

April, 2011

QUALICUM BAY - HORNE LAKE WATER SUPPLY TO NILE CREEK HATCHERY

Some twenty years ago a small group from the Village of Bowser on the east coast of Vancouver Island got together. Their aim: to restore Nile Creek. As rivers go, it's small. What it represents is large.

Nile Creek was once known as the Pink River for its large runs of Pink Salmon, as well as Coho and Sea Run Cutthroat Trout (a.k.a. Yellowbellies). The river had died. The stories of why are varied --- none of them good. With the learned counsel of a number of wise and experienced scientists, along with the relentless perseverance of our membership, the river has been restored to near historic runs of salmon and trout. All of this was achieved with the good will and energies of many against what were once thought to be near impossible odds. However, the runs of salmon and trout are once again in peril.

For the past fifteen years, Nile Creek Enhancement Society ("Society") has produced some twenty million Pink Salmon fry from its Nile Creek hatchery. The water required by the hatchery comes from an old unused water system. A water supply agreement was arrived at between the Society and the Qualicum Bay - Horne Lake Water District ("Water District") at a Water District's trustee board meeting August 15th 1995. It was also agreed that, in return for the use of a portion of the system, the Society would maintain the water line and the forestry road that provided access to it at the Society's expense. Without this commitment and the volunteer work required there would be no water system today due to the increased frequency and severity of winter storms plugging the line with sediment.

In 2010, the Water District informed the Society it will no longer allow the supply of water to the original hatchery and a newly constructed second hatchery put into test operation late in 2010. Given that the water is used for incubation of the salmon eggs, it is only required over winter and spring at a time when stream flow is high. Moreover, the diverted water flows into the hatcheries and exhausts immediately back into Nile Creek.

NO WATER --- NO FISH

No fish soon equates to fewer people fishing, fewer tourists visiting our projects and the surrounding community and less business for local merchants. It also diminishes our community and, above all, it impoverishes nature upon which we all depend.

The restoration of Nile Creek is the Society's flagship project. It has been accomplished by volunteers with the support of the community for the good of all.

The Society needs your help.

Please write a letter of support requesting the Water District do what is necessary to ensure this water supply continues to the Nile Creek Hatchery. Mail or email your letter to the following:

Board of Directors
Qualicum Bay - Horne Lake Water District
234 Lion's Way
Qualicum Bay, B. C. V9K 2E2
qbhlwater@bcsupernet.com

With a copy to:

Ken Kirkby
PO Box 62
Bowser, B. C. V0R 1G0
ken.kirkby@shaw.ca