

Welcome to Pine Park



...a preview of your salmon release day

INTRODUCTION

Your day at Pine Park is the culmination of many months of raising your salmon. This is release day, a day where you and your students have fun while learning about salmon. As well as being a “hands on” day; you will be releasing your salmon fry into Tranquille River, working in a stream model with water and dirt and hiking through the area surrounding Pine Park. This booklet provides a general explanation of the activities that both you and your students can expect to experience during your visit to Pine Park.

AT YOUR SCHOOL

On the day of release, someone may come and help bucket your fry, or it may be a job we ask you to do. **Please do not feed your fry on the day they are to be released.** About half an hour before departure, you will need to siphon water from your aquarium into the white five gallon pail until it is very full. The aquarium pumps, etc. should be unplugged, and for netting the fry, it may be easier if the equipment is removed. Be careful netting them, and expect this to take up to ten minutes. Some of the fry have learned very early to escape the net! Cradle the bottom of the net with your hand when lifting it from the aquarium to the pail. Once the fry are all caught, check again, as sometimes they will try to hide in a low spot in the gravel. Be sure the pail lid is tight fitting and try to transport the fry to the site in as cool a place as possible (out of the blazing sun).

TRAVELLING TO THE SITE

Class transportation to the site is to be arranged by the teacher. If you are using parent drivers, please make sure they have completed and signed the driver form that every school should have. Each driver should also have a copy of a map informing them of how to get to Pine Park on Tranquille River. Be sure to know how many drivers there are, in case the group gets separated and we have to wait for a few vehicles. The cell number at the site is 250-319-0689.



Some older classes bike to the site. If this is the case, bicycles and helmets should go through a safety check prior to the trip. Bicycle safety should be discussed, and be sure to include safety at railway crossings. A vehicle with 4-way flashers should lead the group, and a pick-up should follow at the end. It is a good idea to have a sign on the vehicles informing other road users of the bikers on the road. Ideally, there should be communication between the two vehicles via cell phone or two-way radio.

Buses that bring students to the site stay for the day. In past years, the students unload at the locked gate, the bus drives in and parks for the day, and at the end of the day, the students board the bus at Pine Park and leave. We are hoping to set this up again this year. We need to meet with BC Parks and Tranquille on the Lake to trim branches, move rocks, etc., before buses will be going into the site. Check with myself, Joanne Nicklas or Gord Stewart, our site co-coordinator, for an update on bus rules.

ARRIVING AT THE LOCKED GATE

A condition that Fisheries and Oceans Canada must follow when using the Pine Park site for the month of May is to keep the gate locked during the time groups are using the site. The staff should have a rough idea what time you will be arriving and they should be at the gate to greet you.

Most groups hike into the site from the locked gate, buses drive in and park for the day, and parent drivers have the option of driving in or leaving their vehicle at the gate. We usually recommend having vehicles drive to the site for two reasons: safety of the vehicle when no one is around, and having the vehicles to drive the students out at the end of an active and often tiring day. From the locked gate, it is about a twenty minute walk, and this often provides an opportunity for the students to begin thinking about the surrounding area and to get a good look at the river in which they will release their salmon fry. Vehicles should park just outside of (the fenced) Pine Park, and they should not block



road access to the dam, nor should they be parked directly at the bottom of the hill, in case a rock rolls down from the hill.

The main gate has to be kept locked during the day. Once vehicles are in, they cannot leave without one of the staff going to the gate and unlocking it. This takes away time that the staff has to work with the students, so unless there is an emergency, vehicles that drive in should plan to stay for the day.

AT THE PARK

Salmon Fry Release:

The first activity will be releasing your salmon fry. The students will be briefed on this procedure, as well as on safety around the river, and then they will release their salmon. Adults are asked to go to the river first and help with the safety and supervision of the students. Depending on the number of students and salmon to release, the students may or may not have a partner to work with, and depending on the water flow, smaller groups may release rather than the whole class. Safety is our main concern while at the river. After the release, the gate is closed to the river and this area is “off-limits” for the students.

