

# Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



## 2011/12 FINAL REPORT

**FSWP File Number\*** **FSWP 11 27 HWRS LR**

\* Please use the FSWP File Number provided in previous FSWP project correspondence.

### 1. Project Information

#### 1.1. Project Title

Vedder River Off-Channel Habitat and Enhancement Opportunities Inventory

#### 1.2. Proponent's Legal Name

City of Chilliwack

#### 1.3. Project Location

Chilliwack, BC (Vedder River Corridor)

#### 1.4. Contact for this report

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#### 1.5 Funding Amount

Original Approved Grant Amount:	Total FSWP Expenditures:	Final Invoice Amount:	Final Non-FSWP leveraging, including cash and in-kind:
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$32,500

### 2. Project Summary

Please provide a single paragraph describing your project, its objectives, and the results. As this summary may be used in program communications, clearly state the issue(s) that were addressed and avoid overly technical descriptions. Maximum 300 words.

The purpose of this project was to identify and prioritize fish habitat protection, enhancement and habitat maintenance opportunities in the Vedder River Management Area that will inform and direct future habitat improvements and land use decisions. A total of 34 enhancement projects within five separate floodplain areas along the Vedder River have been identified, mapped, and prioritized. Existing habitat features were also inventoried and mapped as part of this project. The Vedder River Off-Channel Habitat and Enhancement Opportunities Inventory will aid in the effectiveness and implementation of future enhancement activities by the Vedder River Management Area Committee (VRMAC), the City of Chilliwack and local stakeholders.

**OPTIONAL:** Please give a short statement (up to 100 words) of the most compelling activity or outcome from your project.

The Vedder River Management Area is dominated by the active channel of the Vedder River. This rightfully receives the bulk of management attention and along with the Rotary Trail and Great Blue Heron Reserve, the bulk of recreational activity. The opportunity to observe first hand and evaluate the off-channel habitat areas provided the most compelling activity. The development of an understanding of the linkages between the active channel and the off channel habitat areas provides the most compelling outcome.

### 3. Final Project Results and Effectiveness

**3.1** Please copy THE EXPECTED DELIVERABLES from your detailed proposal and insert into this table. Add additional rows as needed. Then describe the FINAL DELIVERABLES (the tangible end products resulting from this work) associated with each expected Deliverable.

If FINAL DELIVERABLES differ from the original EXPECTED DELIVERABLES, please describe why, and the implications for the project.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES	FINAL DELIVERABLES
1. A report describing existing features within the VRMA that have potential to increase salmonid production through enhancement, including site characteristics and recommendations for site enhancement	Same as expected deliverable.
2. Maps and a list of environmentally sensitive features that should be preserved and protected as they are	Same as expected deliverable.
3. A review and mapping of previous habitat enhancement works within the VRMA, showing the location and extent, and including current site characteristics, as well as recommendations for site treatment	Same as expected deliverable.
4. Final report and presentation to Vedder River Management Area Committee (VRMAC).	Same as expected deliverable. Presentation to VRMAC to occur at a regularly scheduled committee meeting in 2012.

**3.2** Please evaluate the EFFECTIVENESS of your project in achieving Project Objectives, using the specific measures of success identified in your proposal. Please include any notable successes or challenges.

This project was very effective in achieving the proposed Project Objectives:

1. Identify and prioritize habitat enhancement opportunities within the VRMA.
2. Characterize each of the eight delineated areas of the VRMA, identifying key habitat areas for protection (size, habitat features).
3. Identify possible maintenance opportunities for previously constructed habitat enhancements
4. Clearly communicate conditions, habitat values and enhancement opportunities in the VRMA lands to members of VRMAC and other interested parties.

The specific measures of success included report preparation and mapping and the use of the findings of the report to facilitate decisions regarding habitat enhancement, maintenance, and protection.

The results of this project are currently being incorporated into another study being completed to help guide the Vedder River Management Area Committee in future decision-making regarding management activities in the Vedder River corridor.

