COWICHAN LAKE SALMONID ENHANCEMENT SOCIETY

Date: June 8th, 2021

Re: Outdoor Learning Program Class Report

From: Bob Crandall CLSES

The Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre located in Cowichan Bay provides learning opportunities for both young and old. With two inlet bays created by installing jetty piers several years ago do make for plenty of tide pools with marine life in abundance. Due to COVID restrictions efforts to book the Lake Cowichan Outdoor Learning Program Class in for a visit was a monumental logistical task.

On Tuesday June 8th, the Outdoor Learning Program students boarded a bus and travelled to the Estuary Centre in time for low tide learning sessions. Twenty-two six and seventh grade students from Lake Cowichan Middle/High School with Teaching Instructor Shannon Steininger were in attendance. Meanwhile, I went to the Hatchery and loaded 21 Coho Fry for the display/chiller aquarium tank at the Centre. Upon my arrival the students had broken into two groups one for learning about Marine life species and one to have the Micro-plastics course which includes the application of the Scientific Method (measured transects) and sieves with which to sift micro-plastic particles (pollution) from the tide pools and sands. Each group had a chance to experience both study sessions. Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) had provided a grant to the Cowichan Lake Salmonid Enhancement Society (CLSES) and Hatchery for the Outdoor Education Program.

The 21 Coho fry were transferred to the Estuary Centre tank without incident and are now feeding well and growing. They will remain on display until the fall and then they will be released into a nearby salmon bearing stream.

Photos next page:

Coho enter their new home which is far more stimulating than a Hatchery Tank.

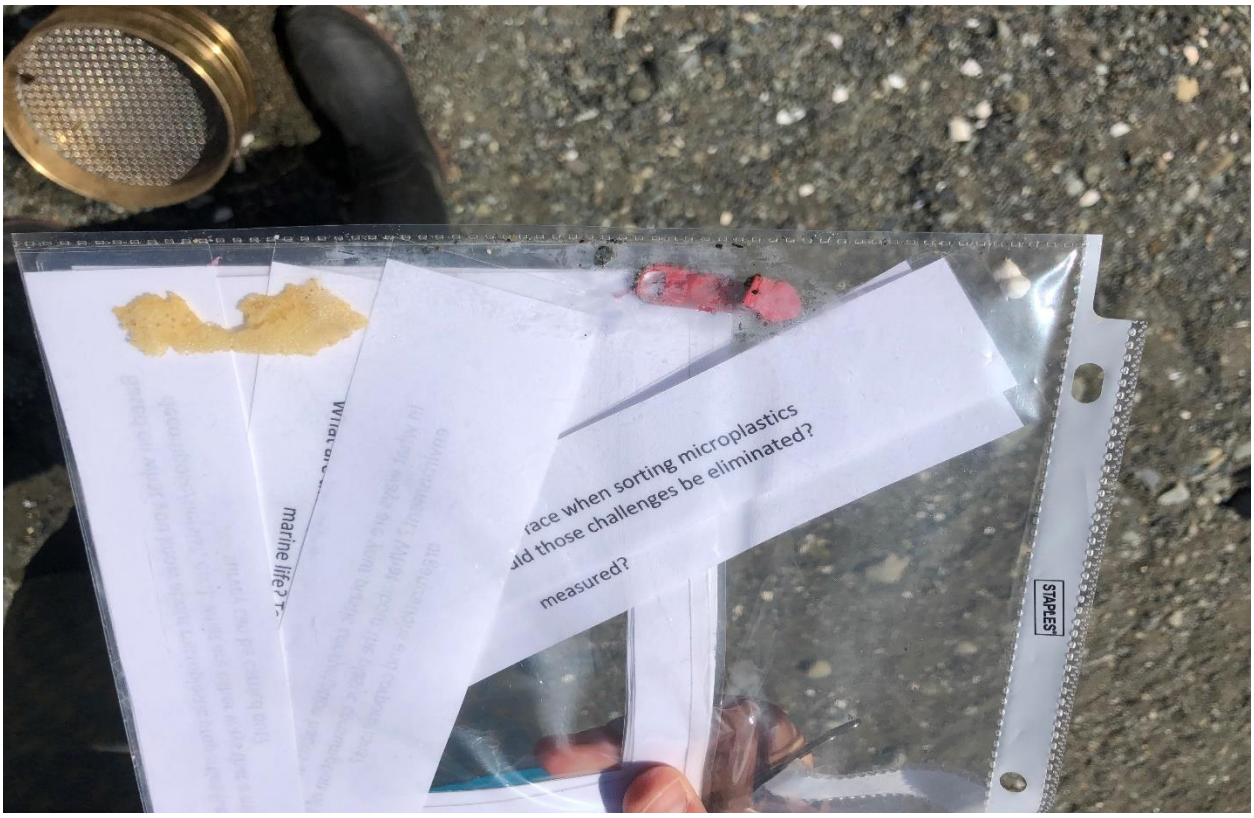
Students checking out the chiller/ aquarium and Coho Salmon Fry.

