

LETTERS

River crusader welcomes grant

I was pleased at the announcement by the new Minister of Environment, Paul Ramsey, that the Oyster River Watershed Management Committee (ORWMC) is the recipient of a grant of \$24,500 from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' Urban Salmon Habitat program to be used for habitat inventory and assessment, as well as for restoration work on the Oyster River.

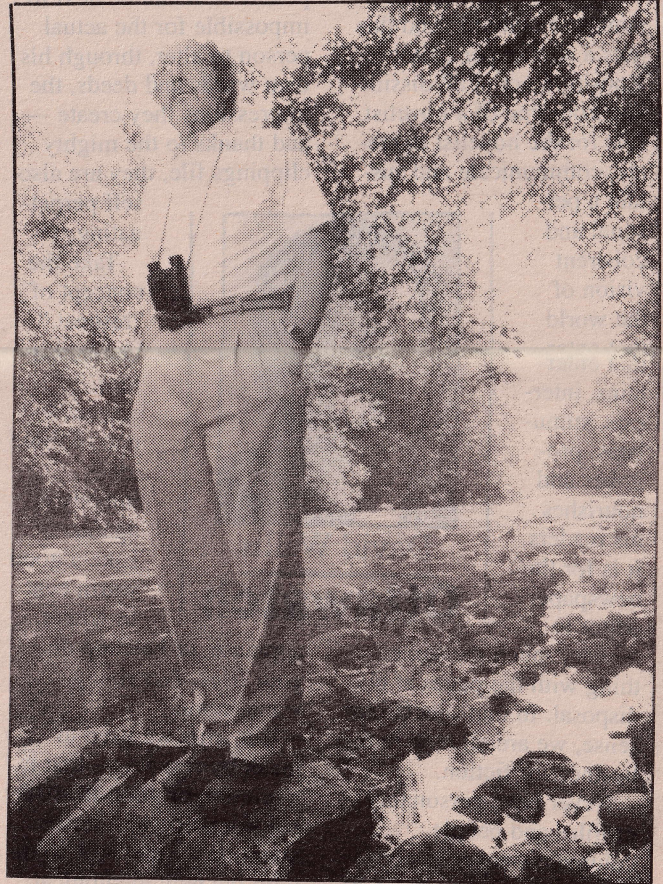
ORWMC is not to be confused with the Oyster River Enhancement Society (ORES) or the Steelhead Society of B.C. (SHSBC) both of which have done and are continuing to do admirable work in the Oyster River watershed.

ORWMC is a stewardship group existing since 1991, espousing bioregionalism, composed of all the stakeholders in the watershed whose primary purpose is to maintain and enhance water quality and quantity in the watershed.

ORWMC is a co-operative organization committed to achieving and maintaining a healthy Oyster River Watershed, by ensuring that land and resource use decision do not compromise the ability of present and future generations to sustain themselves, socially, economically, and environmentally, by protecting water, soils and air to sustain all life forms indigenous to the watershed.

These goals will be achieved through education, co-operation, management, restoration, enhancement, creative solutions, co-operative planning, and implementation of stewardship initiatives.

In 1990, through funding from the two local chapters of SHSBC, an Oyster River Drainage Study was undertaken and published by Ronald J. Frank, Ltd. this



Father Charles Brandt looks over the Oyster River.

File photo

study looked at, among other things: the impact of logging, past, present and future on the watershed. The chief recommendation of the study was to establish a management committee for the watershed made up of all of its users.

Since 1991, the committee has met every two months at the Comox-Strathcona Regional Board room in Courtenay to discuss land and water use issues within the watershed, prescribe and recommend action relative to land use decisions and develop positions on these issues.

At present there are 24 members. Membership is made of representatives from DFO, MELP, the major forestry companies in the watershed, Regional Directors, as well as representatives from the Ministries of Health,

Agriculture, Forests, Highways, and Mines. Key environmental groups sit on the committee as well as UBC Research Farm and IWA.

The current chairman is Chris Hillier. Our Facilitator is Ron Frank.

The grant to ORWMC by the Urban Salmon Habitat program will be used for habitat inventory and assessment and restoration in the lower portion of the Oyster. The major forestry companies have already partially completed similar studies in the upper watershed. A partnership is being formed for the overall care and protection of the watershed.

The Urban Salmon grant gives encouragement to ORWMC to continue its fine work on behalf of the Oyster River.

Father Charles Brandt,
Oyster River