

## Project Proposals for 2008

The Simms Creek Stewardship Society announces its list of priority large projects for the year 2008. This list contains habitat improvement projects for which funding must be sought in order to proceed. A description of each project follows. For further information, or to volunteer your labour on these projects or on the variety of other small projects done each year along Simms Creek, please contact any member of the Simms Creek Stewardship Society.

- Expand the water storage called Butterfly Pond. ([read](#))
- Place spawning gravel. ([read](#))
- Raise the Beaver Baffle weir. ([read](#))
- Re-top the lower McPhedran weir. ([read](#))

### Expand the water storage called Butterfly Pond

Simms Creek is surrounded by urban development of the City of Campbell River. Urban development causes the loss of the land's capacity to hold water for later slow release. The slow release is critical to the Coho salmon fry that spend the entire dry summer in Simms Creek.

To compensate for the losses, Simms Creek Stewardship Society, from its inception, has built water storage into various parts of the creek. One such project removed a culvert to create Butterfly Pond. The pond does hold a significant amount of water, and we believe that the tributary on which it sits remains wet somewhat longer into the drought season.

Butterfly Pond today is long and narrow. The proposed project calls for an expansion of the width of the pond, in order to roughly double the amount of water it holds. In the accompanying photograph, the pond width would extend well beyond the frame. The extra water should allow the wetting of the tributary even farther into the summer. The open water and forest edge might also have the benefit of attracting birds.



An machine excavator would do the digging. Volunteers would be needed for traffic control along the adjacent trail, for manicuring the spoils, and possibly for selective re-vegetation.

## **Place spawning gravel**

The recruitment of gravel to Simms Creek is limited, but the output of gravel to the ocean continues. Gravel provides not only sites for Coho to lay their eggs, but also homes for the insects on which the young Coho fry feed.

Simms Creek Stewardship Society members added gravel in recent years to several sites. In the fall of 2007, adult Coho salmon were observed “hanging around” two of those sites. Spawning cannot be confirmed, but it is nevertheless exciting to know salmon at least take a second look at our handiwork.

We would like to place additional gravel in the creek. One place of note is near the mouth, where Chinook salmon have regularly built redds. Simms Creek is known as a Coho stream, but the opportunity to help out Chinook is too attractive to pass up.

## **Raise the Beaver Baffle Weir**

As the name suggests, beavers once were active at the site of the beaver baffle. After they left and their dam began its decline, Simms Creek Stewardship Society refurbished it with rock. It was a delicate balance. Too much rock would cause flooding of a popular trail. Too little rock would mean less water stored in the beaver pond, and inconsistent flow through the fish ladder across the weir. After two rainy seasons of observations, we are confident that the weir level can be raised slightly.

## **Re-top the lower McPhedran Weir**

The first water storage weir built by the Simms Creek Stewardship Society held up well against freshet and settling. It still maintains a good water level in the pond, and a good shape in the outlet stream. However, the weir also is an attraction to recreational users of Beaver Lodge Forest Lands. The traffic, and very likely those humans who like to make big splashes in the pond, have laid bare the top of the weir in some places. A new cover of rock for the weir is in order.