

For Immediate Release
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300 tonnes of screened gravel will be added to Nanaimo's Millstone River Wednesday August 31st to provide returning Coho salmon with more spawning habitat.

NANAIMO: A study commissioned in 2008 on the Millstone River discovered that high quality-spawning habitat was limited which lead to construction last year of a gravel platform immediately upstream of the Westwood Road bridge.

This year 's (2011) enhancement project will see the creation of a 200 m² spawning platform made from a special blend of select sizes of gravel, adjacent to the Pryde Vista Golf Course. On Wednesday August 31st, staff from the BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the City of Nanaimo will be on-site for the duration of the one-day project.

The work is a continuation of numerous enhancement projects carried out over the past three decades on the Millstone River; the largest being the Bowen Park side-channel completed in the fall of 2007. This 800 m long side-channel, located 1.75 km from the mouth of the river, allows returning Coho to bypass an impassable falls and access the entire 14 km river. Within the first year of operation, 300-500 salmon were observed migrating through or spawning within the channel, confirming its early success. It's estimated the Millstone River has the potential to produce 30-thousand migrant juveniles, eventually leading to greater numbers of Coho returning to the river each fall.

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