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Fisheries Protection Program

Vedder River Sediment Removal 2016

November 27, 2017 Meeting



FISHERIES PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mandate

- The Fisheries Protection Program (FPP) seeks to maintain the sustainability and ongoing productivity of commercial, recreational and Aboriginal fisheries.
- FPP is the Departmental lead for the administration of the fisheries protection provisions of the *Fisheries Act*.
- The FPP is responsible for the review of proposed works, undertakings and activities that may affect fish and fish habitat, and ensure compliance with the *Fisheries Act* and the *Species at Risk Act*.



The Regulatory Process

- The *Fisheries Act* requires that works, undertakings or activities (WUA) avoid causing serious harm to fish unless authorized by DFO. The *Fisheries Act* defines serious harm as “the death of fish or any permanent alteration to, or destruction of, fish habitat.”
- For any WUA that may result in serious harm to fish, an Application for Authorization must be submitted to DFO. By Regulation, this Application must be accompanied with information about their project, potential impacts on fish and fish habitat, mitigation measures, and an offsetting plan.



The Regulatory Process (continued)

- If an Authorization is issued, it will include conditions that the proponent must adhere to. These enforceable Conditions of Authorization will include requirements for the proponent to:
 - implement, monitor and report on measures to avoid and mitigate the serious harm to fish resulting from the project.
 - implement, monitor and report on the offsetting plan to offset the serious harm to fish resulting from the project.



Gravel Removal 2016

- An Application for Authorization was submitted to FPP by the Vedder River Management Area Committee, representing the City of Chilliwack, City of Abbotsford and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, on May 10th, 2016.
- Based on a review of the Application, FPP concluded the removal of gravel from the seven bars on the Vedder River would result in serious harm to fish and an Authorization was required.



Gravel Removal 2016 (continued)

- The gravel removal would result in serious harm to fish as salmon spawning, rearing and migration habitat would be altered as a result of changes to depths, velocities and flow patterns.
- FPP issued an Authorization for the gravel removal on July 22nd, 2016 to the City of Chilliwack and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.



The 2016 Authorization for Vedder River gravel removal required:

a) measures and standards to avoid and mitigate serious harm to fish.

For example:

- sediment and erosion control,
- fish salvage,
- use of existing access routes,
- specific site designs,
- onsite Qualified Environmental Professional monitoring

b) specific offsetting measures to offset the serious harm to fish.

For example:

- habitat excavations,
- large woody debris placements,
- gravel stockpile for spawning site enhancements



The 2016 Authorization for gravel removal on Vedder River also required:

c) numerous conditions related to monitoring and reporting of the avoidance and mitigation measures and offsetting measures.

For example:

- dated photographs and inspection reports of the works, undertakings and activities,
- detailed mapping of habitat conditions pre and post excavation,
- cross section surveys and hydraulic modelling
- photographic assessment of offsetting



Monitoring

- FPP conducted monitoring on September 1st, 2016 and visited three sites: pre excavation (Keith Wilson), during excavation (Yarrow) and post excavation (Bergman).
- FPP received a post gravel removal monitoring report on December 12th, 2016. The next post gravel removal monitoring report is due December 31st, 2017.
- December 12, 2016 monitoring report identified:
 - that overall footprint and volume less than authorized, however, individual sites varied
 - turbidity issues (sediment release)



- On September 9th, 2016, FPP issued an extension of the expiry date of the Authorization from September 15th, 2016 to September 30th, 2016.
- When FPP issued the extension, 3 sites were completed and the other 3 were either started or were mobilizing to start (one site had previously been dropped due to access issues). It was expected that works could be completed within approximately 10 days of the window, however, weather conditions resulted in work stoppages, thus delaying the works. All works were completed by September 29th, 2016.



Questions?