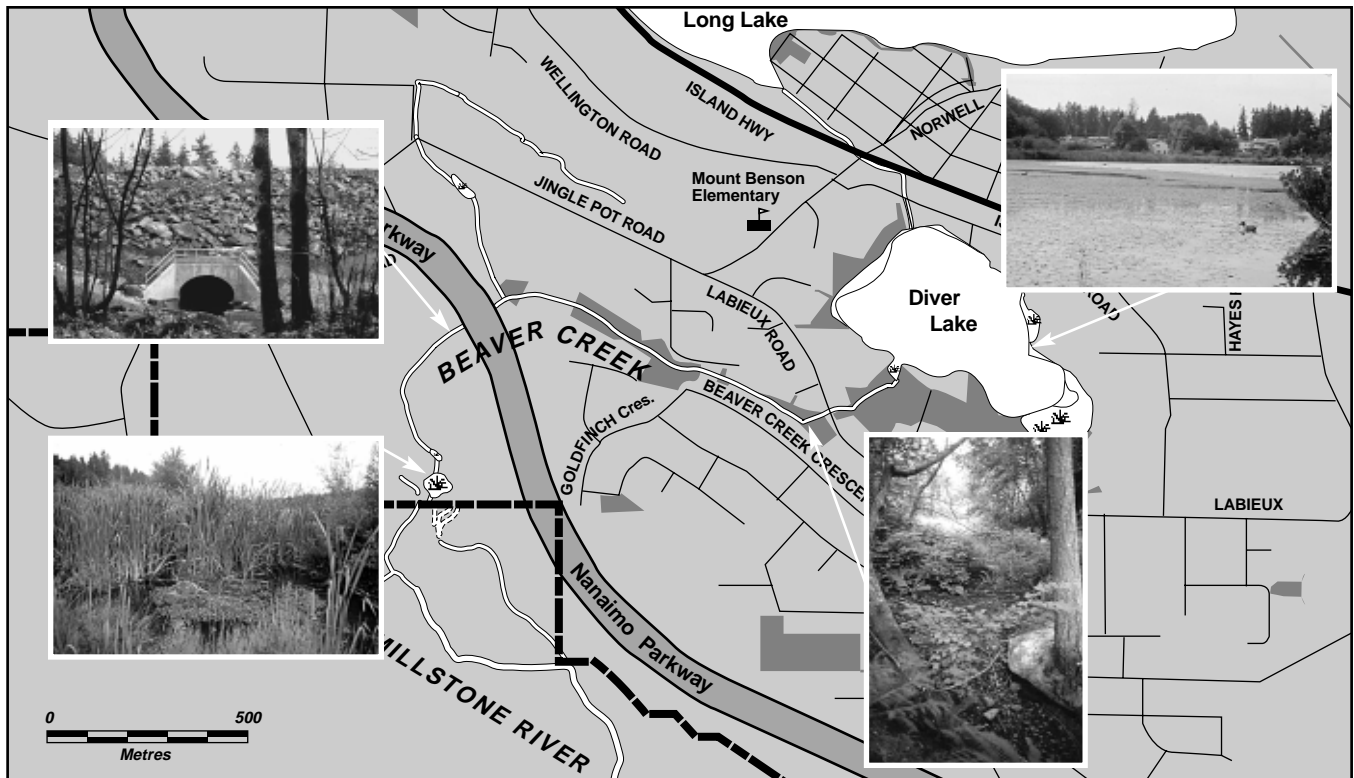


# Beaver Creek and You

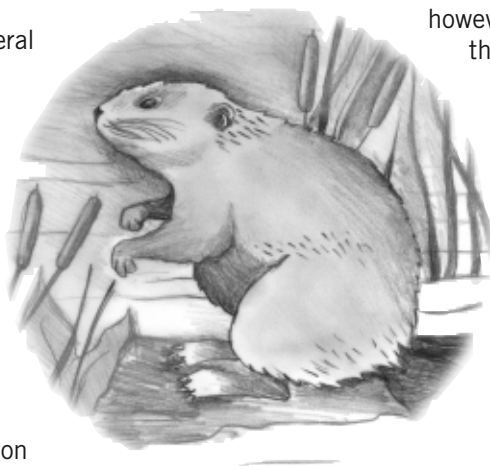


## Where is Beaver Creek?

Beaver Creek originates in the Long Lake-Diver Lake area, and runs for 2.3 km through the Wellington neighborhood of Nanaimo. From Diver Lake, it flows west under Labieux Road through residential areas and several parks. At the Nanaimo Parkway, the creek turns south and flows through recently developed subdivisions, several small wetlands, and farm lands before draining into the Millstone River. Coho salmon, Cutthroat trout, stickleback, sculpin and pumpkinseed live in Beaver Creek, and a variety of birds, small mammals and other wildlife inhabit streamside areas.

## Beaver Creek Then and Now

The early years of industry on Beaver Creek are still evident today. In 1876, the South Wellington Colliery began operation about 1 km west of Diver Lake on the banks of the creek. By 1900, the coal mine had been “played out” but some of the old shafts still feed water into the Creek. Logging on a commercial scale started in the 1940’s. It appears that farming in the floodplain began in the 1930’s, and continues today.



