

# Celebrating Twenty-Five Years

In celebrating its 25th anniversary, the Coho Society recognized the valuable contribution made by the many sponsors and partners who supported its efforts during that time.

As a volunteer environmentally-based organization committed to protecting and revitalizing North Shore salmon rivers and streams, the Coho Society takes a leading role in promoting public awareness of the importance and fragility of the fisheries resource.

In his comments at the Annual General Meeting, President Jim MacCarthy paid tribute to the organizations and individuals who played major roles in the Society's formative years. First is the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, the founding sponsor of the Coho Society. Other original sponsors were Eatons (a name now almost forgotten), North Shore News, British Pacific Properties Limited and Park Royal Shopping Centre Ltd. The latter three organizations and the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce continue as sponsors today.

MacCarthy noted other early partners included Fisheries & Oceans Canada, the three North Shore councils and staffs who continue to make clean streams a priority. Squamish Nations, GVRD and the two North Shore school districts also were in that early group.

Also acknowledged at the annual meeting were former society presidents Mike Nicell, Bill Chapman, Bill Soprovich and Rick Amantea. "To all those individuals and the organizations they represent, we say thank you for your leadership and significant contributions to the salmonid enhancement cause", MacCarthy said.

Over the years the Society has raised \$265,000 for salmonid enhancement activities on the North Shore. Revenues in 2003 totalled \$69,700, expenses were \$56,190 leaving a balance after expenses of \$13,510. Major expenditures were for public awareness, education and stream protection activities with emphasis on Salmonids in the Classroom and volunteer driven projects. Environmental partners in those activities included local Streamkeepers groups, North and West Vancouver School Districts and volunteer-managed fish hatcheries.



*Caught in the Net - Jean Ferguson, Christine Kronert, Dina Zeitler, Pamela Goldsmith-Jones enjoyed an exciting evening at the Fishnets and Tails Gala. (see page 6)*

## World Salmon Stocks Threatened Fraser addresses AGM

Fish stocks on the Pacific Coast and elsewhere in the world are threatened by over harvesting and global warming. That was the message the Honourable John Fraser gave Coho Society of the North Shore members at their 2004 Annual General Meeting.

Fraser is chair of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, an independent body charged with advising governments and the public on salmon conservation issues.

In a wide-ranging presentation that kept members and guests glued to their seats, Fraser spoke of the challenges facing wild salmon and the environment. He pointed out that worldwide, some fish stocks have

declined dramatically over the past decade due to over-fishing, rising temperatures and other factors.

In British Columbia, predictions on Sockeye salmon runs in 2004 are not encouraging and water flows in the Fraser river are low, the result of several dry summers and increased demand for water by local communities and industry, including agriculture. Fraser stressed the need for reliable long-term stream data in managing the province's water resources.

Fraser was pointed in his comments on B.C.'s salmon farms. While acknowledging the importance of farm salmon in the provincial

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**The Coho Society of the North Shore is a volunteer, environmentally-based organization committed to protecting and revitalizing North Shore salmon rivers and streams. Registered under the Society of BC, the organization is managed by a board of directors elected by members and those appointed by government and business organizations.**

## Board of Directors

### Elected Directors 2003

Gordon Adair	Jim MacCarthy
Tom Boppart	Jacci McTavish
Stella Jo Dean	Tracy Nettles
Heather Dunsford	Val Stephenson
Murray Dykeman	Dina Zeitler
Shaun Hollingsworth	Andy Zullo

### Appointed Directors

Toby Baker Squamish Nation
Rob Harden School District #44
Geoff Jopson School District #45
Peter Leitch North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
Trish Prokop GVRD Parks
Bill Soprovich West Vancouver District Council
Richard Walton North Vancouver District Council
Jim Wild Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Dina Zeitler West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
Administrator Eola Fenton

For more information, please contact us at:  
 Telephone 604-926-6956  
 Fax 604-926-6436  
 Website: [www.cohofestival.com](http://www.cohofestival.com)  
 Email: [info@cohofestival.com](mailto:info@cohofestival.com)  
 1310 Marine Drive,  
 West Vancouver, BC V7B 1B5

# Protecting a Fragile Natural Heritage

Fluctuating and at times extreme climatic conditions create problems in salmon rivers across the province, including those on the North Shore. Summer drought and low water levels followed by heavy rains take their toll on local streams, resulting in extensive damage to spawning habitat. Add factors such as disease, low flows and warm temperatures in the Fraser and other major rivers and it is not surprising that the number of fish returning to spawn is down dramatically. Experience in the past two years is a reminder that our local fishery is a fragile natural resource.

