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MEDIA RELEASE

Cities Fight Climate Change Through Ecosystem Restoration

June 14, 2017

Report: http://act-adapt.org/still-creek-a-case-study-of-transboundary-municipal-ecosystem-governance/

Infographic: http://act-adapt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Still-Creek-Infographic-June-13.pdf

Story board: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=81e488a76d704a79997c306a92d49deb

Flooding and extreme heat are projected to increase over the next few decades and will be extremely costly for cities to manage. But a new study from Simon Fraser University shows how cities working together to restore and maintain ecosystems can be cheaper than building hard infrastructure to respond to climate change, and provides additional benefits such as buoyant property values and community health.

SFU's Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT), a think tank based at the Pacific Water Research Centre in SFU's Faculty of Environment, is releasing the results of *Low Carbon Resilience and Transboundary Municipal Ecosystem Governance: A Case Study of Still Creek*. The study analyzes the benefits gained from the restoration of Still Creek from 1949 to 2014 through collaborations between the City of Vancouver and City of Burnaby.

"Urban ecosystems play a crucial role in the fight against climate change, helping us adapt to climate change impacts such as flooding and heatwaves, while reducing emissions," says Deborah Harford, ACT Executive Director.

The study found that the presence of ecosystems has been shown to help absorb floodwaters, reduce extreme heat impacts, and absorb and store carbon, while benefitting property values, contributing to physical and mental health, and helping species survive both climate change and the impacts of human development.

But many ecosystems cross municipal boundaries, and cities often lack the capacity for collaboration essential to restoring and maintaining ecosystem health—resulting in fragmentation and loss of value and benefits.

The case study credits partnerships, creative governance, community engagement, and innovative funding approaches between the two Metro Vancouver cities, leading to many mutual benefits including the return of spawning salmon to the creek after decades of pollution and neglect.

"It's crucial that we resource our cities now to increase their capacity to adapt to climate change while reducing emissions, and ecosystem restoration can form an important component of this approach," says Harford.

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