

Piercy Habitat Assessment Project Update

Under the direction of Current Environmental Ltd. and thanks to the generous financial support of Pacific Salmon Foundation, City of Courtenay, Comox Valley Regional District, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and McElhanney Ltd, Millard Piercy Creek Watershed Stewards were able to launch this project at the end of June this year. The Comox Valley Record reported on this project in their July 8th edition.

Teams of volunteer stewards and friends of Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, under the guidance of biologists of Current Environment Ltd., walked Piercy Creek and its tributaries to identify reaches, pools, riffles and glides, to measure wetted and bankfull channel width and depth and to record creek bed materials such as sand, silt, gravels, cobbles or bolder. The work also included the recording the amounts of woody debris that provides shelter for fish, in-stream and off-channel vegetation, as well as barriers that might restrict fish migration to spawning grounds.

The purpose of the project is to identify options for habitat improvement particularly in regard to coho salmon and to develop guidelines for future urban development in an environmentally sustainable manner.



In-stream and bank vegetation made the collection of data quite challenging in some sections of the creek.

Approximately 75% of the initial phase of the project was completed until work came to a halt due to very low or no flow of water in the upper reaches of the watershed. Sightings of healthy fry and smolt were encouraging and the survey will continue as soon as rainfall results in an increase in the flow of water.

The remainder of the work entails data collection of the upper sections of Piercy Creek and its tributaries up to Marsden Road. The work further includes survey to determine the distribution of spawning coho salmon and sampling to identify winter rearing areas for juvenile coho. The latter work will continue into December and, possibly, January. The completion of the project is scheduled for early spring 2021.

To learn more about this project, go to www.millardpiercy.org