Following release, it is recess and snack break. The students will be briefed on washroom, garbage, boundaries, equipment, etc. before they go, and they usually have approximately 15 minutes for this. Playground safety is a major concern for everyone at the park and we ask that you have an adult on “supervision” during this time.

Stream Simulation Model and Nature Walk:

After recess, the students will meet so that they can be organized into groups. Unless the classroom teacher has different plans for the students, it is hoped each student will have the opportunity to do both the stream model and nature walk activity.

The Stream Model (40 – 45 minutes) – at Pine Park we have developed a stream model that provides students with a “hands on” approach to protecting



and learning about salmon habitat. The students will be given a brief explanation about the stream model and the various problems present in the model, which will ultimately effect salmon survival. They are provided with some ideas on how to go about solving the problems, but more importantly, the students are encouraged to work together to develop ways to improve the model so that salmon survival rates are improved.

After reviewing what the problems are, the students select a problem that they would like to fix. While the students are working on enhancing the stream model, teachers, Pine Park staff and other helpers circulate amongst the students and provide the students with input and encourage them to think about the choices they have made and how those choices will affect the salmon, and possibly those living downstream. We have found that the students who seem to gain the most from this activity are those who have been provided with background information on the water cycle, stream ecology, salmon life cycle, and environmental pollution and its effects on water quality. Students who come to this activity with some background information are able to examine the problems critically and develop their own solutions. They have a better understanding of what needs to be done to improve salmon survival. More importantly, they come to understand how closely related their, or their community actions could be to salmon habitat. If you are thinking about developing a unit to compliment the stream model you may want to consider the following topics:

- Water cycle and watersheds
- Water quality and salmon survival
- Human impacts from logging, industry, agriculture, recreation, transportation systems, construction, and their effect on water quality
- Waste water treatment systems
- Non-point and point source pollution (include storm drain marking)
- Salmon life cycle with needs and limiting factors



We have tried to incorporate many of the “local” concerns or considerations at our stream model.

Nature Walk (40 – 45 minutes) – The students begin the nature walk at the park, and they walk to an old mine site. Once reaching the gold mine, the students and helpers climb up the steep slope to the entrance, unless safety becomes an issue. We ask that you stress to your students that they do not try to enter the old mine as it is shallow and the ground is unstable. They will notice the different colors in the layers of the soil. The students then make their way to the bottom of the hill (squatting with hands at the side if it is dry and slippery – no running!) Nevertheless, this is a challenging climb and the students are always very excited about making it to the top and back down to the bottom.

During the nature walk, the leader will point out various forms of vegetation and try to impress upon students how this growth affects salmon. Similarly, the leader will draw the students’ attention to the different geological formations in the area and explain how these affect salmon habitat and survival. During the walk, students and leaders alike are always on the lookout for evidence of wildlife. Once again, we have found that the students who receive the most benefit from this walk are those students who have some background information. As the teacher, please feel free to add information to the walk, or let the leader know if you would specifically like to focus on a certain area. Some areas to possibly study beforehand could be:

- Vegetation in the riparian and semi-arid zones
- Wind and water erosion
- Rock formations (lava rock walls, cap and pillow lava, hoodoos)
- Food chains
- The history of gold mining in the Tranquille River area
- Wildlife trees and the importance to living creatures in the area



Following the stream model and nature walk to the gold mine, everyone has a lunch break.

Ridge Walk/Climb (20 – 30 minutes) - After lunch, everyone is invited to participate in the ridge walk. Depending on the amount of moisture and temperature in the month of May there are various wildflowers to be seen (eg. Prickly Pear Cactus, Oyster Plant, Lewis's Lomatium, Mullein, Phloxes, Douglas's Tritelia, Sage, Lungwort and Balsam Root). The view from the top of the ridge is spectacular (the lava rock wall is in full view as is the river, Kamloops On the Lake, and Kamloops Lake). It is very easy to see and understand what the riparian area is, and what the semi-arid area is from the top of the ridge.

