

Examples of Successful Programs

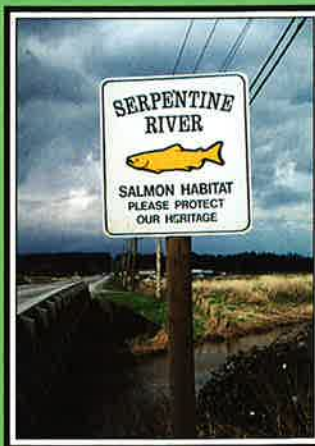
The following groups have undertaken signage programs designed to raise awareness of aquatic and riparian ecosystems. All have agreed to provide advice and guidance to other interested groups.

Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS)



LEPS was formed in 1993 to undertake needed environmental work in Langley, while simultaneously offering hands-on training to high school and college students and informing the public about local environmental issues.

The Society has enlisted the aid of high school students for signage design and the Township of Langley for manufacturing of the signs. Since stream care is a major focus of LEPS, public awareness of stream locations and stream rehabilitation work is considered essential. The signage program is seen as a way to raise community awareness.



The Serpentine Enhancement Society

The Society was formed with the goals of increasing salmon stocks, through the Tynehead Hatchery, and improving fisheries habitat in the Serpentine River. A pioneering signage program was begun in 1991 with the City of Surrey agreeing to erect the signs in locations proposed by the Society.

The Society was responsible for a portion of the costs involved and for the design of the "salmon habitat" sign shown here. Of special note, the design and placement of the signage on provincial highways was approved by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways.

Alouette River Management Society (ARMS)

ARMS was formed in 1993 to promote stewardship of the Alouette River and involve the community in stewardship activities.



One of the many projects being undertaken by this group is a watershed signage program that will actively involve community groups such as the "Beavers" shown here. The Society's vision of an effective signage program is one that combines easily understood signs with community education.

The Storm Drain Marking Program



This program is part of a comprehensive signage program. It also allows young people to participate in spreading the message about the need to protect water quality in local streams and wetlands.

The program involves painting a bright yellow salmon figure on all storm drains that empty into living waterways. The City of Surrey has advanced this to casting the salmon figure into drain covers.

To complement this, brochures that describe the program are distributed throughout the community. The brochures outline the importance of not allowing toxins to enter these drains and, subsequently, local streams and wetlands. Information on recycling and toxic waste disposal is also included. For more information about this program, please contact the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Salmonid Enhancement Program.

For More Information

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Salmonid Enhancement Program: (604) 666-6614

BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Fish and Wildlife, Habitat Protection Branch

Consult the Blue Pages for your regional office number.

Ministry of Transportation and Highways, District Highways Manager

Consult the Blue Pages for your regional office number.

Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS)

Coordinator: (604) 533-6136

Serpentine Enhancement Society

Tynehead Hatchery: (604) 589-9127

Alouette River Management Society (ARMS)

Chairperson: (604) 463-3333

Your local municipality

Consult the Blue Pages of your directory.



Fisheries
and Oceans
Fraser River
Action Plan

Pêches
et Océan
Plan d'action
du Fraser

Canada

Printed in British Columbia on recycled paper.



Developing Fish Habitat Signage

A guide for community groups and concerned citizens.



The first step toward protecting streams and wetlands is education. An excellent way to educate the public about the aquatic ecosystems (streams and wetlands) in your community is through well-designed, well-located signage. Signage can promote awareness and create new respect for a local resource that has been forgotten, taken for granted or perhaps never discovered. This brochure provides the guidance to help you undertake a successful signage project.

Why Protect Habitat?



Development is rapidly depleting our natural resources and destroying fragile ecosystems. The economic and environmental values of these resources must be preserved for future generations whenever possible.

Riparian vegetation (the plant community bordering a stream or wetland) is of particular value

since its benefits are numerous. These include slowing storm water runoff, facilitating groundwater recharge, acting as natural greenspaces, and providing breeding and rearing habitat for insects, birds, amphibians and many other creatures. Healthy riparian ecosystems (soils, plants and animals) surrounding streams and wetlands will help to maintain functional fish habitat.

What Will You Need to Start?

Your most valuable resource is committed volunteers who will see the project through to completion, and beyond. You will also require landowner approval for erection of signage, and, often, financial support. These considerations are discussed in the following sections.

How Will You Pay for Your Signs?

Many volunteer groups secure the materials needed to make signs through fund-raising, donations and sponsorships. An additional benefit of these techniques is that they will raise awareness of your group and its goals within your community.

Municipal governments may provide assistance for a signage program. In certain municipalities, the local government has taken the initiative to develop and install environmental signs. However, you may have to make a presentation to municipal council to begin the process in your area.



Provincial and Federal agencies may also provide general advice on undertaking a signage program and where to seek financial assistance. Contact information is found at the end of this guide.

