

## MEETING NOTE

**DATE:** May 2, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**REGARDING:** Meeting with Mikel Meneer, and Jason Hwang, Pacific Salmon Foundation regarding the B.C. Pacific salmon strategy.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** TBD

### SUMMARY:

- The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and their natural habitats in British Columbia and the Yukon.
- PSF led and is involved in several projects that have been funded by the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).
- In 2019, BC invested \$5M in PSF in the form of a Wild Salmon Day grant to support their ongoing work in salmon conservation. This matched a similar \$5M grant from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).
- PSF's BCSRIF projects included a variety of strategic initiatives (Appendix 1), notably work on the online Pacific Salmon Explorer, a post-wildfire "playbook", and a comprehensive hatchery effectiveness review.
- Under the Pacific Salmon Explorer project, PSF is working to integrate steelhead data into the platform, and BC's participation was identified in the Province's Interior Fraser Steelhead 2019-2021 BC Action Plan and Activities Report.
- PSF hosts an annual Gala, Dinner and Auction as a fundraiser, and Minister Popham has attended the event in the past to represent the BC Government.
- In 2021, PSF requested \$1M in funding from the BC government to match emergency funding to address the November flood impacts. The request was not fulfilled.
- PSF has submitted a request for BC to proclaim Wild Salmon Day for June 1, 2022, and BC has recognized Wild Salmon Day since 2019.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION AND MESSAGES:

- PSF has been a valued collaborative partner on salmon issues in recent years to the Province through close collaboration and regular discussions of key issues.
- In 2021, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries staff worked with PSF under a Non-disclosure agreement to develop foundational aspects of some of the options of the salmon strategy.
- PSF feedback and project results will be key in forming future provincial work on wild salmon.
- In April 2022, ADM James Mack spoke about LWRS and the salmon strategy at an event hosted by PSF and the First Nations Fisheries Council called the Salmon Action Dialogues Series.
- BC continues to focus on wild salmon recovery, and is working closely with DFO, FNFC and other partners to ensure that we are working in the same direction.
- We are committed to ensuring BCSRIF-funded projects are supported by provincial staff.
- Through related strategy development initiatives, such as the Coastal Marine Strategy and the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, we have heard more about the importance of integrating salmon recovery into that work.

Appendix 1: Summary of projects led by the Pacific Salmon Foundation and funded under the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.

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	Initials	Date
DM		
ADM	JM	May 2, 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	MT for DT	May 2, 2022

Appendix 1: Summary of projects led by the Pacific Salmon Foundation and funded under the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.

Project Name	Description
Science-based review of hatchery results in the Pacific Region	The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) will conduct a science-based review of hatcheries in the Pacific Region (including community hatcheries and Fisheries and Oceans Canada's major facilities) to evaluate performance and the effectiveness of current genetic and genomic tools, in order to optimize salmon production in BC
Determination of bottlenecks limiting wild and enhanced juvenile salmon and steelhead production in BC using PIT tags and spatially comprehensive arrays	Together with partners, the Pacific Salmon Foundation will develop monitoring and evaluation framework to determine survival bottlenecks in freshwater and marine environments for hatchery and wild Chinook, Coho, and Steelhead. Research, monitoring, and evaluation activities will seek to maximize the performance of hatchery and wild stocks; and the installation of new infrastructure will support adaptive management of hatchery programs to meet harvest, conservation, and sustainability objectives
Empowering Indigenous community fisheries with deep learning - computer vision for adaptive management of terminal salmon fisheries	This project will integrate traditional and modern technologies through the development of new computer vision deep-learning programs to automate salmon counting and species identification from video and sonar data. Connecting these tools with community-run escapement monitoring programs around the North and Central Coast will support the transition towards real-time data integration and in-season monitoring to inform adaptive management of salmon fisheries
Climate Action Priorities for Salmon	This project will create a Climate Action Plan for BC salmon through three initial project components: developing improved genetic baselines to understand genetic differences at a scale finer than Conservation Units; developing a 'playbook' to guide landscape recovery strategies and priorities for salmon following major fires; and assessing Fraser River migration impediments.