Once everyone reaches the top of the ridge and follows one of the two paths going across the hill, they begin the trek down the face of the hill. It is a steep sand slope and while it is a negotiable slope, the adults and students alike particularly enjoy this section of the hike. (Be prepared to empty your shoes!!!) There must always be a leader at the front of the group, and the students are reminded not to run down, as it is difficult to gain control and stop before getting to the solid ground at the bottom of the hill.

Salmon Predator/Prey (10 – 15 minutes) - after the Ridge Walk, this is the last activity for the day. By playing this game, the students come to understand some of the many obstacles, challenges and hazards that salmon experience throughout their life cycle. Once again, students who have background information (in this case on predator-prey relationships) especially enjoy this game. Parent participation during this game is greatly appreciated.

TIME TO LEAVE

After the game is over, students are requested to help clean up the site and to gather all their belongings and board buses/vehicles or walk to the gate, and then head back to the school.



A NOTE TO CONCLUDE

The focus of the day at Pine Park is for the students to have fun while consolidating a lot of the information that they have gained during the time that they have cared for their salmon. It is a hands-on day where students get to experience and witness what it means to be caretakers of the environment in order to enhance salmon survival. This is also a day that Fisheries and Oceans provides as a way of saying “thank-you” for being involved in the Salmonid Enhancement Program. Teachers that visit the site will also have the offer of follow-up classroom work.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Who pays for the busing to Pine Park?

The classroom teacher (school) is responsible for organizing and possibly paying for travel to the site – whether it be by bus or parent drivers with adequate insurance.

2. How many staff will be at the site?

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has hired a site coordinator, Gord Stewart, who will be at Pine Park every day in May. Gord is the Executive Director of the BIG Little Science Centre, and has extensive Fisheries background. I plan to be at the park on days when there are large groups there. Fred will have little time for Pine Park this year, as he has a number of out-of-town schools to look after. You are more than welcome to organize and bring site help eg. a forestry worker, miner, artist, etc.. Fisheries and Oceans will provide one Pine Park staff member to the class that looked after the salmon aquarium at the school. If several classes from the same school are coming to the site on release day, additional activities will have to be planned and led by school staff.

3. Is there someone with First Aid, and an emergency vehicle on site?

Gord and I have a Level 1 first aid certificate. We also have a cell phone to use. There will always be at least one vehicle at the park that can be used in an emergency. We do have a first aid kit, but we recommend you also bring your school portable kit. The staff also have 2-way radios for communication at the site.

4. Are we allowed to have a campfire at the park?

Campfires are allowed in the burning pit as long as there are no fire regulations in effect stating differently. Please supply your own wood if you are planning a wiener roast or want a campfire.

5. Is there drinking water on site?

The students need to pack at least two drinks for the day. If the weather is hot in May, we often use a large jug of drinking water on top of what students bring. We must be somewhat careful with the potable water as we want the jugs to last as long as possible. Be sure to inform your students that water from the taps in the washroom is not drinkable!



6. Are there washrooms on site?

Yes, there are washrooms with flush toilets, (working as long as the silt doesn't plug the line), and running water in the sinks to wash hands with.

7. Will someone pick up the fry in the morning?

This year, probably not. Please refer to above for tips on bringing the fry out with you.

8. Do I have to follow the program of activities laid out by the staff?

No, you are free to substitute any of our plans with your own. Some groups bring an "expert" to the site and by all means, take advantage of the expertise. Some specialists have been: foresters, rock specialists, First Nations speakers, gold miners, etc. We would appreciate you informing us if there will be changes, as we may change the plans of the staff or volunteers we have scheduled for the site that day.

9. Will someone be helping to clean my tank at the end of the day?

We have 20 days to release fish in May, and 33 groups to accommodate during this time. We should be able to inform you if we will be able to clean your tank when we see you at the park. Directions are available from the "Procedures Manual" if you do have to clean your own aquarium.

If you have questions about release day at Pine Park, please contact:

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