

October 22, 2018

Jubilee wetland restoration update

Restoration of the Jubilee wetland that had been previously infilled has reached another milestone.

Various wetland areas have been sculpted to include a range of depths, peat was applied to increase organic covering and coarse woody debris was placed in select areas to add habitat complexity.

“Completing the underlying framework is an important milestone,” says Terri Martin, the City’s environmental specialist. “The wetland is located in a basin with no overland surface flow to adjacent creeks. It’s vital to get the hydrological aspects right, and quite a bit of work has gone into this. There might be some fine tuning to do once we have a chance to see how this new system works, but this phase is largely complete now.”

The process began earlier in the season with amphibian salvage after the hatching period was over. Biologists relocated a few Pacific tree frogs and northern red-legged frogs as well as almost 240 Pacific northwestern salamanders to a number of deep water pools so that water levels in the area could be lowered for machine access. Work revealed that more of the previously mined peat was available than originally estimated, and this helped increase the amount of organic covering available.

“We had several opportunities to meet on site with the qualified environmental professional to see the restoration unfolding,” Martin continues. “This is a large project and it was quite an eye opener to hear from the biologist about the various challenges of transforming a paper plan into the beginnings of restored habitat.”

Parkway Properties had already removed an extensive amount of invasive Scotch broom and blackberry, and these removal efforts continued in 2018. The biologist team is now working on a planting plan for the fall season. Parkway Properties is also working on the registration of the conservation covenant on the 2.1 hectares of forest land near the west property boundary that is part of the conservation solution as set out in the development permit.

“A conservation covenant will also be placed on the wetland once the construction is complete and the wetland can be surveyed,” says Peter Wipper, the City’s director of planning.

By year end, a post development report will summarize the restoration work to date and present the as-built areas of habitat. A five-year post construction monitoring plan will also be submitted at this time. Monitoring objectives will include evaluation water elevations and hydroperiods, invasive species, wildlife use and vegetation establishment.

Work to restore the wetland follows City Council’s December 2016 requirement for a combination of wetland restoration and compensation land at a two-to-one replacement ratio for the northern portion of the infilled fen wetland south of Jubilee Parkway. The solution includes retaining two existing provincially red-listed (endangered) trembling aspen forested wetlands and existing forest land on the west side of the property bordering the Woods Creek wetland. Conservation targets (including strategies to reduce threats to targets) as well as ongoing monitoring and measurement of key ecological attributes will use accepted scientific methods and best practices.

In 2017, the City issued the development permit for the restoration, and a water control / diversion structure was installed with a Highways permit and a Provincial *Water Sustainability Act* notification.

Please direct questions about the restoration plan to Terri Martin, the City’s environmental specialist at 250-286-5711 or via email to terri.martin@campbellriver.ca. The City will continue to issue news releases on the progress of the wetland restoration.

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Contact: Terri Martin, Environmental Specialist

250-286-5711
