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## Airport clears contamination

By Laura Lavin - Peninsula News Review - November 02, 2007



Peninsula Streams' Ian Bruce with some of the thousands of fish killed in the 2004 poisoning of Reay Creek.

by Peninsula News Review/file photo

After three significant fish kills in 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Reay Creek, the Victoria Airport Authority has begun some serious remediation work on its property.

“The fish kill was extensive, and since then we’ve reviewed and assessed the impacts of [several industries on airport property],” said Airport Director Airside Operations and Development, Terry Stewart. “There have been some poor industrial practices that lead to a moderate amount of contaminated soil at a work site that has been remediated.”

The exact source of the fish kill was never determined by Department of Fisheries and Oceans investigators.

Stewart said selenium, chromium, cadmium and other heavy metals were found in soil samples taken from various places on airport property. "Obviously a lot of it was deposited over the last 60 years as a result of the military and industrial use of the areas." Last September extensive amounts of soil and sediment were removed from the airport property in the upper part of Reay Creek. The lower area, near the Aviation Museum, is targeted for clean up in August of 2008.

"The results have been very successful. All of the heavy metals have been taken out," said Stewart.

All of the soil testing, removal and remediation has been done without federal funding. "We tried to get Transport Canada and Environment Canada to help, but it ended in a bureaucratic quagmire ... we weren't high enough on the priority list," Stewart explained.

"Our [Victoria Airport Authority] board took a very proactive environmental posture — they gave the go-ahead to management to hire our own consultant."

Stewart said the VAA is "committed to finishing the job" and maintaining a high standard of environmental practices at the airport.

The Sidney Anglers, Peninsula Streams and Friends of Reay Creek have also continued to support the enhancement of Reay Creek. More than 1,000 Coho smolts were released into the creek last year.

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