Project Name	Description
Supporting the Ongoing Use and Development of the Pacific Salmon Explorer	This project focuses on the expansion, continuous improvement, and application of the Pacific Salmon Explorer (PSE) tool. Planned activities include: 1) a complete the build-out of the PSE to all salmon-bearing watersheds in BC; 2) collaboration with First Nations and federal/provincial regulators to establish best practices in the assessment of salmon and their habitats; 3) addition of new functionality to the PSE deemed critical by end users; and 4) leadership in understanding the impacts of climate change on salmon in BC and developing strategies for mitigating climate threats
Assessment of sampling methodologies, March 2022 Gulf of Alaska	Multi-vessel survey to study the distribution of Pacific salmon across the North Pacific Ocean, building on two research expeditions to the Gulf of Alaska in 2019 and 2020 undertaken through the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative. Parallel sampling with Japanese drift gillnets and Longlines will enable direct comparison of sampling capabilities of trawl nets versus other gears in the deep-water environment of the Gulf of Alaska. The project is an extension of high seas conducted through the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project, assessing the factors that affect survivability of key salmon stocks.

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 5, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**ISSUE:** Meeting with Kristina Sigurdottir Hansen, Norwegian State Secretary, regarding aquaculture in B.C.

### BACKGROUND:

- Kristina Hansen is Norwegian State Secretary for Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries.
- Norwegian firms are major players in the B.C. aquaculture sector, including:
  - Cermaq (acquired by Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation) which has global operations in Norway and has 26 salmon farming sites in B.C. – 3 within the Discovery Islands.
  - MOWI, one of the largest global seafood companies and largest producer of Atlantic salmon, has 44 salmon farming sites in B.C. – 17 located in the Discovery Islands.
  - Grieg Seafood, a global company based out of Norway operating 22 salmon farming sites and a hatchery in B.C. and directly employing approximately 180 people.
- On April 22, 2022, the Federal Court ruled on "procedural fairness", as part of a judicial review of the federal government's intention to not renew open-net pen salmon farming in the Discovery Islands area. The ruling set aside the federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard's (DFO) decision to shut down fish farms, meaning that an injunction granted on April 5, 2021, will remain in effect. That injunction allows operators to continue to apply to DFO for licences to transfer juvenile salmon to their fish farms.
- Federal Minister Murray is currently deciding the terms to renew the 79 remaining salmon farming licences in the province when they expire in June 2022.
- The Norwegian Ambassador, Jon Fredriksen met with several B.C. Ministers on March 2, 2022 on several topics, including the aquaculture licensing decisions, B.C.'s Coastal Marine Strategy, the federal Blue Economy Strategy, and clean energy.
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Province's Salmon Aquaculture Policy may also have impacts to these companies. That policy dictates that no new or renewal tenures will be approved unless the operator has negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they operate.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION AND MESSAGES:

- B.C. respects the federal government's position on finfish aquaculture and their decision authority regarding licensing in the Discovery Islands. However, there are 79 salmon farming licences pending renewal decisions, and we are urging our federal counterparts to commit to a renewal plan that supports the affected families, companies, and coastal communities.
- On March 10, 2022, our Premier sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau making clear that any plan developed by 2025 to transition from current open-net pen technology must be built on meaningful and principled engagement involving industry, First Nations, local governments, and the Province.
- To this end, B.C. is fully committed to engaging with the Government of Canada to find positive and lasting solutions that benefit all involved.
- I have held an initial meeting with the Honourable Joyce Murray Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, where I stressed that any federal licensing decisions should fully engage those First Nations most impacted, providing them with clarity, as well as the time necessary for businesses to evaluate their investment options. Minister Murray and I have committed to meeting regularly.

- Internally, I am working to organize provincial ministers together so that we may address this complex situation and engage the federal government with a strong and united provincial team.
- Additionally, our MLA for the North Island, Michelle Babchuk, is currently organizing a delegation of community leaders to go to Ottawa to communicate concerns over the Discovery Island Decision and 2025 Transition Planning.
- The Province is prioritizing reconciliation with First Nations and are encouraging DFO to consider the principles of UNDRIP in decisions related to salmon farming in B.C., including balancing First Nations rights to economic development decisions within their territories.
- Solutions to these issues will need to balance environmental considerations, the economic interests of coastal communities, job opportunities, protecting the health of wild salmon, and our government's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations.

