

## Royal Roads celebrates fish ladder restoration

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Volunteer Joe Richardson shows three-year-old Scarlette Budzinski a rough skinned newt trapped in the ponds at Royal Roads University's Japanese Gardens July 8. The trap was part of an all-day event to celebrate the restoration of fish ladders on the property.

The restoration of one of the oldest fish ladders on Vancouver Island was celebrated Wednesday at Royal Roads University.

The ladders, built sometime between 1914 and 1920, bridge three manmade ponds on the property that would have been stocked with trout for the Dunsmuir family.

"The loss of spawning and rearing habitat due to the deterioration of the fish ladders had caused a noticeable decline in the number of trout found in this pond system over the past 30 years," said David Rutherford, manager of grounds and gardens. "Sea-run cutthroat trout are an important link in the food web, so by restoring the fish ladders we'll contribute to a healthy, viable ecosystem in the Esquimalt Lagoon and surrounding wetlands."

Restoration focused on repairing broken cement baffles or concrete blocks that slow water flow and form the "rungs" of the fish ladders which connect three ponds in the Japanese garden with the Esquimalt Lagoon. Work was largely finished in 2008.

"Restoring the fish ladders is consistent with our mission to maintain the natural diversity, as well as to preserve the heritage of this site," said Steve Grundy, an associate vice-president at RRU and chair of the university's heritage and sustainability committee.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation donated \$5,980 toward restoring the ladder.