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KEEPS Education Programs

The January to end of June period saw a student attendance of 2,301. The programming year began with several outdoor Watershed Road Show programs, and then we were primarily focused on the salmon fry season. To that end, the Salmonids in the Classroom program in School District 42 experienced its highest fry survival recorded to date, with all 15 classroom aquariums reporting 90% survival or higher.

WE THANK VOLUNTEERS, TEACHERS AND PARENT DRIVERS!



Watershed Road Show, March 12th.



Spring Break day camp, March 24th.



Stream fry release / testing, May 13th.

Upcoming Events

- A River runs through it, August 16, 11AM-2PM, Stewardship Center
- Wild times with the neighbors open house, September 13, 11AM-2PM, Stewardship Center
- Return of the Salmon, October 18, 11AM-3PM, Fish fence (registration only)

Resource restoration

K.E.E.P.S. and two local classes assisted at two sites this winter / spring: the first was along Dewdney Trunk Road in Whonnock, while the second was adjacent to 261st. Street. Both sites were rental properties that were purchased by Metro Vancouver Regional Parks with the intention of restoring them to a natural state.

Right: restoration site at 261st Street, April 15th.



Did you know?

Coho salmon fry often migrate upstream into small tributaries to rear, in order to avoid fall and winter high streamflow events. In Maple Ridge, they have been known to ascend tributary streams two kilometers or more.

Bell-Irving Hatchery has long been recognized as an important satellite facility for a number of more urbanized Lower Mainland streams, and this critical role is most apparent in the spring. This year, a total of 15,000 coho salmon smolts went to Byrne, Kaymar, Brunette and Stoney Creeks, all in Burnaby. In addition, the hatchery was able to step in to assist Sapperton Hatchery with 4,000 coho fry, in the wake of a fish loss at that facility.

For chum, there were a total of 6 transfers of 195,000 fry to 11 different streams in Burnaby and Vancouver, with 73,000 remaining fry being released to Kanaka by early May. This included 8,000 released during the Goodbye Chums event.

As of Canada Day, about 64,000 coho fingerlings remain onsite, and that will be so until their release in May 2027.

We had 2,000 visitors from mid March to June 30.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Hatchery Happenings



Goodbye Chums 2026

Over 500 visitors took in our April classic on this 19 degree spring day.



Going at a good clip

At Kanaka Creek, the retention of one hatchery reared coho salmon per day is normally permitted during the month of November. The process of being able to recognize a hatchery coho begins 16 months prior with dedicated volunteers and small pairs of scissors. The small adipose fin is painlessly removed, so that the returning adult can be easily identified as a hatchery fish.



Bear Necessities

We certainly do have a healthy population of black bears, and this is especially apparent in the spring and summer, when the bears search for food almost continuously. In an encounter, remain calm and non threatening. You may speak to the bear in a calm voice while slowly leaving the area. Other ways to help:

- Maintain an attractant free yard (bird feeders, unsecured garbage, unclean barbeques)
- Stay on designated trails, and be aware of surroundings. Avoid the use of headphones.
- Keep pets on leash.
- Report improper human behavior (crowding / harassing bears, leaving out attractants)



Spring / early summer Open Houses

Left to right: How the mighty have pollen, March 22nd; Smolts on the water, May 24th; Get your plants on, June 14th. Many thanks to our great volunteers!



Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society

11450 256th Street, Maple Ridge, B.C.

Phone: 604-970-8404

Cellular and school programs: 604-970-8404

Email: [r.davies\(at\)sham.ca](mailto:r.davies(at)sham.ca)

Web: www.keeps.org



About our organization: KEEPS was formally incorporated as a Society in December of 1998. We are involved with a wide variety of activities including habitat monitoring and restoration, GPS mapping, and of course public education and awareness. The Bell-Irving Hatchery was rebuilt in 2013 and the Kanaka Creek Watershed Stewardship Center was completed in 2017.

KEEPS consists of our Board of Directors and general membership, as well as a Hatchery Manager and part time Coordinator and Administrator. We also retain a Program Interpreter to implement our education programs. Want to become involved? Send us an email at volunteer@keeps.org

KEEPS gratefully acknowledges that we live, work and play on the traditional and unceded territories of the Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations.

Winter to summer

The mostly mild winter of 2025/2026 meant that Spencer Creek rarely dropped below 4 degrees. A much drier than normal second half of spring did result in pH values climbing into the 7.5 range, but nothing that would cause concern. The spring programming included the usual visits to the fish fence site, as well as looking at green infrastructure around the school neighborhood. In Albion Park, the stress calling of songbirds was utilized by the students to track down barred owls.

Left: creek testing, February 24th; Center, right: following songbird distress calls to a barred owl in the forest.



Steelhead

There has always been a very modest presence of these anadromous rainbow trout in Kanaka Creek, but the final week of April brought some unprecedented viewing this year of these springtime spawners. Unlike their Pacific salmon counterparts that of course spawn in the autumn, the steelhead can survive to spawn two or more times.