Most of the streamside areas still contain lush native vegetation, which helps to shade the creek, filter out sediment, stabilize its banks, and provide greenways for wildlife and people. A few of these areas, however, are riddled with pedestrian trails that have damaged the vegetation and increased erosion. In addition, as roads, houses and other “impervious” surface replace the natural vegetation in the watershed, water collected during rainstorms is directed more quickly into the creek via storm sewers. This increases the potential for flooding in winter and also reduces water levels in summer. Fortunately, two natural springs feed the creek in summer, allowing fish and other aquatic creatures to survive the dry season.

Local residents are concerned about the future of Beaver Creek in terms of maintaining good water quality and water flow. These residents are keeping a careful watch as well as planning activities that will benefit the creek.

## How Can I Help?

The following “actions” can help make Beaver Creek a better place for fish, wildlife and people.



### LOSS OF STREAMBANK

**VEGETATION:** Streamside vegetation and root systems filter out contaminants,

stabilize banks and provide shade, shelter and food for fish and wildlife. When vegetation is removed, banks erode, temperatures increase, water levels fluctuate and fish habitat is lost.

**ACTION:** Preserve existing natural streamside vegetation and replant degraded areas.



### GARBAGE ACCUMULATION:

Plastic containers, tires, newspapers, batteries, metal scraps etc. can reduce water

quality, damage habitat and make the stream unattractive.

**ACTION:** Remove garbage from the streams and rivers but leave woody debris in place.



**MANAGING RUNOFF:** Water quantity and quality are reduced when natural vegetation is replaced with pavement, houses

and other hard surfaces. Surface water no longer filters slowly through the soil and vegetation, but instead, runs off these surfaces very quickly into storm drains, ditches and streams.

**ACTION:** Use gravel, loose bricks or flagstones instead of impermeable surfaces like pavement and concrete whenever possible. Let rainwater from roofs drain into the soil or use it in gardens.



**WATER QUALITY:** Clean water with lots of oxygen is essential to a healthy stream, but fertilizers, pesticides, car oil, and other wastes from storm drains

degrade that quality.

**ACTION:** Keep fuel spills, paint products and detergents away from storm drains. Reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers and control soil erosion, manure and septic runoff so it doesn't flow into streams.



**PET DROPPINGS:** Disposing of animal waste close to creeks and riparian areas can contaminate the water.

**ACTION:** Don't dump pet wastes near the creek. Use “baggies” to pick up after your pet in public areas and dispose of them responsibly.



**REMOVAL OF WOOD:** Large pieces of downed wood provide shelter and food for fish, animals and birds. Logs in the stream create pools and stabilize the stream bed.

**ACTION:** Avoid removing stumps and dead trees in or along the stream when they do not create a fish barrier or a hazard to people.



### UNNATURAL BARRIERS:

Structures such as culverts and retaining walls along the creek can block fish movement, increase bank erosion or disturb stream habitat if not installed properly.

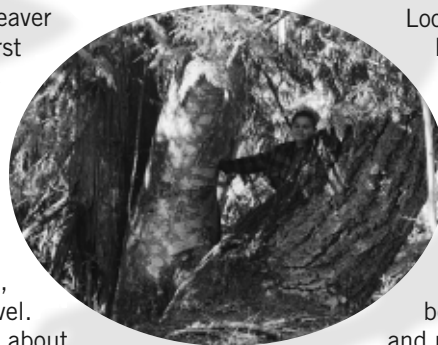
**ACTION:** Modify or remove those structures which threaten water flow, fish access or bank stability.

## What's in Store For Beaver Creek?

Another hot summer in the year 2020, and Beaver

Creek has completely dried up for the first time. The last of the coho and cutthroat have died as the water disappeared. The banks are bare of trees and shrubs, a result of too many dirt paths. With the cool forests gone, wildlife no longer takes refuge along the creek. Garbage has accumulated on the banks and in the creek. Bank erosion from winter storms has silted up the channel, filled in pools and smothered the gravel.

Residents near the creek are concerned about flooding and decreased property values.



## OR...

Local residents have made a real difference to Beaver Creek. The Beaver Creek Trail, linked to the Parkway Trailway, has replaced the network of dirt paths and allowed especially sensitive areas to be restored to their natural beauty. Several foot bridges allow for quiet observation of the stream. Another achievement has been getting the creek to flow all year round. Unstable banks have been re-vegetated and the creek has been enhanced for salmon and trout spawning and rearing. Residents take pride in the diversity of wildlife using the wetlands and stream-side areas.

## The Future is Ours to Create

*For more information on voluntary stewardship, contact the Nanaimo Area Land Trust (see below).*

**If you have an idea to share or would like more information, contact one of the following:**



**City of Nanaimo**  
Environmental Planner,  
455 Wallace St.  
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5J6  
Phone 755-4483



2948 Hammond Bay Rd.  
Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 1E2  
Phone: 758-5490



**Community Futures  
Development Corp.**  
271 Pine St.,  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
V9T 6G1

**BC Hydro**  
THE POWER IS YOURS  
400 Madsen Rd,  
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5M3

August 1998