

## How to create fish heaven

Do you enjoy fishing, snorkeling or netting minnows at the Lake? Would you like to see more fish around your lakefront property? The best way to get more fish to stay around your piece of heaven is to give them their own piece of heaven.

If we know the kind of habitat fish like best, we can attract and accommodate more fish. Fish like shade on hot summer days, just like we do, and cover to hide from predators. They favor safe places to lay their eggs and great places to dine. Also like us, fish get bored doing the same old thing, so they need variety in their surroundings. But most of all, fish like clean, cool water. So how can we make a fish heaven that includes all of their favorite habitat characteristics?

Step number one is to apply for permission to restore fish habitat under the Canada Water Act. This must be done before making any changes to the shoreline or the lake. But there's no need to fret fish lovers, the application process for fish habitat restoration is quick and easy.

Step number two is for creating a fish heaven is to come up with a plan to create your fish heaven and what you will add to enrich their lake habitat. Keeping a natural shoreline is a good place to start. Try adding cobbles or large angular rocks to your shoreline and shallows for fish to lay their eggs between. Planting native, non-invasive shoreline and aquatic plants provides shade and cover for fish and help to keep the water cool. Shoreline and aquatic plants are also home to many insects that fish like to eat, so planting them is like building a five star restaurant for fish. Woody debris is also a great place for fish to hide or hunt, and creates some diversity. Try anchoring a small pile of randomly placed logs and large sticks in the water. Constructing a fish friendly dock is another great feature to add to the list. The best type of dock is a floating structure that lets light through and is not made with treated materials, tires or pilings.

For more information contact the Lake Windermere Project at 341-6898. You can also visit the Project office located in the old District of Invermere office beside the Invermere Community Center. The Lake Windermere Project is a non-profit, long-term comprehensive stewardship program dedicated to safeguarding the health of our lake. The Lake Windermere Project is made possible by generous support from Wildsight, Environment Canada, Columbia Basin Trust and the Real estate Foundation of B.C.