

Paq Creek Project

As some of you are aware, PHARA is looking for partners for an exciting project to daylight a portion of Paq Creek that currently runs through a failing culvert underneath the Madeira Park Elementary School playing field.

Paq Creek flows from Lily Lake to the ocean and was once home to a significant cutthroat trout and salmon population. Because of the unusually large size of these fish, between about 1989 and 1994, Provincial Fisheries harvested these trout and used their offspring to stock numerous waterbodies on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. Our goal is to restore and increase the historic salmon and trout runs.

Some old timers here will remember that the school playground was once a wetland/swamp which was filled in over the years due to regular flooding since the school was built in 1952. In the 1960s, the Creek was culverted under the school grounds. Unfortunately, the old culverts have been collapsing since then, causing sinkholes and a dangerous situation for students and maintenance machinery. Rerouting the creek and fencing it along the edge of the school fields (adjacent to the IGA) between the baseball diamond and Lagoon Road would eliminate this danger.

Having a restored salmon run adjacent to the school (fenced) would also provide an excellent experiential learning experience for students and the community about the lives of salmon and trout and their importance to the ecosystem and to the shíshálh people.

To date, we have had site visits and/or discussions with DFO, SCRDC Infrastructure Services, In Situ Archaeology and most importantly, SD46. All of these have given their support in principle. Most recently, we had a visit by Dave Bates, a Registered Professional Biologist with 30

years' experience dealing with fisheries related issues on the Sunshine Coast and elsewhere. He has volunteered to advise us on next steps and his expertise is going to be absolutely vital. Currently we're working on a design for the new creek and we will be applying for permits and approximately \$200,000 in funding from the province and salmon enhancement groups.