

THE SALMON CELEBRATION

“Remembering Our History, Celebrating the Living”

The 5th annual “Salmon Celebration” took place on BC Rivers Day, Sept 28th 2008 at Vanier Park in Vancouver. The Salmon Celebration was created as a free event to:

- honour the spirit of the salmon that historically lived in the streams that flowed into Eastern False Creek
- connect the urban public with local groups who teach salmon awareness, practice watershed stewardship and urban sustainability.
- We were also proud to be a part of the events that celebrated September 2008 as the fourth “Wild Salmon Month” in Vancouver.

The weather was magnificent – a brilliant sunny day down by the water at Vanier Park! Over 16 groups put up displays of their activities about salmon and wilderness issues and urban sustainability. There were three environmentally-friendly food vendors and 2 craft Workshops where kids and adults could create fish hats to use in the parade and First Nations stencils. The Vancouver Maritime Museum also offered Wooden Boat Building, there was a display of salmon can labels by the Archives and a survey from Think City.

The Sambata Band opened the event. Two stilt walkers and two ground performers entertained one and all. This was followed by Mooshums Little Jiggers, a group of Metis boys and girls who perform songs and dances from the traditional Metis repertoire. They always break into the crowd and we all dance together. Then came a parade with lots more festive dancing and prancing.

The Nisga’a Dancers then arrived with many members from young children to the elders. Their series of stories, dances and songs, and wonderful costumes were very impressive and moving. We heard from Arlette Alcock – a Metis folk singer who created some songs especially for the event. Fraser Union sang folk songs from the West Coast. Then Victor Guerin and his dad Delbert from the Musqueam Nation spoke to the crowd and told stories. After this we were visited by canoe by the Squamish Nation Ocean Canoe Family. They danced and drummed framed by the backdrop of the high-rises of downtown Vancouver. It brought our thoughts back to a time when False Creek was not an urban setting surrounded by buildings, but in the words of Vancouver’s original Chief Archivist, Major Mathews, “a marine corridor, framed in forest green”.

Before the event, we had a Craft Workshops at Science World and many more History tables at Community Centres and Farmers Markets. This year we also staged 4 very successful Lost Streams and Big Trees Walks for Salmon Month. Our event and outreach were very successful and those who were able to join us enjoyed themselves, learned new things and connected with one another. We estimate over 1000 people came to the Salmon Celebration and at least 200 more attended our workshops and walks.

For pictures of the event and information, check <http://www.falsecreekwatershed.org>
To contact us, please email info@falsecreekwatershed.org