

Species at risk benefit from land donation

By Paul J. Henderson, The Times February 11, 2011

A riverside property in the Chilliwack River Valley has been donated to the Abbotsford-based Fraser Valley Conservancy (FVC) by the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD).

The property, at 48513 Auchenway Rd., will be used for conservation purposes in perpetuity and connects Crown land to provincial parkland.

"Through the restoration of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats, a very significant wildlife corridor connecting Crown land to provincial parkland will be created and maintained," said Ashley Peters of the FVC.

The FVC said the property and adjacent area is home to several species at risk, one of which may be the Coastal Giant Salamander.

Because of a mudslide two years ago the Auchenway property had been deemed unsafe for residential use, according to FVRD Area E director David Lamson.

"The Fraser Valley Conservancy has partnered with the Chilliwack River Action Committee to plan for remove several old sheds and alien plant species," Lamson told the Times via e-mail. "Bioengineering methods are planned to restore natural habitat."

Lamson said this work is intended to reduce sedimentation into Ryder Creek and degradation of downstream salmon spawning habitat.

"Support for this project has come from the CRV Ratepayers Association, Chilliwack Fish and Game Protective Association, Fraser Valley Salmon Society, Chilliwack/Vedder River Clean-Up Coalition, The Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition and individuals," he said.

FVC executive director Lisa Fox said the acquisition of the property is just the first step from their point of view.

"When FVC takes over a property it is a permanent deal and endowment funds are needed to manage and aid in the rehabilitation and re-establishment of habitats for long term success," she said.

- The FVC has set up an Auchenway Habitat Management Fund, donations to which can be made at www.fraservalleyconservancy.ca.

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