**3.4 If applicable, please describe project outcomes that relate to one or more of the following strategic approaches (Section 2.1 of RFP; section 8 of detailed proposal template), and include specific examples.**

<p>Engagement of First Nations. Please specify who, and in what capacity.</p>	<p>Information sharing with local First Nations. The project start-up meeting was attended by a representative of the Ts’elxwéyeqw Tribe. Additional information sharing is occurring as the results of this project are being incorporated into a Vedder River Management Study, which has the involvement of the Ts’elxwéyeqw Tribe and Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre.</p>
<p>Active partnerships with one or more organizations.</p>	<p>The project relied upon the existing and successful partnership provided by VRMAC. Key participants in this study included DFO, the City of Chilliwack, and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO). VRMAC members participated and shared information and resources.</p>
<p>Engagement and participation of diverse and under-represented groups.</p>	
<p>Relationship building, as a foundation for sustainable, enduring activities.</p>	<p>Completion of the habitat and enhancement opportunities inventory will allow ongoing activities to be focused on the best opportunities and avoid unforeseen negative habitat consequences. Information gathered through this project is being incorporated into a Vedder River Management Study that is engaging a cross section of participants such as DFO, MFLNRO, First Nations, Cities of Chilliwack and Abbotsford, and other stakeholders. As enhancement projects are implemented, there will be opportunities for additional relationship building with local stewardship groups.</p>
<p>Capacity building, including mentorship models, leadership training and skills development.</p>	<p>This project sets the stage for an ongoing effort to improve habitat related to cut off channels and groundwater influence within the VRMA lands. By its completion, VRMAC will have the capacity to implement these improvements over the ensuing years directly in association with floodway management activities and through partners, such as DFO, Chilliwack Parks and local stewardship groups.</p>
<p>Recognition and support of champions and their initiatives.</p>	<p>Several VRMAC participants have for several years advocated improvement to VRMA lands outside the active floodway but capacity to do this has been limited. This project recognized their ongoing commitment and effort by extending the scope and capacity of VRMAC.</p>
<p>Opportunities to influence policy and decision making,</p>	<p>This project will provide VRMAC with a tool to inform decisions about activities and land uses within the VRMA with respect to salmon habitat outside the active channel.</p>

**3.5 Please describe how the benefits of this project will be sustained and/or be built upon into the future. What are the planned next steps, or recommendations for further work, if applicable?**

As noted previously, the findings of this study are being incorporated into a Vedder River Management Study that will help guide future decision-making of the Vedder River Management Area Committee. The proposed enhancement projects have been prioritized based on a cost-benefit rating. The next step will be to determine how best to proceed with the highest priority projects, including identifying possible partnerships, for example, with local stewardship groups.

Some of the projects involve relatively easy, lower-cost works, which may be included as part of VRMAC's gravel management program and the City of Chilliwack's routine vegetation maintenance program, or readily implemented by stewardship groups. Other works require additional design, and VRMAC will explore possible funding options for those works.

**3.6. What are the top three lessons learned from this project that could be useful to communicate to others doing similar work in the Basin?**

1. Project was initiated through a series of roundtable discussions which led to the capture and compilation of extensive knowledge and experience. This proved to be an invaluable undertaking.
2. Significant fish habitat gains can be made through the strategic coordination and monitoring of efforts by various stakeholders.
3. The Vedder River corridor offers a unique opportunity for coordinating off-channel habitat work due to the existence of a well-established Management Committee comprised of regulatory agencies and stakeholders. For example, some habitat improvement opportunities were identified that could relatively easily be incorporated into the existing flood protection activities overseen by the Management Committee.

**3.7 REQUIRED: Attach all DOCUMENTATION of Final Deliverables, and LIST attachments in Section 8. These may include technical reports, maps, photos, evidence of communications, lists of meeting participants, etc.**

## **4. Outreach and Communications**

**Please describe how you have communicated project activities and results within local and basin-wide communities, across organizations and/or to decision makers.**

**Please list and attach copies of (or links to) any communications materials from these efforts that you have not previously submitted.**

Project activities were communicated to the Vedder River Management Area Committee members (presentation of final report to occur in spring of 2012). The findings will also be shared with other interested organizations (eg. local stewardship groups).