



Media Release

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Juvenile wild salmon confirmed in newly restored “Salmon-Safe” stream on BC Transit site in View Royal

VICTORIA – BC Transit’s handyDART facility in View Royal is now home to young salmon and trout. Biologists counted 27 fish this past week in the newly-constructed stream that runs through the handyDART site and connects with the nearby salmon-bearing Craigflower Creek. 20 juvenile Coho salmon and seven cutthroat trout were found, confirming what the non-profit Fraser Basin Council (FBC) had anticipated would happen when they certified the site under the Salmon-Safe BC program last fall.

“This is a joyful moment. It’s the reason we have the Salmon-Safe program — to encourage land and water stewardship that help wild salmon like these thrive,” said Theresa Fresco, program manager at FBC. “The View Royal site that BC Transit is redeveloping was previously an old, degraded industrial property with a badly damaged waterway. The stream restoration, and now the fish, show that sound management and community stewardship can have amazing results.”

The new stream has riffles and pools, as well as purposely placed rocks, logs and weirs that break up the water flow, introduce oxygen to the water, and reduce stream bank erosion. Newly planted shrubs and trees will protect the banks and shade the new stream as they grow. The stream has also created a wildlife corridor connecting to the forest along Craigflower Creek. A Salmon-Safe expert assessment team visited the handyDART construction site in March 2022. They reviewed BC Transit’s environmental management plan, which includes extensive erosion and sediment controls and water quality monitoring, and Salmon-Safe certification was granted in September 2022.

“Salmon are at risk all along our coast. We once had thousands of small streams that provided over-wintering habitat for young fish, but many of them have been lost or paved over.” said Cori Barraclough from Aqua-Tex Scientific Consulting and lead environmental monitor for the project. “Our goal in building this new creek was to reverse some of that harm. We hoped that if we built it, the fish would come, but finding so many young, healthy fish in this brand-new channel is very gratifying. This builds on the excellent work being done by local streamkeepers and Esquimalt Anglers to protect and enhance the Craigflower Creek watershed.”

While the site is still under construction and the handyDART facility set to open next year, the fish aren’t the only ones that have moved in as other species are already calling the new stream home. Earlier this year, an American Dipper bird took a liking to the stream, as well as a heron and a variety of other small birds including chickadees and sparrows. A terrestrial garter snake has also made a nest on the slope

near the stream among the shrubs that were recently planted by local elementary students, and a family of deer calls the site home.

The BC Transit handyDART centre is the first “Salmon-Safe” certified project on Vancouver Island and was recognized for excellence in water conservation, stormwater management and restoration of the stream. Certification of the site by the Fraser Basin Council through its Salmon-Safe program recognizes progressive, environmentally friendly land and water management practices in BC.

About the Fraser Basin Council and Salmon-Safe BC

The [Fraser Basin Council \(FBC\)](#) is a non-profit organization that brings people together to advance sustainability in British Columbia. FBC manages the Salmon-Safe BC program to encourage and recognize land and water management practices in both urban and agricultural settings to better protect and restore Pacific salmon habitat and water quality. Salmon-Safe urban certification standards apply to variety of urban development landscapes, ranging from high-density urban infill to industrial parks. While the standards are designed as a standalone program, they can also complement other leading certification standards, such as LEED, Sustainable Sites, Envision and Earth Advantage.

To learn more about the Salmon-Safe program, visit <https://www.salmonsafe.ca>.

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Photos, courtesy of BC Transit and the Fraser Basin Council

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Caption: BC Transit’s handyDART site development in View Royal, recognized as Salmon-Safe last fall by the Fraser Basin Council, features a newly restored stream that is now home to juvenile salmon. Environmental monitors on the site this past week counted, measured and released 20 juvenile Coho salmon and 7 juvenile cutthroat trout.