

Somenos Creek Habitat Restoration

OUR PROJECT AND OUR GOAL

The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society and their partners have begun a habitat restoration project on Somenos Creek. Our goal is to reintroduce streamside native trees such as Garry Oak, Sitka Spruce and Cottonwood as well as shrubs like Red Osier Dogwood, Pacific Ninebark and Hardhack to restore lost trout and salmon habitat. Thousands of trout and salmon use Somenos Creek as a spring and fall migration corridor, for winter refuge and as summer rearing habitat. This project is supported by volunteers from the community to help with research, monitoring and planting.

THE CHALLENGE

Parts of Somenos Creek that used to be fish habitat have been altered by human activity. Many native trees and shrubs have been displaced by invasive weeds.

During the 1900s urbanisation and agricultural development in the Somenos Basin resulted in natural streams being modified into ditches that were cleared of streamside vegetation. These changes improved drainage but resulted in the degradation of salmon and trout habitat.



STREAMSIDE TREES AND SHRUBS ARE IMPORTANT FOR FISH

- Trees provide shade, keeping stream water cool and oxygenated
- Tree and shrub roots prevent erosion and filter runoff water
- Insects that live in the trees drop into the water providing food for the fish below
- Tree branches, roots and fallen logs provide fish with places to hide from predators



Photo: Dave Preikshot

This reach of Somenos Creek shows how invasive weeds like Yellow Flag Iris and Parrot's Feather dominate much of the stream and bank habitat. This altered habitat is hostile to salmon and trout.



Photo: commons.wikimedia.org

Highly disturbed creek habitat providing limited opportunities for native plant species and salmon to thrive.



Photo: Aaron Morse through commons.wikimedia.org

Healthy creek habitat, with native trees and shrubs dominant, providing shade, refuge and food for native salmon and trout.



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