

FBSES November 2019 Flyer

About 5,000 years ago, science tells us, the West Coast assumed pretty much the shape we know today, the icecaps had gone, and the salmon were coming to streams like the one that became Rosewall Creek. *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, the coho, could be on its 1500th generation arriving here this fall—they know the way. One of the ways we identify fish is named Adam Vojnic, and he's a streamwalker from Courtenay. He knows his fish. On September 30, Adam checked Rosewall Creek from the estuary to the upstream park boundary for us and found 60 coho, on October 13, 129 coho, as well as 80 jacks (two year old males) 27 Chum, three Pinks and three Chinook .(The last two trios are strays; they took a wrong turn.) So the spawning run is well under way, as is all the work at the hatchery; the fish ladder is in, all our egg-take and bacterial kidney disease (BKD) testing gear assembled, the incubation room newly refinished and watertight, the creek is high and fast with the latest rain, and fish are finding their way to our brood channel.



Because we never want just one big job going on at a time, we also clip our brood stock in October and November, taking off adipose fins so that lucky fishermen can keep the hatchery fish they catch. That's after we've gone to all the work of raising eggs to smolt stage and sending them out into the wild with serious advice about avoiding shiny objects and juicy looking hoochies. This year, we have 'only' 23,350 coho fry to clip, because of our high losses to BKD in this brood. All the eggs we take are kept separate until the tests on the kidneys of their mothers are back—and anything infected has to be destroyed.

The other job completed last month was returning all our rescued fry to their natal streams to enjoy the reality show that is life in the wild. For our little competitors, getting off the island alive is winning—and then you have to stay alive out there in the Strait. Yet another job—we keep busy—is potting up our donated silviculture 'plugs' into gallon pots for later use in the environmental restoration projects we're big on. 100 of those pots will go to reforestation around the Mackenzie Overpass in Victoria, and another hundred to McNaughton Creek's new side channel area. FBSES has just had 300 spruce donated by Mosaic, the forest products company, and 300 cedars from BC Timber Sales; we aren't going to run out.

While FBSES is all-volunteer, some things need money. One of the best sources of it is the Pacific Salmon Foundation and its annual dinners every fall all over the Island and rest of BC. Chaired again this year by Fanny Bay's own Judy Ackinclose, Courtenay's sold out dinner, live and silent auctions and dance raised \$51,000 for Comox Valley enhancement groups, and sold out 2020's dinner as well. Correction; the photo caption in October 2019's FBSES column misidentified the dates of the photographs. The top two of the set were taken August 12, 2019 not July 12 as written. The error was the writer's, not the Flyer's.

As always, you're welcome at 8425 Berray Road any Wednesday or Saturday morning to see fish and neighbors in action, and there is also the interesting www.fbses.ca