

Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



Fraser Basin Council



2009/10 FINAL REPORT

FSWP File Number* 07350-35/FSWP 09 D EE 54

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

1. Project Information

1.1. Project Title

Coldwater River Habitat Education and Awareness

1.2. Proponent's Legal Name

Nicola Tribal Association

1.3. Project Location

Upper Coldwater River watershed, Merritt, BC

1.4. Contact for this report

Name: Jessica Urquhart

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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:
\$35,000.00	\$27,721.88	\$0.00	\$2,760.00

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 Coldwater River is one of the most important systems in the Nicola watershed for early timed spring chinook (critically low population levels), Interior Fraser coho (Endangered, COSEWIC), Thompson steelhead (stock of concern), and bull trout (Provincial blue listed) for both spawning and rearing. The upper Coldwater River watershed is heavily impacted by campers from May to September. Since 2006 NTA fisheries staff have visually observed an increase in recreational vehicle use and damage in the upper Coldwater River watershed. Staff observed vehicle tracks running over the site of known chinook redds. The focus is to educate these users, to change their behavior in order to preserve fish habitat values in the Coldwater River. For 2009 the project objectives were:

1. Attend ATV club meetings in winter 2009/2010, interior/coastal, to present two years of data and discuss possible trail and river crossing changes,
2. Continue to collect data through questionnaires, educate area users, and monitor negative impacts,
3. Collaborate with ATV/BC Kamloops in creating an information pamphlet focusing on stream

area riding for the province, and

4. Redesign and install new signage. Redesigning as necessary for specific spawning habitats near/in river crossings.

A total of 181 interviews were conducted. Data collected has given the following results:

- 907 users visited the Study Area,
- 3,424.5 user days,
- 452 recreational vehicles operated in the Study Area,
- 1,569.5 recreational vehicle days,
- 77% of Study Area users reside in the Lower Mainland,
- 18% of users were affiliated with an ATV/BC club,
- Brodie Siding camping area was the most popular (48% of users),
- 21 river crossings were located, photographed, and waypoints recorded, and
- 89% of users would use bridges if they were installed.

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

The education component of the project is working, to what degree has yet to be determined. Area users are on their best behavior when our crew is conducting surveys. No one admits to operating their machines in/near the Coldwater River, but the damage continues. One crew member witnessed just this:

During one interview, a woman's son was across the river on his ATV. As he started to cross the river she shouted, you better not even think about driving that machine through the river! He shouted back, what about this morning when you were letting me ride in the river?

3.Final Project Results and Effectiveness

3.1 Copy EXPECTED OUTCOMES from your detailed proposal and insert into this section. Add additional rows as needed. Then please list the FINAL OUTCOMES (the tangible end products resulting from this work) associated with expected outcome.

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

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	FINAL OUTCOMES
1. All future recreational vehicle users in the Coldwater River watershed will be knowledgeable of the fish habitat values associated with the river.	A total of 907 area users were given information regarding fish species found in the Coldwater River, and the negative impacts of operating recreational vehicles in/near fish bearing streams.
2. All recreational vehicle users of the Coldwater River watershed will self-educate/self-regulate/self-monitor with regards to vehicle usage near/in river.	Crews did witness some self-monitoring of area users, but there was evidence to suggest they are "on their best behavior" when they know our crews are around.
3. To achieve a reduction of negative human impacts on this environment.	With only two years of data it is too soon to confirm/deny that this is happening. In some

	cases existing access to the river has been abandoned, but new access points were observed. We can confirm that the area users are willing to listen.
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4.

3.2 Please evaluate the EFFECTIVENESS of your project in achieving Project Objectives. Please identify the indicators you have used to measure the effectiveness of your project. Please include any notable successes or challenges.

The effectiveness of this project cannot be measured because changing human behavior takes a long time. However, the project has demonstrated some effectiveness in raising awareness of the issues. Attitudes have been receptive and people respectful of our crew. Everyone was pleasant willing to fill out our questionnaires. People were engaged, they listened and asked questions. We have had nothing but overwhelming support from the area users to ATV/BC, Kamloops.

Another factor supporting our effectiveness is that when this project was implemented in 2008 we had the Nicola Valley ATV Club (ATV/BC affiliate) interested in being involved. At the orientation meeting prior to field work, the President discovered and was not thrilled that the work was being done in the upper Coldwater River watershed. The comment was made that, they are a crazy bunch out there, and their club stayed as far away from that area as they could. They did not want to be associated with those types. During the 2009 field season, four questionnaires were completed by Nicola Valley ATV Club members.

We were unable to attend ATV club meetings, to discuss the project, the results, and possible river crossing/trail changes. Upon a better look at the objectives we realized that removing/changing river crossings would be better suited for the 2010/2011 project year. The clubs using the Study Area have developed websites to disseminate information, and no longer hold monthly meetings. The Land & Environment Coordinator, ATV/BC Kamloops, has been essential in providing these clubs with updated information on our project, results, and future activities.

Collaborating with ATV/BC Kamloops to create an information pamphlet focusing on stream area riding has been put on hold. In meetings held over the winter 2009/2010, we had discussed a bigger picture. For 2010/2011 we will be collaborating, through a Memo of Understanding, to create draft stewardship guidelines for recreational vehicle use in and adjacent to streams (provincial applicability). It is anticipated this will assist if the Province moves toward legislation and licensing.

Redesigning new signage (specific to spawning habitats in close proximity to river crossings) was not completed. Unfortunately we were not made aware of FSWP signage funding until last month, and the sign shop was unable to respond with the short notice.

3.3 Please attach all DOCUMENTATION of Final Outcomes, and LIST attachments here. These may include technical reports, maps, photos, evidence of communications, lists of meeting participants, etc.

3.4 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?

There are three ATV/BC clubs (Lower Mainland clubs) that are the main users of the Study Area. In future years they could take over stewardship of the area. ATV/BC Kamloops has invited NTA to collaborate on creating guidelines for recreational vehicle operations in/adjacent to water ways (2010/2011 project year); a Memo of Understanding will be signed. Also, proposed for the 2010/2011 project year is to look at key river crossings, those in close proximity to chinook spawning habitats, and work with the area users to look at the possibility of closing those crossings and installing bridges.

3.5 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. It is imperative to work with the area users in order to get positive results
2. Area users are on their best behavior when they know our crews are in the vicinity, so some observing without being seen is key to getting the real picture of their recreational vehicle operations in/adjacent to streams/rivers.
3. Trying to change human behavior (an FBC goal) is a much longer term endeavor than typical project funding commitments.