Nature dictates some of these phenomena but others are man-made. On the North Shore despite co-operative efforts by government agencies, committed volunteer groups, enlightened developers and other parties, urban development and pollution continue to put pressure on local streams.

With some salmonid stocks declining to near extinction levels, the need to raise public awareness of the severity of the situation is critical to the future of our fish bearing waterways.

To that end, the Coho Society and its partners have undertaken a community wide public information/education campaign directed at citizens of all ages. The objective is to convince young and old that, by being actively involved, they can improve conditions in neighbourhood streams. Action includes elimination of pollution from chemicals and construction activity and more environment friendly use and management of those streams. That is the message for all audiences, whether they be elementary school students or political and business decision makers. It is a challenge all can identify with.

The campaign also points to recent successes in enabling salmon to migrate and spawn in formerly unproductive streams. Fish culture programs in local schools and Adopt-a-Fish field days are other means of increasing public awareness and participation.

By developing that sense of stewardship and pride in their watersheds, North Shore citizens will ensure that wild salmon will always return to spawn in local waters.

## Volunteer Leaders Recognized



Kurt Peiffer      Mary Sue Atkinson      Bill Ryan

Three volunteer leaders were honoured with Watershed Steward Awards at the Society's 2004 Annual General Meeting. It was the third year that North Shore citizens were acknowledged in this way for outstanding effort to protect the natural environment.

This year's recipients were Bill Ryan, Mary Sue Atkinson and Kurt Peiffer.

Bill Ryan is a long time director and former president of the Seymour Salmonid Society. As elder statesman on the Seymour Board, Ryan plays a leading role in political

and operating policy matters affecting the hatchery and the river itself. In addition to producing 700,000 fish annually, the Seymour hatchery serves as an education centre giving hundreds of students hands-on experience in fish culture.

Mary Sue Atkinson lists her occupation as homemaker but she is perhaps better known as an outspoken role model for young people concerned about the environment. Atkinson's battles with governments and the establishment are legendary. She served on the Seymour Salmonid Society Board of Directors

at one time and is currently active on the Pacific Fisheries Resources Conservation Council.

Kurt Peiffer is a senior member of West Vancouver Streamkeepers Society. In addition to acting as treasurer, Peiffer has a major responsibility in the society's volunteer operated fish hatchery on Nelson Creek and in the Adopt-a-Fish program. In co-operation with municipal staff, Department of Fisheries and developers, West Vancouver Streamkeepers are making progress in revitalizing local salmon streams.

In presenting the awards, Coho Society president, Jim MacCarthy said "In serving as they do, these three demonstrate the important role that volunteers play in making good things happen in our community. It is our privilege to be associated with them and the organizations they represent in ensuring that salmon will always return to North Shore rivers and streams."

# Wild salmon and the environment face serious challenges

Continued from page 1

economy and as a needed protein food source, he called on the farm industry and governments to take direct action in addressing disease, sea lice infestation and other conditions that threaten wild salmon migrating near fish farms. The Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council has recommended that provincial and federal governments establish a Salmon Aquaculture Forum at which issues could be debated and resolved. In its report, the Council cautioned "The seriousness of the wild salmon and aquaculture issues should not be underestimated." Fraser also advocated more co-operation and

***"Vision and leadership will determine the future of Pacific salmon"***

co-ordination by governments to clearly define the roles and accountability of all stakeholders. "Vision and leadership will determine the future of Pacific salmon," he said.

