



Laura Lavin photo

Ian Bruce [left] and Alex Marr look for ground water rising from the trench that will form the improved Tatlow Creek.

New life for old creek

Laura Lavin
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"This is the last piece of the Moses Farm," said Ian Bruce of the Peninsula Streams Society as he walked a muddy field.

From Gardner Pond to Deep Cove, Tatlow Creek runs under West Saanich Road, through yards, and down culverts. In many areas the creek is but a narrow, shallow dip in the

landscape. The Peninsula Streams Society hopes to change that. Bruce was contacted by Fran Robertson, granddaughter of the original owner of the land. "She wanted it to be like she remembers it as a kid," said Bruce.

Peninsula Streams has been testing the water quality of Tatlow Creek since the late 1990s, the quality shows that it could support chum salmon. "The quantity is the problem," said Bruce. In some areas, the creek is but a trickle due to its shallow depth.

So Peninsula Streams Society has undertaken the

task of dredging a section of the creek, reconstructing the channel, building pools and riffles for salmon to spawn in.

"We want to build the pools deep enough so that groundwater can come into the pools which may help sustain coho," said Bruce.

Students at Deep Cove elementary school are also involved growing plants and participating in the conceptual design.

"It's a little bit of science and a little bit of heart," said Bruce. "They'll also hatch some [salmon eggs] and bring them down to release them when they're ready,"

he added.

Les and Bridgette Keals of CCM Construction provided an excavator for the job and operator Bob Young donated his time to the project. Peninsula Streams Society received grants from both the District of North Saanich and the Pacific Salmon Foundation to do the work.

"It says a lot for our community," said Alex Marr, a volunteer on the Tatlow Creek project. The Tatlow stream keepers helped prepare for the work and will help with planting and other management of the stream.