

BEFORE



CN partners with stewardship society to improve fish passage

By Vivian Chui

Partnering with the Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society (NEWSS), the Canadian National Railway Company (CN) installed a new customized culvert to improve fish passage to upstream habitats at its rail crossing over Stoney Creek.

To put in place the pre-assembled culvert measuring three metres in diameter, crews diverted the creek around the working area for the day, as well as temporarily removing the track and an embankment portion, CN spokesperson Kate Fenske said.

Environmental monitors were on site during construction to provide technical direction, diverting flow and salvaging fish from the work area, Fenske added.

"The collected fish were then released downstream unharmed," she said, adding that in the weeks after the culvert installation, crews also built an in-stream rock weir to stabilize the creek's banks and remove debris upstream of the new culvert.

CN completes a fish passage restoration project in Western Canada each year to restore or improve fish access to habitat upstream of the CN track, Fenske said.

Initiated by NEWSS and with two years of planning, the culvert replacement project involved the company

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- Wayne Salewski

shutting down the rail line for 16 hours, said NEWSS director Wayne Salewski.

"It's amazing they got it done in that short period of time, but it's a beautiful fish passage/culvert now," Salewski said. "They made plunge pools on both sides of it, they created a weir, to the help the fish ... it's better than it's been in 50 years."

He added, "As a large corporation with a lot of responsibility to their customers, they don't take this lightly."

The rail company will return next year to conduct fish monitoring, as well as plant trees and shrubs along the land by the creek, Salewski said.

"Their staff on this project has been amazing, very efficient," he said. "It's a good relationship with CN."

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and after

The culvert installation was the society's sixth Stoney Creek project in the last two years — NEWSS and its partners, including CN — have spent more than \$600,000 in restoration and improvement so far

on the creek, Salewski added.

Another project for Stoney Creek will take place soon, as crews build winter habitat near Vanderhoof's pedestrian bridge over the creek.



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