In concluding, Mr. Fraser stressed the importance of grassroots advocacy and stewardship and noted that attendance at this meeting showed the diverse and widespread interest in conservation of wild salmon. (The fact that many stayed

after the meeting to continue the discussion with Mr. Fraser was indicative of their own concerns and interest in his message.)

For more information, visit the Conservation Council website at [www.fish.bc.ca](http://www.fish.bc.ca)



Honourable John Fraser

***The Honourable John Fraser was raised in Vancouver, obtained a law degree at the University of B.C. in 1954 and in 1972 was elected Member of Parliament for the Vancouver South Riding. His public service as MP goes back 21 years, during which time he held senior cabinet posts as Minister of the Environment and Minister of Fisheries. He also served as Speaker of the House, and has the distinction of being the first person to be elected to that position by his peers from all parties. To carry out his responsibilities as Speaker at the high level he set for himself, Fraser learned French, which earned him the respect of all members of the House.***

***In 1994, John Fraser chaired a public enquiry on Fraser River Sockeye and later served as Canada's Ambassador for the Environment at the United Nations. In 1998 he was appointed chair of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, charged with advising governments and the public on salmon conservation issues. The Honourable John Fraser falls into the distinguished Canadian category. His honours include the Order of Canada, the order of B.C. and honorary doctorate degrees from Simon Fraser and St. Lawrence Universities.***

## Coho Society is Environmental Advocate

In its role as an advocate on the protection of salmonid watersheds, the Coho Society speaks out from time to time on environmental issues. Action may be in the form of appearances before municipal councils, representations to provincial or federal governments or direct contact with special interest groups and partners.

In some cases, the Society may support a particular proposition, in other cases it may state its concern and offer constructive alternatives.

A recent issue on which the Society made its views known was the provincial government's intention to eliminate the Seymour Salmonid Society's wild Steelhead program. To the disappointment of the Seymour group and others who know the river well, the government proceeded with its plan.

Another controversial issue on which the Society has taken a position is the provincial government's proposed overhead route for the Sea-to-Sky highway at Horseshoe Bay.

In a letter to Premier Campbell, the Society registered its concerns about the environmental impact an overland route would have on

Larsen Creek fish and other marine life in the watershed and on the wildlife and fauna of Eagleridge bluffs.

The Society's letter pointed out that these are both environmentally fragile areas. They must be protected and preserved for heritage and social reasons, not only for residents of West Vancouver but for citizens throughout the south coast region.

The Premier was urged to use his good offices to ensure that the four-lane tunnel option recommended by West Vancouver Council and its consultants and strongly supported by North Shore citizens is selected.

In his reply, the Premier said no decision had been made. "We are working towards a solution that will ultimately make the highway safer and more reliable while remaining sensitive to environmental concerns", the letter said.

If you would like to share your thoughts on the subject with Premier Campbell you can e-mail him at [www.gov.bc.ca](mailto:www.gov.bc.ca) or write him at Box 9041, Provincial Government, Victoria, BC V8W 9E1.

# Highlights of the 2004 COHO

Coho Festival 2004 celebrated 25 years of bringing wild salmon back to North Shore streams. Judged one of the best ever, this year's festival, following the 'Get Hooked on Family Fun' theme, was a huge success from beginning to end.

With a record of being rained out only once in 24 years, Coho festival organizers took a positive approach in planning the Sunday, September 12th feature day program.

Their optimism was well-founded. After several days of heavy rain leading up to the festival, on the morning of September 12th clouds parted and the sun broke through. It was the beginning of a great day that began with the Coho Run from Kitsilano beach, through Stanley Park and over Lions gate Bridge to Ambleside Park. Some 300 athletes completing the run were treated to breakfast in the park hosted by Tiddlycove Lions Club.

The Coho Walk down the Capilano River, cancelled last year because of the forest closures, returned as a feature event. The 8.5km journey from Cleveland Dam to the Capilano Hatchery and the Capilano Suspension Bridge continuing to Ambleside Park was a spectacular nature experience for the 900 family members participating.