Students with DFO Biologist Kate MacDonald “Education Coordinator” learning about marine life species in tide pools.

Thank you, Kate!

Laying out the transect and grid for micro-plastics lesson.

Sieves of different sizes are used to sift out micro-plastics.

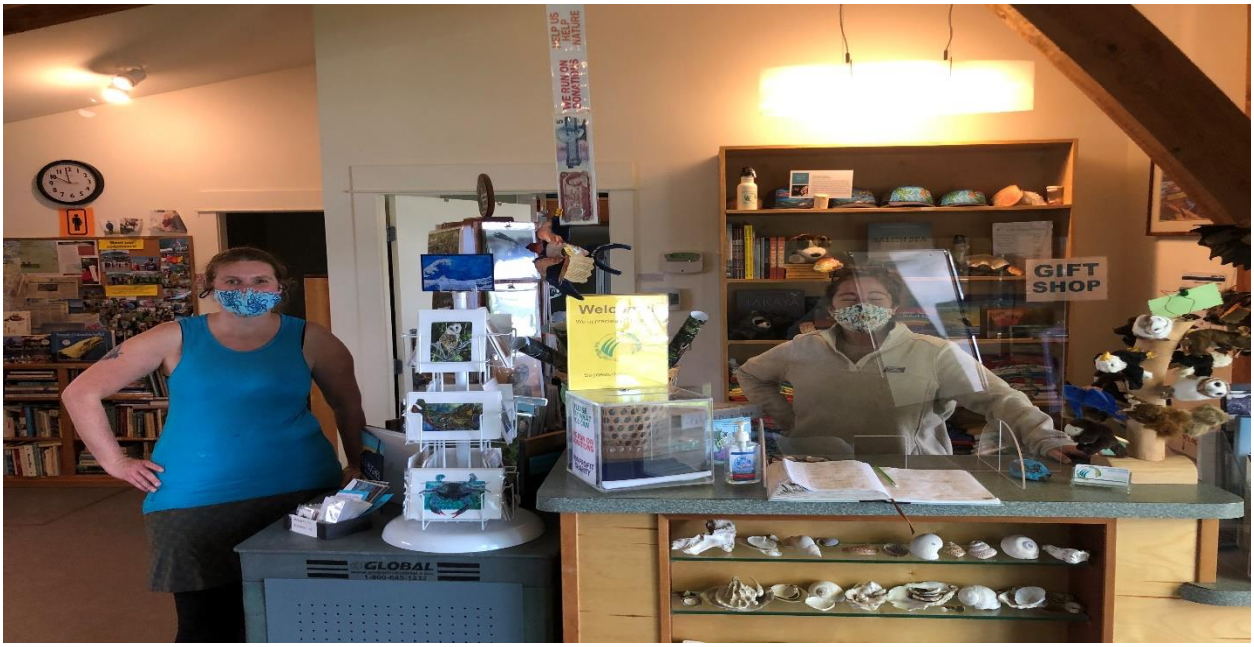


Recovered micro-plastics are bagged.


Estuary viewing tower. The Osprey nest (occupied) could be seen this day.

Students take turns inside (5 at a time for COVID rules) viewing marine life tanks.

An exploring mind.



Madeline Southern and Amy Clinton-Baker. Thank you for all you do.

Thank you, Pacific Salmon Foundation!

Note: It is important that the students from the upper watershed have the opportunity to learn about the lower watershed (Estuary) also. A report from the Shaw Creek Outdoor Education Program Class field trip June 10th for trapping juvenile salmonids and fish identification in the Elk Garden Side Channels of Shaw Creek is due out soon.

Big Thanks to Everyone who helped make this possible. bc