

September 03, 2021

For Immediate Release:

Tom Berry Gravel Pit- Largescale Salmon Restoration Project

Background. Tom Berry gravel pit is located within the traditional and unceded territory of the Stó:lō Peoples. The Tom Berry Gravel Pit (also known as Starrett Pond to Hope locals) was created immediately adjacent to the Fraser River near the town of Hope, B.C., to provide material for the Coquihalla highway construction in the 1980's. Due to its proximity to the river, it is seasonally flooded when the Fraser River rises during the spring freshet. Chinook, sockeye and coho juvenile salmon swimming down the Fraser River canyon often enter the pit during the spring when the river is high. During this time, the pit is like a "pit stop" that provides the young salmon a place to feed, grow and rest before continuing their journey to the Pacific Ocean. But, as the river water-levels recede in late summer, the pit becomes disconnected from the Fraser River. Once this happens, the salmon become stranded in the pit and cannot complete their life cycle.

Purpose. The goals of this restoration project are to improve connectivity between the pit and the Fraser River to allow salmon to utilize the habitat and complete their life cycles; and restore this pit to support complex wetland features and floodplain forest ecology for salmon, waterfowl, and wildlife. Habitat restoration work has been guided by a working group from representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Stó:lō Nation, and Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition (FVWC). The FVWC have been actively working to improve this watershed and salmon habitat with our community and partners over the last four years.

Restoration to occur at Tom Berry Gravel Pit.

There are two phases to restoration:

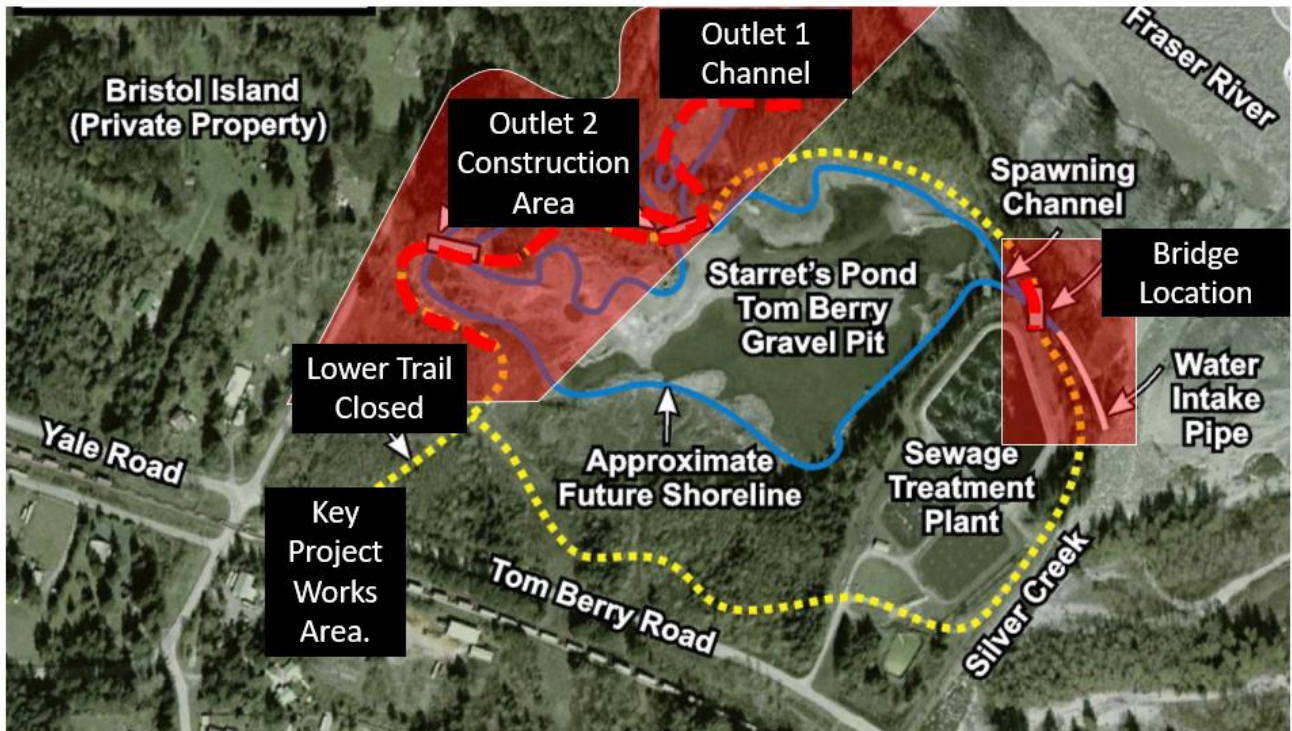
1. Heavy machinery including excavators, bobcats and dump trucks will be operating from approximately September 8-24, 2021 to construct the salmon channels located at the northwest side of the pit near Bristol Slough. To maximize safety, pedestrian access to this property may be temporarily restricted during salmon channel construction.
2. Tree planting and bioengineering efforts are planned for the fall 2021 and spring 2022 throughout the pit to help revegetate the area.

Learn More!

To learn more about this project and/or the Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition, please visit our website at <https://fvwc.ca/our-work/tom-berry-starrets-pond-trail/> or contact us: info@fvwc.ca | 604-791-2235.

Acknowledgement. Funding for this project is provided by DFO Coastal Restoration Fund, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Project supporters includes Hope Mountain Centre for Outdoor Learning, AdvatangeHope, District of Hope, Fraser Valley Regional District, DFO Resource Restoration Unit, BCIT, Hope Communities in Bloom, Wetlands Force, and community volunteers.





CONSTRUCTION (CREATING NEW & RESTORING SALMON CHANNELS)

When: September 8-24, 2021

Where: Tom Berry Gravel Pit Hope BC

Why: To restore and create new salmon habitat

What to Expect: You can expect to see excavators at Tom Berry Gravel pit

Who: Habitat construction will be led by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Resource Restoration unit and supported by Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition, a charity that specializes in salmon habitat restoration.



To maximize safety, pedestrian access to this property may be **temporarily restricted** during salmon channel construction.



TREE PLANTING, BIOENGINEERING & HERBIVORY

When: Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

Where: Tom Berry Gravel Pit Hope BC

Why: Trees and shrubs are important for healthy streams and salmon. Trees shade and cool the water, the roots stabilize streambanks and salmon eat the insects that fall from the leaves

What to Expect: You can expect to see biologists and volunteers planting trees and shrubs; installing wire cages around trees to reduce damage from herbivory impacts and pruning vegetation.

Who: Planting will be led by the Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition, a charity that specializes in salmon habitat restoration and will be supported by their partners.