

Bridge Coastal Restoration Program Project Report

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Project Identification

Name of Proposed Project: South Alouette Off-Channel Enhancement (seed application)

Name of Watershed: Pitt River

Specific Project Location: (1) South Alouette River 2.0 km east of 232 St. (2) South Alouette River at 232 St.

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to determine the feasibility of completing two off-channel enhancement activities in the Alouette River watershed. This was to include an attempt at obtaining landowner approval, since the majority of affected lands lie within private property. The two project locations are:

- (1) "Payton Channel": This is a historical side channel of the South and North Alouette system that originates near Fern Crescent and 232nd Street before running in a southwesterly direction to join the South Alouette at the 22800 alignment. We would install a small intake on the North Alouette River to provide a base flow to the channel. This would yield nearly 1.0 kilometer of coho salmon rearing habitat.
- (2) Fern Crescent Channel: This presently dry side channel of the South Alouette River is located 2.0 kilometers east of 232nd Street on the right bank of the river. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans completed preliminary survey work on this project in 1999, but landowner approval to proceed with the project could not be obtained at that time. The completion of the project would result in the creation of approximately 0.5 kilometers of coho salmon off-channel rearing habitat.

Methods

Initial written correspondence was hand delivered to individual property owners between May and July, 2003 (see also Appendix 1: Landowner Correspondence). This was followed up by telephone. Onsite meetings then occurred at each property, where the proposed nature and location of the new habitat was discussed in detail. At the same time, the District of Maple Ridge was consulted for detailed site information in terms of maps, property boundaries, and locations of utilities and other infrastructure.

Results and Discussion

The majority of affected landowners were supportive of the proposed project, either verbally or in writing. There were two (one on Fern Crescent; the other on Payton Channel) that would not support the project. In both cases, the landowners expressed concerns about how stream setbacks may change due to the implementation of the project. Unfortunately, these concerns could not be satisfied even when the two property owners were provided with literature that explained how stream setbacks were determined (by definition, there would be no effect on their properties.) It should be noted that the Fern Crescent Channel landowner that would not approve the project would not have had any works occurring on his property, since the channel would have passed to the south of his boundary. However, the North Fraser Salmon Assistance Project is unwilling to pursue any works in the absence of unanimous landowner approval on both affected properties and adjacent ones. There were also two property owners that were not opposed to the project, but at the same time were reluctant to sign the consent form that NFSAP provided, due to fears of potential future liability issues.

The District of Maple Ridge had one item of concern regarding the Fern Channel. Communication with District staff revealed that there is a flood control device in the berm between the South Alouette River and the proposed route of the Fern Channel at the 240th Street alignment. We note that it may still be possible to route the channel around this device if unanimous landowner support is achieved in the future.

Recommendations

Both of these proposed project locations have been visited by Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff in the past and have been determined to be feasible projects from an engineering standpoint. For this reason, we recommend that the landowner approvals contained within this report be kept on file. If it comes to light that unanimous landowner approval becomes attainable, due to changes in property ownership or other factors, then the NFSAP recommends that both the Fern Crescent Channel and Payton Channel projects be pursued.

It became abundantly clear during this project that there is much misinformation regarding stream setbacks and their effects on private property, especially as they relate to enhancement works. Both of the landowners that opposed the project based their opposition on incorrect interpretations of the stream setback literature that was provided to them. The NFSAP believes that it would be a worthwhile endeavor to produce a flyer that explains setback legislation in lay terms. Such a document could be distributed to riparian property owners well in advance of project feasibility investigations in the vicinity of private lands.

Acknowledgements

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We thank the following individuals for providing background information, documentation, or both:

Jim Sheehan, District of Maple Ridge
Berne Serne, District of Maple Ridge
Harold Beardmore, Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Supporting Documentation

Attached are letters from landowners and a site map.

Financial Statement

Item	Cost
Landowner meetings and site inspections; telephone correspondence; meetings with District of Maple Ridge staff; report compilation and distribution	\$3,000.00
Vehicle mileage	\$ 80.00
WCB @ 3%	\$ 99.00
Office supplies, cell phone	\$100.00
Contract administration	\$300.00
Total	\$3,579.00