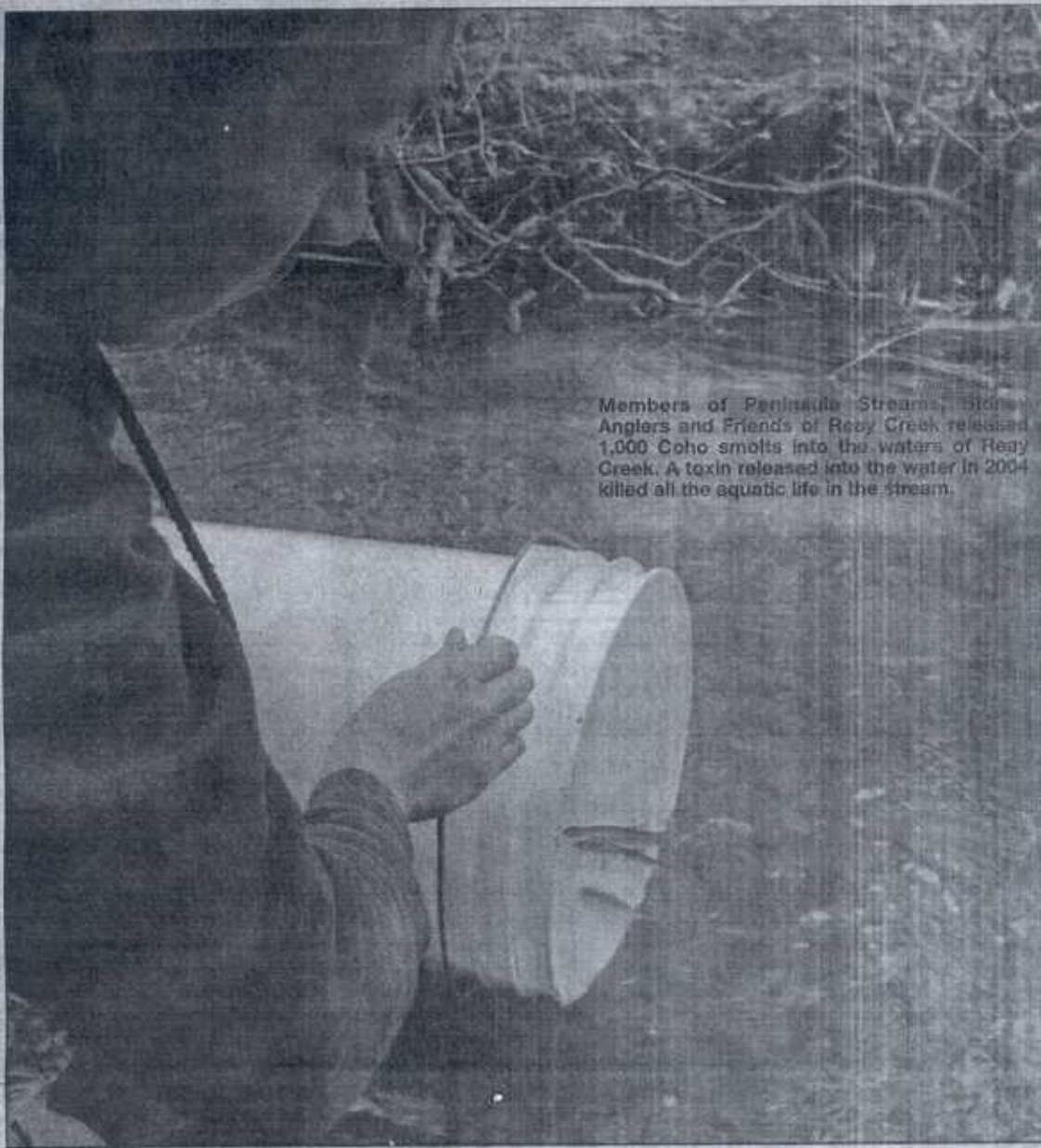


Coho hit the creek

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Members of Peninsula Streams, Sidney Anglers and Friends of Reay Creek released 1,000 Coho smolts into the waters of Reay Creek. A toxin released into the water in 2004 killed all the aquatic life in the stream.

One thousand Coho smolts were released into Reay Creek last week. After three significant fish kills in 2002, 2003 and 2004, the Sidney Anglers, Peninsula Streams and Friends of Reay Creek are hoping this will be one of the last times they will have to artificially restock the waters.

"Prior to the first significant kill we had 100 coho returning and a resident population of 12 to 14 pair of sea-run cutthroat trout of about 21 inches in length using Reay Creek as their home stream," said Tom Davis, Peninsula Streams board chair. "It was on its way back to becoming a healthy environment, and right at the time we thought we had it licked and were looking at maintaining it, we had three consecutive debilitating kills that wiped out the entire fish population."

The Goldstream Fish Hatchery, which provided fish for the creek for the first time in 1983, provided the smolts for the release last week.

Goldstream Hatchery, the Town of Sidney, the local Department of Fisheries and Oceans along with members of the public have supported the enhancement of Reay Creek for more than 20 years.

The smolt that were released are three to five inches in length, more mature fish than are usually released.

"They will go and imprint on the stream for a few days to weeks and in a year and a half will come back as adults," said Davis. It has been done in the past and has worked in the previous two attempts by Peninsula Streams.

"We don't get them all back, sometimes they get to the right church, but not the right pew," Davis said.

"On the negative side, I hope we're sending a message to the polluters around that we are not giving up on the stream ... the government and Environment Canada, I don't think they did a good job in terms of looking for a prosecution or on obtaining information that would have brought closure on the three kills in this stream."