As the morning progressed, crowds came out for balloon rides, exciting rides and other fun activities, including face painting and skill games. Many young artists tried their hand at painting a large living river mural.

Talented local bands, roving performers and daredevil cyclists entertained crowds throughout the day. Also popular were the puppy petting booth, police dog demonstrations and trained canine performances.

Elected officials and business and special interest groups were well represented as were police and fire prevention forces. Some 60 celebrity chefs from the North Shore and elsewhere in B.C. donned aprons at the salmon barbeque. A large crowd followed members of the Squamish Nation to the beach to witness the traditional Blessing of the Salmon ceremony.

Environment and fish culture exhibits and demonstrations organized by Department of Fisheries officials, local Streamkeepers Groups and the North Shore Outdoor School were informative and impressive.

The Coho Festival is presented as a 'Celebration of Nature's Annual Miracle of Salmon Returning to North Shore Rivers and Streams.' It was a family celebration this year for the estimated 6,000 local residents and visitors, thanks to support of our sponsors and many volunteers.



# Festival at Ambleside Park



1. Daredevil cyclists thrilled the crowd.
2. Up, up in the Remax balloon.
3. Co-ordinator Sandra Ferros organized 60 Celebrity Chefs.
4. Celebrity Chefs do their thing on a sunny afternoon.
5. The Squamish Nation Blessing of the Salmon Ceremony.
6. Main Stage entertainment kept the festival lively.
7. Coho Run winners celebrate their victories.
8. West Vancouver students, teachers and parents during Tag Day at Park Royal Mall.
9. Painted faces are part of family fun.

*Coho Communications images courtesy of Alan Beaton, Tor Bengtson and Gladys Lee*

# Fishnets and Tails Gala Highlights COHO 25th Anniversary

The Fishnets & Tails Gala in celebration of the Coho Society of the North Shore's 25th Anniversary was a great success. Over 300 people representing



Gala co-chairs Murray Dykeman and Heather Dunsford with event co-ordinator Margo Johnston.

business, political, educational and environmental groups gathered for the event in the Squamish Nation Recreation Centre on Thursday, September 9th.

Guests were welcomed by the Squamish Nation Dancers and the evening took off from there. Special decorations, entertainment, music and visual presentations and food stations by sponsoring restaurants created a warm, high-energy atmosphere.

In their remarks, Gala Committee co-chairs Murray Dykeman and Heather Dunsford explained

that the purpose of the gathering was two-fold: first to network and build a bond among those for whom protection of the environment is a priority and second to raise funds for educational programs and stream protection projects.

Silent and live auctions of items generously donated by sponsors was spirited and humorous. Allocation of funds raised for fish culture programs in local schools and to support volunteer managed hatcheries and volunteer groups involved in stream revitalization will be reported on at a later date.



COHO Society director Tom Boppart & his wife, Heather, share a laugh at the Gala.

A program item of particular interest was a presentation by Squamish Nation elders in which they gave the Coho Society the Squamish name *Ta sts-owi-kwi sté Imexw* which translated is "The



Drummer William Nahanee officiated at a ceremony honouring the Coho Society with the Squamish name *Ta Sts-owi-Kwi Sté Imexw* meaning "The Salmon People".

Salmon People." This honour recognized many years of working together to protect the salmon. Another item of interest was the unveiling of well-known West Vancouver artist Daniel Izzard's painting 'Return of the Capilano Coho.'

The inaugural Fishnets & Tails Gala was a social and financial success. Murray Dykeman thanked all the sponsors and participants for their generosity and support in making it a night to remember.

