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## **Millennium Park Among Projects to Receive FWCP Funding** **FWCP Announces \$162,000 for fish and wildlife in Puntledge River watershed**

**(COURTENAY)** The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) announced its annual funding for a variety of local projects in the Puntledge River watershed – from helping Kokanee in Comox Lake, to exploring the use of small woody debris structures to protect Chinook fry.

Millennium Park in Courtenay is the focus of one project starting soon, which involves improvement to side-channel connectivity, and is one of three projects being led by the Comox Valley Project Watershed Society (CVPWS). This project will enhance habitat by improving habitat connectivity between the slough, pond and the finger channel, which will improve access for fish, and result in the restoration of a tidal influenced off-channel section of the Courtenay River.

The FWCP Coastal Region Board approved funding in 2016-17 for the following projects in the Puntledge River watershed:

- Tagging Puntledge Summer Chinook (K'omoks First Nation).
- Assessing Fish Restoration in the Puntledge River Watershed (K'omoks First Nation).
- Assessing Kokanee Spawning in Comox Lake (Courtenay and District Fish and Game Protective Association).
- Conserving Land to Support Puntledge River Salmonids (CVPWS).
- Survey of Two Tributary Creeks in the Courtenay River Estuary (CVPWS).
- Improving Habitat Connectivity at Simms Park (CVPWS).
- Conserving Riparian and Wetland Habitat in the Puntledge River Watershed (Ecofish Research).

Together, these seven projects will receive nearly \$162,000 from the FWCP. The FWCP is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and Public Stakeholders, to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by BC Hydro dams. In its Coastal Region, FWCP receives all of its funding, nearly \$2 million in 2016-17, from BC Hydro.

“We fund hands-on and research-based projects that align with our strategic Action Plans,” says FWCP Coastal Region Manager, Trevor Oussoren, adding, “improving the science and understanding of a species is an important part of any effort to conserve and enhance species.”

“We’re blessed to live in the beautiful Comox Valley, and it’s vital that we protect the fish and wildlife that also call it home,” says Don McRae, MLA for Comox Valley. “Thank you to all of the community partners involved in these important projects in the Puntledge River watershed.”

The projects approved for FWCP funding reflect conservation priorities in the region, and were selected after review by FWCP’s Coastal Region fish and wildlife technical committees, and its nine-member regional Board, which is responsible for reviewing and approving all FWCP projects in the Coastal Region.

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Within its Coastal Region, FWCP is funding 41 fish and wildlife projects for a total of \$1.9 million in 2016-17. Across the province, FWCP is funding more than 116 fish and wildlife projects for a total of approximately \$8.7 million. For more information on the Puntledge River watershed projects, and other projects funded by FWCP, visit [fwcp.ca](http://fwcp.ca).

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