

### SAVING SHELLY CREEK FROM AN INVASIVE SPECIES OR IRIS AND THE MUD WRESTLERS



Shelly Creek, home to Cutthroat trout, migrating Coho and Steelhead smolts, turtles, salamanders, waterfowl, muskrats and other aquatic life, is in danger of losing the wetland habitat on which these animals depend. Yellow iris has been invading the marsh beside Martindale Rd

for a number of years. This beautiful plant is actually an invasive species that takes over wetlands and forms such thick stands that nothing can swim or move between it. The result is a piece of aquatic habitat is lost.



On June 15, nine volunteers from the Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society, Castaways and Qualicum Beach Stream Keepers dug up, hacked out, and hauled out on pontoon boats, 880 kilograms of yellow iris plants from the marsh. The plants were placed in plastic bags and taken to the waste transfer station to be buried and never rear their beautiful heads again.

As the volunteers wrestled the iris out of the squishy, steaming mud they discovered that the mud in Shelly Creek takes 20 years off one's appearance. Who knew? In light of this news, we should have no trouble attracting volunteers for the onslaught of yellow iris in July. The iris removed in June only represents 70 per cent of the stand in the Shelly Creek marsh.





Many thanks to the volunteers who donated their time, tools, boats and pickup truck, and the Regional District of Nanaimo who graciously waived the disposal fees at the waste transfer station. This is how good things happen.



Representing the mud wrestling teams from l. to r. are Terry Martin, President of the Castaways, Shelley Goertzen of MVIHES, and Don Lyster of QB Stream Keepers