

Restoring a Creek



In the 1960s, salmon were regular visitors to Douglas Creek as they came home to spawn. Since then, storm water surges during heavy rains washed away spawning gravel and eroded the creek banks. As well, thousands of people and pets visit the park each year and some have ventured into the creek bed causing further damage to the salmon habitat.

To bring the salmon home, the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, the District of Saanich and other partners launched an ambitious project in 2010 to restore the creek and its banks.

This photo was taken shortly after the bridge was installed in 2021 and illustrates several key elements to restoring a creek. The bridge itself provides a safe crossing, especially when the water is high and helps protect sensitive salmon habitat from unnecessary foot traffic. The filter fence is placed during construction to prevent sediment from entering the creek. It typically remains in place for several months afterwards to allow the soils to settle. Large rocks help to prevent erosion during high water flow, and the riffles help to add oxygen to the water. The pools that are created allow fish and their food to hang out.



Can you find me in the river bed?
HINT: Look along the bolders.
I'm right along the high water mark.



Large boulders have been added to stabilize the creek banks during high water flows.



The crew added logs and other large woody debris to enhance the creek habitat. Woody debris changes the water flow creating places for fish and other creatures to hide, hunt, or rest.



Hundreds of native trees (such as Cedar – XPA) and shrubs were planted on the banks of the creek, but many had to be protected from deer who like to munch on young plants and rub their antlers on the trunks, killing them.



DAK,ILĆ (Sala) pictured above, ELILE, (Salmonberry), SKEKĆES (Red Huckleberry), KÁTELĆ (Oceanspray) and SENI,ILĆ (Dull Oregon grape) were just some of the native plants added to the park.



A new split-rail fence helps designate the trail so that the stream banks and stream bed can recover.

Photo: Darrell Wick



Before any of this work could begin, crews had to divert the water from the creek so that they could work in a dry creek bed. They also widened the creek in places to help slow the water during heavy rains.

A Team Effort

The successful completion of this project was a partnership between the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the District of Saanich, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Goldstream (Howard English) Hatchery.

Logs are anchored with cables to prevent them from being washed away.



Photo: Darrell Wick

