



Media Release
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Kwikwetlem Nation Supports Restoration of Vital Coquitlam River Fish Habitat

Coquitlam, BC. – Transportation Investment Corporation, an agency of the Province, will soon begin work on a major fish habitat restoration project in the lower Coquitlam River designed to help bolster the prospects of the area's beleaguered salmon populations.

The project, located on the "Wilson Farm" portion of Colony Farm Regional Park, will build vital habitat for juvenile salmon and restore tidal function to a part of a river traditionally ranked high in the Outdoor Recreation Council's 'Endangered Rivers List'.

"This project will go a long ways to addressing a major limiting factor to the production of salmon in the Coquitlam River," said Dr. Craig Orr, environmental consultant to the Kwikwetlem First Nation. "Urbanization has claimed much of the juvenile salmon habitat in the lower Fraser River area, and this project aims to restore a large part of that critical habitat."

The Wilson Farm project, a negotiated highway construction mitigation project funded by the provincial Gateway Transportation Project, will deepen and expand existing channels for juvenile fish, replace old tidal pumps with newer and fish friendly pumps, and add cool groundwater to allow fish to survive better. The project was planned with help from experts from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the private sector, and input from the public. It was also designed to have minimal impacts on the old field habitat of Colony Farm Park and its associated wildlife.

"This project is unique in the lower Fraser area," said Orr. "Most restoration focuses on creating spawning habitat, but you also need places for juvenile salmon to grow up to be big salmon, and this habitat is unfortunately now very rare." Chief Ron Giesbrecht commented that, "In the Halqu'eméylem language, Kwikwetlem means red fish up the river, and it is our People's enduring stewardship responsibility to ensure spawning habitat in the Coquitlam River. From our perspective, the project design will be a substantial improvement to habitat for many species".

Kwikwetlem First Nation
2 – 65 Colony Farm Road, Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 5X9
Tel: 604-540-0680 Fax: 604-525-0772



The channel will be improved and the pumps replaced during the fish construction “window” between August 1 and September 30, 2011. A three-year monitoring plan will also be launched by Kwkwetlem with help from an interested public.

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For Further Information: Dr. Craig Orr, Kwkwetlem Environmental Advisor, 604-809-2799.