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Was it  
Libellous?Courtenay  
councillors  
are asking  
for legal  
advice

# Silt threatens Browns River

## Highway project blamed

by Julie Szabo

Road construction on the Mt. Washington Highway could kill fish in Browns River.

So says Father Charles Brandt, a local resident concerned about the viability of the river. He says the Browns River is running muddy, and adds that highway construction is to blame.

"The river is brown with silt," said Brandt. "The silt covers the gravel and suffocates insect life in the stream."

Brandt says fish in the Browns River will starve if insect life disappears, and that silt can settle

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in gills and kill fish.

Local logger Ken Cottini says the river is running "pure mud." He adds that if a logging company was responsible for the silting, it would have been shut down or fined under the Forest Practices Code.

"I can't understand why the (highways) ministry didn't show more concern about the environment," said Cottini. He says the province is ignoring the problem in order to finish the new highway by next fall.

The Ministry of Highways and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have tried to slow the silting by constructing silt-straining mechanisms. One of the construction companies has been asked to cease operating a skidder, and both companies have been ordered to install extra silt fences.

Doug Gentals, of the Ministry of Highways, is overseeing the Mt. Washington Highway project. He says that Environment Monitors are on site during the project. He also says that silting is a side-affect of construction.

Brandt went with Gentals to Browns River on Wednesday to view the "obvious problem." He said that ministries are taking steps to correct errors, but that they were "tardy" in taking action.





## A River Runs Through It

Black Creek environmentalist Father Charles Brandt claims that construction of the new Mt. Washington Road is compromising the viability of the Browns River by overrunning it with silt.

*Photo by Fr. Charles Brandt*