## Daniel Izzard's "Return of the Capilano Coho"

Internationally acclaimed artist Daniel Izzard is a long time environmentalist and supporter of the Coho Society. His way of celebrating the Society's 25th Anniversary was to donate one-time reproduction rights of his 'Return of the Capilano Coho' to the society. Izzard's rationale for his painting follows:



***The return of the Coho is something we all expect and take for granted. However the reality is: the act of migration be it by fins, flippers, wings or legs is a very delicate phenomenon, a miracle of nature, which has been under threat throughout the history of human evolution. The time has come for us, as enlightened stewards of this small planet, to do whatever it takes to respect, protect and preserve all other creatures of this world. This means protecting their habitats, the rivers, streams, seas, wetlands, free open ranges, and large untouched mountains and forested areas, not forgetting the clear air and pure water we, as cohabitants, need for survival. Failure to do this will be at our mutual peril.***

***The Coho Society has made great strides over the past 25 years and is always raising its sights on the future. My congratulations and thanks from all those who cannot speak for themselves.***

Daniel J. Izzard SFCA.CIPA

# Giving Children a Reason to Care

Take hundreds of children, copious buckets of squiggling little Coho, official adoption certificates and what do you get? The Adopt-a-Fish Program – a unique salmon release program on the North Shore.

The program kicked off in Spring 2002 with dual debut releases in Edgemont's MacKay Creek and West Vancouver's MacDonald Creek in Memorial Park.

This year's late April event at MacDonald Creek attracted over 200 kids and was organized by the Coho Society in partnership with West Vancouver Streamkeepers and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Conveniently located across from the release site, the West Vancouver Memorial Library hosted event registration, a lecture on the life cycle of salmon and a salmon-themed book display.

"The idea is that by putting fish in the water themselves, the kids will remember streams are important," said Coho Society Director Tom Boppart. "Getting children involved at an early age ensures their awareness that streams are alive and need to be kept clean will stay with them for life."

The Society publicizes the release event through flyers handed out at all local elementary schools in the area. Kids turn up on the day and receive an official adoption certificate from the Coho Society. They are then led to the creekside release site where they are handed a bucket of five to eight Coho smolts some three to four inches long from the DFO's Capilano hatchery. Streamkeepers assist the kids in releasing the fish and give a brief history of the



A budding environmentalist prepares to release her salmon to the wild.

salmon life cycle.

"There is great excitement among the children," said West Vancouver Streamkeepers President Hugh Hamilton. "They particularly like the part when the squiggling fish are put in their little buckets. Their squeals of delight put a smile on everybody's face."

"The parents are just as interested as the kids in the whole process. They ask almost as many questions as the children!" said Hamilton.

"The most commonly asked question is 'Will the salmon return?'" said Boppart. "These are hatchery fish but they do come back to the stream they were released in within two to three years. About one in a hundred will survive to return."

By signing his or her name to the adoption certificate, each child makes a commitment to help maintain clean waterways to keep their fry healthy. They agree to get actively involved in protecting the environment by keeping litter and garden wastes out of streams, using a small amount of environmentally-safe soap when washing the family car and reminding neighbours not to dump pollutants down street drains. It is hoped these actions will remain with them throughout their lifetime.



Another youngster watches intently as his just-released fish swim away.

## Stream Watch: It's up to all of us

A recent news report on the spill of toxic material into Lynn Creek is an example of irresponsible action contaminating local salmon streams.

In this case quick action by North Vancouver District staff prevented what could have been a disastrous situation. Investigation by Environment Canada to identify the responsible party is underway. Contraventions of the Fisheries Act can bring severe penalties.

The Lynn Creek spill is not an isolated case. Incidents of chemicals and construction effluent being dumped into creeks and storm drains happen far too often.

As a community and as individuals, we are responsible to protect our fish-bearing waterways. Private citizens can participate in three ways:

- First, by ensuring that chemicals, oil, pesticides and other toxic materials do not get into streams and storm drains.
- Second, by joining the local Streamkeepers organization and getting actively involved as a volunteer.
- Finally, by quickly reporting any unusual condition in the neighbourhood streams, such as fish kills, sudden appearance of froth or change in water

colour, dumping of construction materials or garbage in creeks or machines operating in or around creeks. Report to the appropriate offices:

**Federal Government**  
**Fisheries & Oceans Canada: 1-800-465-4336**  
**Environment Canada: 604-666-6100**

**Provincial Government**  
**Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection**  
**1-800-663-3456**

**Municipal Governments**  
**North Vancouver District: 604-990-3666**  
**North Vancouver City: 604-987-7155**  
**West Vancouver District**  
**604-925-7101 or 604-925-7100 (after hours)**

# Salmon Schooling Our Students



Students and salmon participate enthusiastically in the fry release from their Salmonids in the Classroom program

Each year over 5000 salmon can be found swimming in schools throughout North and West Vancouver – elementary schools that is.

