



## MEDIA RELEASE



**Investment  
Agriculture  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Surrey Staying Sharp on Salmon Enhancement**

**November 2, 2006 – Surrey, B.C.** Surrey salmon streams are benefiting from the Salmon Habitat Restoration Program (SHaRP). What began as a summer employment program eleven years ago, involving local high school and college students, has grown into a proactive watershed stewardship initiative resulting in teams of students enhancing the Little Campbell, Serpentine and Nicomekl watersheds.

SHaRP falls under the umbrella program ‘Nature Matters’, says City of Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts. “Essentially, Nature Matters is about protecting the things that matter most: our water, streams and creeks, and our natural areas and habitats,” says Watts.

But it turns out that SHaRP is so much more than salmon habitat protection. Since 2001, the agricultural component of SHaRP – with funding from the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative – has been working with farmers to integrate environmental and agricultural needs such as livestock exclusion fencing, community education, invasive plant removals and debris removal.

Installation of exclusion fencing along riparian edges – 390 metres this year alone – has addressed and dealt with some unusual problems, from preventing Coho fry becoming trapped in the water retained in cattle hoof prints to ensuring new-born calves do not need to be rescued from the muddy banks of a creek.

Paul Taylor is that Surrey farmer who had to rescue his new-born calf.

“We have had both exclusion fencing installed and invasive plant species removed on our farm by the SHaRP team” says Taylor. “Now, where we had erosion of land along the stream bank due to the cattle we have native plants established and fencing which has prevented further loss of our land to the stream.”

“Our cattle are now safer as they are not able to fall into the stream or get stuck in the mud along the banks,” Taylor adds. “Working with SHaRP has not only improved the stream habitat, it has helped us out on our farm.”

The removal this year of more than 25 truck loads of invasive plants and the re-establishment of hundreds of riparian and wetland plants is assisting farmers in controlling invasive plant species from their fields.

Michael Steele of Clover Valley Organic Farms knows only too well the benefits of SHaRP on his farm.

“We have been involved in the SHaRP project for three years,” said Steele. “By removing couch and quack grasses as well as blackberries and introducing native plant species, we now have a buffer zone between our farm and the non-organic farm that neighbours us.”

Steele adds: “We now enjoy the songs of many birds that have made this newly planted area their home. But I think the most rewarding part of this has been to see the high school students that have worked on our property learn more about the environment and to have an appreciation for it.”

By undertaking on-farm projects that demonstrate agricultural practices with an environmental balance and educating agricultural producers on provincial and federal fisheries regulations, not only has awareness increased amongst the agricultural community but benefits have been realized in reduced erosion of land, increased land usage, livestock safety and improved water quality in creeks.

This project – an undertaking of the City of Surrey and funding partners including the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative (AEPI) – is an example of how working together can bring awareness, understanding and improvement of environmental practices for both farmers and their communities.

The AEPI provides funding assistance for farmers in B.C. to address environmental issues, enhance environmental sustainability and reduce the impacts of wildlife on agriculture. Funding for the AEPI is provided through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, a joint program of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. AEPI funds are held in trust with the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. The B.C. Agriculture Council manages the program.

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