

2015 AGM President's Report

The purpose of the Quadra Island Salmon Enhancement Society is to protect, maintain and restore Quadra Island salmon and their watersheds. To this end, the Society's two main roles include 1) maintaining, monitoring and enhancing watersheds and fish habitat, and 2) providing public education and raising awareness. Our last AGM was held on April 10, 2014. Early in the year we came together as a group to review our progress on various projects, and plan our work for 2014 and beyond. Since that time, our group of enthusiastic volunteers have worked on many projects to support our mandate. It's easy to overlook how much this group of volunteers accomplished in a year, so the following review is a good reminder of our achievements.

A good deal of our board meeting time was spent discussing the future of the counting fence at the outlet of Village Bay Lakes. The present system is very labour intensive during adult salmon migration, with twice daily visits by committed individuals, particularly Larry Hafemeister and Lauren Miller. There are also safety issues since the fence must be accessed by boat during all kinds of weather. We are looking at options for a land line powered camera system in this remote location but viable options are very expensive. We continue our discussion around this issue in 2015.

Good rapport was maintained with relevant agencies regarding issues of mutual interest. We continue to review and comment on any TimberWest blocks that may have stream issues. At our request, Emcon cleaned the large woody debris blockage at the Hyacinthe Bay Road culverts. We also met with Tom Rutherford from DFO, and other like-minded groups, to discuss the ongoing problem of the absence of a permanent Community Advisor, despite a series of excellent temporary ones.

The EcoCenter was open during July and August with the help of HRDC funding. Cole Houlihan staffed the center, with 155 visitors stopping in. The annual release of coho fry from the pond at the EcoCenter took place as usual in late spring, and 500 new coho fry from the Quinsam Hatchery were added to the pond, thanks to Leah Carlson at DFO. Thank you to Doug Richardson, Larry Hafemeister and others who worked on upgrades and repairs to the main building.

As usual, the drought-proofing program on Hyacinthe Creek was active, and proved invaluable in maintaining adequate flow during the summer for both coho fry and trout. The volume of water stored at the site #3 wetland, due to beaver activity, was used to our advantage during a very dry summer.

The Village Bay Lakes watershed feeder streams survey continued in 2014, with encouraging results. We hope to explore more streams, and carry out more fry trapping in 2015, using standardized field, mapping and recording protocol. Work continued on Luoma Creek, headed by Frank Gleeson. Early in the year, trees provided by DFO were planted at the outlet of Luoma Creek to provide shade for salmon. A-frames built in 2013 on Luoma Creek had been damaged by high stream flows that winter. Last summer, these were repaired and a large log jam was cleared.

The Granite Bay group of keen volunteers was busy carrying out invertebrate surveys, water quality studies and juvenile sampling.

Many volunteers were out on the streams weekly in October and November counting salmon returns in Granite, Drew, Village Bay, Open Bay and part of Hyacinthe Creeks. Chum and coho returns remained good for another year. The counting fence at Village Bay Lakes was operational, with volunteers counting and releasing coho and chum into the lake system.

Thanks to Eileen Sowerby, we were able to carry out a membership drive in the fall. Total volunteer time given to the society was 875 recorded hours. I'd like to thank our many volunteers, and particularly the board of directors, who gave many hours of their time attending meetings and stepping up when work needed to be done.

Janis McLean