For over 20 years thousands of school children across the North Shore have had the chance to learn about salmon first hand through the annual classroom incubation program Salmonids in the Classroom.

With some 100 salmon incubators spread across classrooms of 30 or more students and often involving the whole school, the program provides the opportunity to study the salmon life cycle from the 'eyed stage' when the eggs are delivered into each classroom in January until the 'fry stage' in April/May when the children themselves release the salmonids into the creeks and streams of the North Shore.

Raising 50 or more Coho salmon in the classroom is an excellent opportunity for students to gain awareness of salmon biology and habitat requirements for healthy and sustainable watersheds while developing a new sense of stewardship for salmon.

"It's an exciting experience for kids," said Bev Bowler, Education Coordinator for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the

sponsor of the program. "Although the eggs are fragile and must be kept in the dark, students monitor the water temperature and make daily observations on egg development."

"The final release of the fry into local streams is a wonderful part of the program. The students have taken something from the wild, watched it grow, helped it survive and then set it free," said Bowler.

"The Salmonids program connects classroom science to the real world," said Eagle Harbour Primary School Principal David Langmuir. "Through this connection the students see their actions impacting the environment and it's an important awareness to have. This is lifelong learning and we hope that as the adults of the next generation they'll continue to have a sense of stewardship for the salmon."

The program is a joint effort sponsored by DFO in partnership with the North and West Vancouver school districts. The Coho Society is also a major partner and provides funding for the incubators and other materials critical to the continued success of the program.

## Celebrating Canada Day with Coho



*The Society was out in full force again on July 1st with their hugely popular salmon barbecues at the official Canada Day celebrations in both North and West Vancouver. It was the third year that hundreds of buns filled with scrumptious salmon and delectable hot dogs were sold at the Waterfront Park and Ambleside Park locations. This is just one of the many ways Coho volunteers reach out to the the North Shore community throughout the year.*

## SALMON TALES

### *Here's a Fish Story!*

"The one that got away" may have caused many anglers sleepless nights but one Canadian grumbled that he could not sleep because the salmon swimming upstream to spawn made too much racket. Just another fish story? Read on.

An early governor of New Brunswick complained that such a large number of salmon entered the Miramichi River that "One is unable to sleep, so great is the noise they make in falling upon the water."

The tale is told in a new book by David R. Montgomery, professor of geomorphology or study of the evolution of earth's landforms at the University of Washington. *King of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run of Salmon* from Westview Press. A glowing review in *The Economist* enthused that "This admirable account of salmon evolution and conservation... is a fascinating and important book. It should be read by us all."

### *Fish of the Year*

In his August 4th column, professional fishing guide David Korsch reported that up to that time, the "fish of the year" weighing in at 50.5 pounds was taken at the Hole in the Wall in Horseshoe Bay.

Since then there have been reports of Chinook salmon of 55 pounds or more being caught (or lost) off the Capilano River and elsewhere on the North Shore. Apparently the "fish of the year" is still to be decided.

### *Enviro Award Winner*

Long time salmon stream protector Karen Milne was the recipient of The City of North Vancouver's first annual Environmental Stewardship Award at a special meeting of the City's Parks & Environment Advisory Committee.

The award recognized Milne's leadership role in habitat enhancement in the Mosquito Creek Watershed, including the Fell Channel and Thain Creek projects. Milne was instrumental in creation of the City's environmental protection program and produced education programs on the Mosquito Creek Heritage Walk and websites on urban streams.

In presenting the award, Mayor Barbara Sharp and Councillor Barbara Perrault spoke of Karen Milne's outstanding volunteer contribution over many years to protect the environment.

In 2003 Karen Milne was recipient of a Coho Society of the North Shore Watershed Leader Award.