaken by many salmon conservation-minded stakeholders across the North Shore with some exciting and encouraging results.

The mural project and attached Coho Society workshops are a means to get the message out to a wider audience and engage youth and the broader community, encouraging the protection and enhancement of the North Shore's valuable though vulnerable wild salmon populations. ●

—Byline ??????????

