



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Conservation Groups Join Forces to Find Solution for Fish Impacted by Seymour River Slide

The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC are funding an engineering assessment to look at restoring fish access to the upper Seymour River. The two non-profits have jointly committed \$20,000 to assess the feasibility of safely clearing the current barrier to fish passage, created when an estimated 50,000 cubic metres of granite fell into the upper river canyon last December.

Government biologists and volunteers from the Seymour Salmonid Society have been monitoring the river upstream of the slide to determine if fish have been able to find their way past the boulders and debris. Shaun Hollingsworth, President of the Seymour Salmonid Society, says the results of that monitoring are concerning. "So far, we haven't detected any fish at the spawning grounds above the slide, and acoustic tagging research by UBC indicates that juveniles released above the slide aren't able to travel downstream, either." Hollingsworth says this could have big impacts on the already-stressed populations. "If these fish remain cut off from their spawning habitats, Seymour's wild steelhead and coho populations will likely be reduced to mere remnants, and in the case of summer-run steelhead, may ultimately disappear."

Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation CEO Brian Springinotic says the decision to support the assessment was based on its potential to help conserve fish stocks and reconnect habitat on the Seymour, including recent habitat restoration efforts on the Seymour River estuary.

"The Seymour River is one of the few in BC that supports both summer-run and winter-run steelhead," says Springinotic. "This assessment will fill in some of the current information gaps about the feasibility of removing this rockfall and provide a realistic picture of what options are available to conserve these populations."

Andrew Wilson, President of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, says the Society's funding contribution is in recognition of the river's value. "The Seymour River provides important habitat for steelhead, coho, and pink salmon. The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is pleased to be part of assessing how fish passage may best be re-established in the Seymour River to ensure these fish

populations are maintained for the public and that the river can continue to provide a productive and sustainable fishery”.

The engineering assessment is scheduled to begin immediately, and is expected to be completed by the end of August.

Photo: Images available [here](#).

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