

## The Lower Seton Spawning Channel

SITE #040301

GC1TTRH

Written & Researched by Wendy Fraser

### SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Lillooet, V0K 1V0  
 Location/Parking: N 50°40.369'  
 W 121°56.397'  
 Geocache Location: N 50°40.412'  
 W 121°56.546'  
 Accuracy: 5 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0574728;  
 North 5614055 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 210 m./689 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 2  
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5  
*(1=easiest; 5=hardest)*  
 Date Established: 1999  
 Ownership: First Nations Land  
 Access: • Dirt Road  
 • Year-round  
 • Vehicle accessible  
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:  
 Gold Country Communities Society  
 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467  
 email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

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A walk along the Lower Seton River Spawning Channel is a pleasant, 1.4 kilometre loop, all on flat terrain, around the winding channel. This is a bird-watcher's paradise, offering views of many species, including great blue herons, pelicans, loons, eagles, falcons, owls, ospreys, cranes, kingfishers, plovers, sandpipers, flycatchers and swifts.

Try to spot the three bat houses that have been placed in the trees. The channel is an excellent location for seeing bats, particularly at dusk. Other Seton River wildlife includes river otters, beavers, muskrats, gophers, deer, squirrels, groundhogs, marmots, coyotes and bears. Black bears are more likely to be seen in the fall when the salmon are running. If your timing is right, you may have an opportunity to see *sqlaw'7ul* (beaver) at work.

The Sekw'el'was (Cayoos Creek) Community oversees the area and is making ongoing trail and habitat improvements. The channel was originally operated to

accommodate pink salmon, who return to the Seton River in odd-numbered years to spawn.

Pink, or humpback salmon, have a short two-year life cycle. When the two-year-old adult Pinks return from the ocean to their home streams, the female uses her tail to dig a trough-shaped nest, called a redd, in the gravel of the streambed. As she deposits her eggs, she is approached by one or more males who fertilize the eggs as they fall into the redd.





***The spawning channel is designed with logs and rocks to control the speed the water travels at and create pools for the different species of fish.***

She then uses thrusts of her tail to cover the newly deposited zygotes with gravel. The female lays from 1,000 to 2,000 eggs in several clutches within the redd, often fertilized by different males. Females guard their redd until death, which comes within days of spawning. The eggs hatch from December to February, depending on water temperatures, and the juveniles emerge from the gravel during March and April and quickly migrate downstream to the ocean.

To ensure fish for the future, the Lower Seton Complexing Project was initiated to enhance the rearing habitats for a wider variety of fish species; Coho, Chinook, Sockeye and Pink salmon, Steelhead trout, Rainbow trout, Bull trout, Mountain whitefish, Shiners, Sculpins and long-nosed Dace.

To re-create the natural habitat and improve the biodiversity of the area, pools and riffles were constructed, the channels were aligned, marshes were created

and insects were introduced for fish and wildlife use. In-stream structures, including boulders, rocks and logs, were also installed in the 2,900 metre-long channel. The Lower Seton Spawning Channel receives its water supply via 150 metre-long siphons from B.C. Hydro's Seton Power Canal.

Funding for the ambitious "complexing" of the spawning channel was provided by B.C. Hydro's Bridge Coastal Restoration Program. Established in 1999, the goal of the program is to restore fish and wildlife habitats and resources that were adversely affected by the development of hydroelectric power facilities in the Bridge River Coastal generation area. These footprint impacts include negative effects on fish and wildlife as a result of reservoir creation, watercourse diversions and dam construction. B.C. Hydro provides \$1.7 million in annual grant funding for eligible restoration projects.

According to signage at the entrance to the project, the Cayoose Creek Community has been developing a co-operative working relationship with B.C. Hydro, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the provincial Ministry of Land, Air and Water Protection.

#### **Detailed access information:**

- From Lillooet, drive 2.5km south on Hwy #99, the Duffy Lake Rd.
- Turn right onto the overgrown road immediately beyond the Lightfoot Gas Station.
- Go down the hill for a short distance, and turn left at the first fork.
- Follow the road to the parking area & signage.

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#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

(2005). *Canyon to Alpine: Lillooet hiking guide*. Lillooet, BC: Lillooet Naturalist Society.

Bridge Coastal Restoration Program. Retrieved February 3, 2009, from BC Hydro Fish & Wildlife Web site: <http://www.bchydro.com/bcrp/index.html>

Francis, D. (2000). *The Encyclopedia of British Columbia*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing.