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Nanaimo Airport Works To Restore Haslam Creek Fish Habitats

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The Nanaimo Airport Commission can be thankful for September's sunshine. The warm-dry weather allowed Phase II of the Haslam Creek Fish Habitat Restoration Project to proceed as scheduled.

"There is only a small window of opportunity when restoration work can be done on the Creek," said Airport Operations manager Reg Brady, "we had 15-30 days in early September to get the work done, but only if water levels were low enough."

Phase II of the restoration project began on September 1st at T-Bridge Road on the South side of Haslam Creek. Stumps from last year's tree topping and clearing were saved and incorporated along the banks of the creek and into large Spurs – log, stump and rock formations that extend about 1/3 of the way into the creek to create pools and habitat for salmon fry and other small fish. The redirecting of water flow and the addition of stumps along the south bank of the river helped to alleviate erosion that was destroying fish habitat in the area.

Mike Hooper, President/CEO of the Nanaimo Airport Commission said, "This is a large, complicated project. Our team has been working in partnership with and under direction of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The financial contribution for the project to date has been through the Nanaimo Airport."

Al Magnan, DFO Habitat Biologist, worked closely with the airport on the project. "With a collaborative approach, the Nanaimo Airport and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have been able to ensure that the airport's safety concerns were addressed, while protecting and enhancing Haslam Creek's important fisheries values."

Magnan went on to say, "The Nanaimo Airport was instrumental in identifying and implementing a variety of mitigation measures and stream enhancement features that will over time increase fish habitat values within Haslam Creek. By understanding that vegetation management adjacent to Haslam Creek will be an ongoing activity, the Nanaimo Airport has started a proactive revegetation program that will gradually reduce future maintenance costs while maintaining important riparian vegetation values."

Fisheries Biologist Dave Clough (D.R. Clough Consulting) added, "This is the first fish habitat restoration work that I am aware of along Haslam Creek." Results of this recent work won't be available until next year, once the water level has had a chance to rise and fish have returned to the area.

Operations Manager Brady is optimistic about the results of this project. "We are encouraging partnerships with other fish and habitat conservation societies to develop. This work is a good beginning. These changes could have such a positive impact on the area and it would be great to see other such projects in the region."

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For more information on the Haslam Creek Fish Habitat Restoration Project please contact Mike Hooper, President/CEO, Nanaimo Airport 245-4191.