

# Slocan River

## Rainbow Trout Habitat Enhancement Project

February 2006

Newsletter #8

### Fish Use Assessment of Phase One Habitat Structures Completed

The fish use assessment of the five Phase One demonstration fish habitat structures in the Slocan River has been completed following surveys conducted in August and October, 2005.

During the fall of 2004, prior to their installation, an initial survey was undertaken at the proposed site of each structure. The initial survey provided information on the numbers of trout and other fish using these areas of the river, and this data was then compared to the

recent post-installation survey numbers.

Initial findings have indicated that fish are beginning to use the structures and that their use of the structures varies throughout the year. It is expected that this use will increase over time as the structures experience several more spring freshets, where woody debris will be captured, adding to the overhead cover, and the structures will induce scouring of the river bottom, increasing the water depth.



*Habitat structures in the Slocan River*

### Study Completed On Impacts to Recreational River Users

Tim Thurston and Rena Vandenbos, instructors of Selkirk College's Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Program, were contracted for the summer of 2005 to gather public input regarding the impact of the habitat structures on recreational river users.

Public input included a survey, conducted by a student in the Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Program. The student surveyed river users at various locations between Passmore and Winlaw from June until the end of August. River users were interviewed as they floated past the structures and at various take-out points along the river.

Survey findings indicate that the section of river where the habitat structures are



*Tubers float past a habitat structure*

located is used considerably less than the sections downstream of the Passmore Bridge. The river users' knowledge of the project was high, with very few respondents not knowing what the

structures were for. The average response from the groups of users to the existing in-stream structures was supportive of both the ones in the main channel and those at the channel margins, providing the structures will indeed benefit rainbow trout. Slightly more than half of those people surveyed found the warning signage upstream of the habitat structures to be adequate or even excellent, but greater than 40% of respondents indicated that they had not seen the signs, or felt that they were not effective.

CPC plans to place an additional sign at the Winlaw Bridge in 2006. Further feedback will be obtained from organized river user groups.



*Above - Habitat structure at river's edge  
Right - Habitat structure in mid-stream*

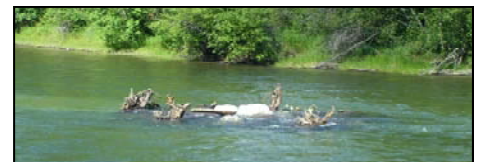
### Phase Two Structure Installation Delayed

The decision to install the Phase Two structures has been delayed until further fish use monitoring is conducted through 2006 to confirm that the structures are effective.

Work will also be undertaken to refine the proposed locations of the Phase Two structures, based on the performance of the Phase One structures. The effectiveness of the individual structure types will

also be reviewed.

Feedback will be gathered from the public in the fall of 2006, once the Phase Two plans have been refined.



## Riparian Demonstration Project

This past spring, students enrolled in the Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Program at Selkirk College teamed up with Columbia Power to create a riparian demonstration area on the Slocan River. The demonstration area design, developed for CPC by Terra Erosion Control, was designed to exhibit different techniques used in bank stabilization. The placement of brush layers, the installation of a brush mattress, and the planting of live stakes were the three techniques used in the demonstration area.



*Riparian demonstration project following planting, Spring 2005*

Wildlife, mainly beaver, caused considerable damage in the early stages. A fence was then erected to keep the beaver out and seedling protectors were placed over the seedlings.

The riparian demonstration site can be viewed adjacent to the Slocan Valley Trail, 1 km south of Winlaw.

## Interpretive Signage

CPC is working with Selkirk College and a local graphic artist to design interpretive



*Riparian demonstration project, Summer 2005*

signage for the riparian demonstration area. The signage, to be erected in the spring of 2006, will explain both the structures and the riparian component of the Project. The signs will be integrated with other interpretive signage on the Slocan Valley Trail.

### *In Tribute...*



*Fred Fraser, Valley resident and member of the Slocan River Streamkeepers, passed away in November after a short illness. Fred was a driving force behind the Slocan River Streamkeepers and was closely involved in working with Columbia Power Corporation on the Riparian Restoration Program. Fred will be sorely missed by all his friends and colleagues.*

## Slocan River Riparian Restoration Program

During the development of the Project, riparian (riverbank) restoration was identified by the public as a key component in the recovery of the health of the River and the trout population.

The Riparian Restoration Program was designed to address riparian restoration on privately held land.

During 2005, the inaugural year of the Slocan River Riparian Restoration Program, eight projects were funded from the 13 proposals received. The proposals were reviewed by a committee consisting of members of the Slocan River Streamkeepers, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Environment, Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, and CPC representatives.

A pre-project assessment was conducted on all eight sites to establish baseline conditions. The three components of the monitoring program are: vegetation assessment, stream bank assessment and underwater fish use assessment.

Post-project monitoring will occur at specified intervals to determine the

success of the program and to provide valuable insight into effective restoration prescriptions and techniques.

**Information on the Riparian Restoration Program can be obtained from:**

**Tom Bradley**  
*Slocan River Streamkeepers*  
250.226.7792



*Riparian restoration work by the Slocan River Streamkeepers on a funded project*

## Contact Information

For more information, or to comment on the Project, please visit the Columbia Power Corporation website at [www.columbiapower.org](http://www.columbiapower.org) or call:

**Audrey Repin or Llewellyn Matthews**  
*Columbia Power Corporation*  
250.365.8585

## UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSION ON THE RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROGRAM

Columbia Power Corporation will be conducting an information session on March 11th at the Passmore Hall from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm to assist property owners on the Slocan River who are interested in applying for funding for riparian restoration work in 2006. Approaches to riparian restoration and program details will be explained and attendees will be advised of the application process. **The deadline for funding applications for 2006 will be March 31st.** Watch the Valley Voice for more details.