A Plan of Action

Once you have secured volunteer support and the funding/sponsorship necessary to complete your project, you need to establish realistic objectives and time frames based upon your available resources. Morale among your volunteers may falter if objectives are not met due to unrealistic goals.

A plan of action must be built around a clearly defined final product. In this case, a map showing the locations of all critical habitat where signs should be placed would be the focus of your plan. This requires a survey of your community and a decision by your group as to where signs would be most effective. Many groups have focused on placing signs at road-stream intersections and on trails alongside creeks in order to reach the widest possible audience. Your group should research local signage by-laws to determine if the signage you envision is acceptable in the locations you desire.



You must obtain permission from the landowner to erect signage, whether on public or private land. In order to erect signs on provincial roads, you must obtain approval from your District Highways Manager by applying in writing with full details of your proposed signage design and location (contact information can be found at the end of this guide).

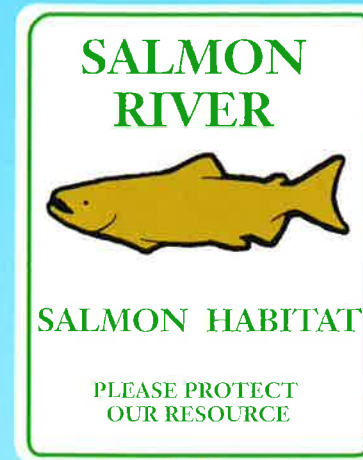
Generally, more durable signage materials, although more costly, will last longer, look more professional and require less maintenance. A variety of options for materials and construction techniques are available. Many groups have used standard aluminum sign blanks for roadside signs and plywood for trail-side applications. Please contact the organizations suggested at the end of this guide for additional advice.

Long-Term Commitments

Regular inspection and maintenance of your signage will be required. Your group should consider the signs to be an ongoing commitment since signs in disrepair may lead the public to think your group and its goals have died, along with the habitat you intended to protect.

Recommended Signage

To promote instant recognition of a particular message, the following designs are suggested. Consistent standards will not only simplify the task of designing your signs but it will help to avoid confusion created by using different signs to serve the same purpose.

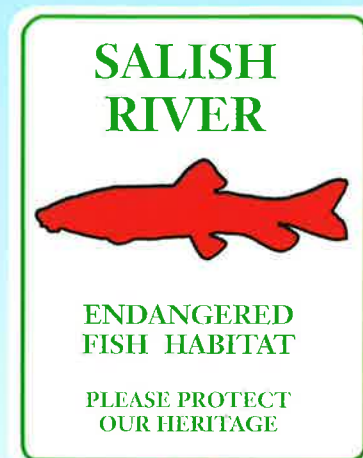


Salmonids

The stylized yellow salmon figure has been adopted by many groups and is a visually effective icon to indicate the presence of salmonids. The green lettering and border on a white, reflective background has proven to be a pleasing combination.

Non-salmonids

To denote other fishes that are not salmonids, a figure of your choice may be used in place of the yellow salmon. A blue sculpin (bullhead) figure has been suggested to indicate non-salmonids. This concept could also be extended to other creatures. For instance, a salamander or toad might be used to represent amphibian habitat.



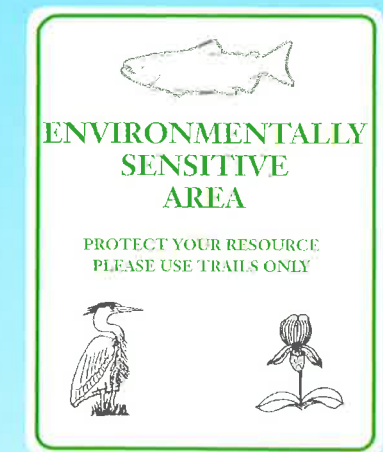
Endangered Species

Should your group wish to bring attention to a threatened or endangered species in your community, a red figure is suggested. This sign shows a stylized Salish Sucker. Information on endangered (red listed) species in your area is available from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.



Stewardship Initiatives

Activities such as habitat restoration or protection could be represented by a simple illustration such as this. Where your stewardship activities are focused on fish habitats, a fish figure should be a highly visible component.



Environmentally Sensitive Areas

These areas often include sensitive riparian and aquatic habitat that must be protected. Your signs, however, should also strive to capture and increase awareness of other sensitive elements of the ecosystem. The wording can, of course, be tailored to your situation.

The key aspects of these signs are their simplicity of message and graphic presentation. Simple, clear designs such as these will be best suited to roadside applications where rapid comprehension is critical. Additional detail could be included on trail-side signage.

The designs shown here are intended to fit a standard 24" by 30" aluminum sign blank which has been approved for roadside applications in many areas. Signage intended for other locations, such as parks, does not need to be restricted to these dimensions, but be sure to research any by-laws or policy that may limit your creativity.