

# Half-a-million pinks to be released come spring

## TSOLUM

Tsolum River Restoration Society enhancing salmon stocks in the Tsolum River with the help of Aquaculture Industries, DFO and a team of volunteers. 500,000 pinks will be released this April into Headquarters Creek a major tributary of the Tsolum River.

Thanks to funding from local aquaculture businesses the Tsolum River Restoration Society (TRRS) has been able to proceed with a pink salmon enhancement program on Headquarters Creek, a tributary of the Tsolum River that flows from Wolf Lake to the Tsolum River close to Farnham Road in Merville.

The Hatchery facility on Headquarters Creek has suffered a series of setbacks over the years. The last setback of course, was a cut

back in funding to Federal Fisheries operations. The hatchery has experienced water temperatures that rise beyond salmonid tolerance as Wolf Lake is baked in the sun and the outflow from the weir at the lake becomes very warm. Many logging roads and low lying swamps deliver sediments into Headquarters Creek when water levels rise. Some quarter of a million eggs were lost to suffocation two years ago. Since that time the Hatchery has remained dormant

vels of acid rock drainage emanating from the mine site. The TRRS is currently fundraising to commission a cover design to complete the job at the minesite. There has been approximately 50 per cent reduction in the toxic copper recorded in the Tsolum River due to work completed previously. The Society is now seeking support to finish the job.

In early April the thousands of pink fry that are being reared in the raceways at the Tsolum Hatchery will

“We hope to attract fish into the Tsolum by augmenting flow at the time the fish are moving past the Tsolum/Puntledge confluence.”

Bill McLean

be released into Headquarters Creek, a major tributary of the Tsolum River. Grade four students from Tsolum Elementary with teacher John Harrison will assist in this release as a part of the "Salmonids in the Classroom" programme sponsored by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Anyone interested in attending this event should watch for announcements in the local media towards the end of March.

Plans are underway to

ensure that returning adult pink salmon are able to make their way back into the Tsolum River to spawn naturally.

Bill McLean, DFO Operations Support Biologist at the Puntledge Hatchery writes, 'Over the past few years we have noted that most of the returning pinks move up the Puntledge before August 15. Flow in the Tsolum is very low at this time and fish cannot enter the system. They either hold in the Puntledge where they are targets of seal predation or continue to migrate up the Puntledge. We hope to attract fish into the Tsolum by augmenting flow at the time the fish are moving past the Tsolum/Puntledge confluence.'

This is one of several projects proposed for this year pending funding.

It has been well established that pink salmon form a fundamental nutrient base that supports all other salmonid species. By providing increased pink stocks and adequate flows the Tsolum River Restoration Society, working in partnership with all the businesses, organizations and individuals involved can begin to provide a more hospitable environment for the return of salmon to the Tsolum

The TRRS would also like to thank the Comox Valley



RACEWAYS, LARGE EIGHT-FOOT deep cement boxes, approximately 80 feet long, are covered to provide a dark place for fry so they don't crowd each other.

PHOTO BY JACK MINARD

Chamber of Commerce for honoring the Society with the Environmental Initiative Award 2000. This award acknowledges the efforts of many people and organizations that have worked for many years to return the Tsolum River to health and productivity. For more information, to donate to the society, become a member of the Society call Jack Minard at 338-7515

I J- J

The TRRS is very appreciative of the generous donation from local aquaculture industries and would like to thank the following: Stolt Sea Farm Inc., Omega Salmon Group Inc., Heritage Aquaculture, Moore & Clarke Co. (Canada) Inc., Ewos Canada Ltd., (Surrey and Campbell River), PRA Manufacturing Ltd., Point Four Systems Inc., Aqua Health Ltd. and Browns Bay Packing Co. Ltd. These companies' generous donations allowed the TRRS to prepare the hatchery, rear eggs to the eyed stage and transfer the eyed eggs to the pre-prepared hatchery. Without this support (his project could not have been begun.)

The TRRS was also able to purchase an automatic water quality measuring device for installation in a tributary immediately below the abandoned minesite on Mt. Washington. This instrument will give us critical information about toxic lev