

2017 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 14, 2016. 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.

We have been discussing the future of the counting fence at the outlet of Village Bay Lakes for some time now, while researching different options which would be safer and more fish-friendly. After a visit to the site with DFO Stock Assessment Technician, Ian Matthews, he recommended a camera/computer setup powered by a generator. Several board members visited a similar setup at Sakinaw Lake near Pender Harbour, to see the camera in operation. With the technical expertise of Doug Biro, we have begun work on a similar system, which we hope will be operational and ready for a trial run by fall of 2017.

DFO continues to support the society with an annual grant, as well as giving us on-the-ground support. In addition to Ian's help with the counting fence, Shannon Anderson led volunteers in a fry trapping session, and DFO Community Advisor Stacey Larsen's help is ongoing in a variety of ways.

Good rapport was maintained with other 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 again cleaned the large woody debris blockage at the upstream end of the Hyacinthe Bay Road culverts, and the Walcan road crew maintained the large culvert at the Reed Lake outlet. DFO and provincial Ministry of Transportation staff, along with QISES members, inspected the Heriot Bay Road culvert at Drew Creek, discussing its replacement (hopefully in 2017), as well as the possibility of a Drew Creek watershed assessment and potential stream enhancement for coho.

As usual, the drought-proofing program on Hyacinthe Creek was active, and again proved it's worth helping to maintain at least minimal flow during the summer for both coho fry and trout. Drought conditions were not quite as bad as the summer of 2015, but flow was still very low by late August. A small beaver dam at the outlet of Mud Lake was beneficial in keeping the lake water level high, which we were able to access through waterlines to augment downstream flow.

The Granite Bay group of keen volunteers was busy carrying out invertebrate surveys, water quality studies and juvenile sampling, and generally keeping a careful watch on the Granite Bay Creek watershed. As well as Granite Creek, volunteers carried out fry trapping on Kutala Creek (Leishman's Road), Drew Creek, Open Bay Creek and Little Morte Creek.

Community involvement included an evening presentation at the community hall, with Elan Downey speaking on the effects of global warming and "the Blob" on ocean phases of salmon life in the Pacific. Eileen Sowerby led a group of BC Naturalists in late spring in the Morte Lake area, and Quadra's Fall

Fair gave us the opportunity to set up our large 3-D map and hand out information to educate the public about Quadra's watersheds.

Work at the EcoCenter included the erection of our large "We've Got Salmon" sign near the road, thanks to Doug Richardson and others, as well as a new picnic table and repairs to the McKercher Creek dam platform and waterline support. The annual release of coho fry from the pond at the EcoCenter took place in late spring, when 500 new fry from the Quinsam Hatchery were added to the pond, thanks to DFO and volunteers. However, we believe that the fry may have been flushed out of the pond by the extraordinarily high rainfall last fall, so we're hoping that they were able to survive the effects of the deluge as they travelled downstream.

The EcoCenter was open during July and August with the help of HRDC funding. Becca MacDonald did a good job of staffing the center by welcoming and educating approximately 200 visitors. She also attended the Saturday farmer's market to promote the society, with T-shirts, bumper stickers, pamphlets and children's books available for sale.

Many volunteers were out on the streams weekly in October and November counting salmon returns in Granite, Drew, Village Bay, Open Bay, Hyacinthe and Klunis (Heriot Bay) Creeks. 2016 was a year for phenomenal chum returns on the island, in most cases doubling or even tripling numbers seen in previous years. Surprisingly, the chum seemed to be especially big and powerful as they pushed higher than previously encountered in upper stream reaches. The counting fence at Village Bay Lakes outlet was operational, with volunteers counting and releasing coho and chum into the lake system. However, it was a grim year for fence volunteers, with record high rainfall making its operation both dangerous and difficult.

Thank you to Frank Gleeson and Bruce Bjornson for managing the Society's bookkeeping activities, and to Chan, Nowasad and Boates for their help with our year-end statement. Total volunteer time given to the society was over 1000 recorded hours. I'd like to thank our 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. The new year will see our membership policy change to one of lifetime membership for all who have donated to the Society in the past. We are grateful to both island Tru-Value stores for their generous Spirit Board Points system, and to all shoppers who donate their points to the Society. Donations may also be mailed to Box 413, Quathiaski Cove, BC V0P 1N0.

Janis McLean
President