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	Initials	Date
DM		
ADM	JM	May 5, 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	DT	May 5, 2022

## MEETING NOTE

**DATE:** 19 May 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**REGARDING:** Meeting with Ducks Unlimited regarding Watershed Security Strategy and Fund

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Sarah Nathan, Manager-Provincial Operations, Ducks Unlimited

### SUMMARY:

- Ducks Unlimited is a non-profit conservation organization that conserves wetlands and associated habitats that support waterfowl and other ecological assets.
- Ducks Unlimited is supportive of the Province's Watershed Security Strategy and Fund project and are an important partner organization.
- Ducks Unlimited is asking that preservation and restoration of wetlands be central to the Strategy and Fund. Healthy wetlands are a natural solution for improving a watershed's ability to naturally manage flood waters and be resilient to climate impacts.
- LWRS staff have met with Sarah Nathan over the past year to discuss how Ducks Unlimited can support the development and implementation of the Strategy and Fund.
- Ducks Unlimited recently received \$1 million in funding from the Budget 2022 commitment of \$30 million to improve B.C.'s watersheds. They also partnered with the BC Wildlife Federation on projects under the Stronger BC Healthy Watersheds Initiative.
- The current funding will be used to fund summer technicians in the Cariboo region to complete monitoring and maintenance activities at priority wetland sites, support capacity for engagement with Indigenous groups, and support upgrading engineered wetlands to modern dam safety standards.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION AND MESSAGES:

- Ducks Unlimited is a valued partner and a key stakeholder in the development of the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.
- Ducks Unlimited's expertise is welcomed as we look to the Strategy to address watershed assessment, adaptive management and remediation.
- Public engagement on the discussion paper ended on March 18 and we are preparing a what we heard report to be released late summer.
- Overarching themes we heard during engagement included: reconciliation, climate change and governance of watersheds.
- We will continue to collaborate with key partners such as Ducks Unlimited as we develop options for the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.
- We look forward to continuing to partner with Ducks Unlimited as we develop and implement the Strategy and Fund.
- We expect a draft Strategy to be released for public engagement in late fall or early winter.

### PREPARED BY:

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### REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM		
ADM		
Program Dir/Mgr.	TZ	2022-05-18

The Honourable Josie Osborne  
Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship  
[LWRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LWRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

May 4, 2022

Dear Minister Osborne:

On behalf of Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as the new Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship.

DUC is a non-profit conservation organization that aims to conserve wetlands and associated habitats that support waterfowl and other ecological goods and services. As a grassroots organization and registered charity, DUC works with many volunteers and partners with other organizations, including the Province of BC, to help conserve habitats in BC and across Canada. Today, DUC is highly regarded as one of Canada's most trusted and respected conservation organizations supported by more than 126,000 people.

DUC has been operating for 84 years, and in BC for 54 years. Over this time, we have conserved and/or restored 182,322 ha of wetland and associated upland habitats in BC; an area nearly six times the City of Surrey. Some of our newest initiatives include: a partnership with the property casualty insurance industry to scope and deliver natural solutions to mitigate the impact of climate-change driven flood events in the Lower Fraser; partnerships with BC Cattleman's Association in the BC Interior to provide secure stock water while enhancing carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation on range lands; and collaborating with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council on an effort to protect 984 ha of Intertidal Crown foreshore as part of a broader Salmon Parks Initiative.

Recently, we provided a response to the Province's Watershed Security Strategy Discussion Paper. Wetlands support watershed security in a variety of ways; we see strong alignment between our mandate and this key Provincial priority.

On behalf of DUC, I would like to respectfully request a meeting to discuss the Watershed Security Strategy, and how DUC can support this initiative. I can be contacted at ([s\\_nathan@ducks.ca](mailto:s_nathan@ducks.ca), 778-888-1706) to arrange a date and time that would best suit your schedule. I look forward to hearing from your office.

Sincerely,



Sarah Nathan  
Manager of Provincial Operations, BC  
Ducks Unlimited Canada

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 17, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land Water and Resource Stewardship & Team B.C. 2025 Transition Plan Working Group

**ISSUE:** Summary and next steps of feasibility report on Recirculating Aquaculture Systems for salmon production in B.C.

### BACKGROUND:

- Salmon grown in Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) farms are raised in tanks in what are called “closed containment” production facilities to minimize interaction with the natural environment. Water is constantly recirculated, which significantly reduces the amount required for production. Fish waste is captured, and the water is filtered using a variety of water treatment technologies.
- In response to the federal government’s plan “... to create a responsible plan to transition from open net-pen salmon farming in coastal British Columbia waters by 2025...,” the Province identified a need to undertake economic analysis of farming salmon using RAS technology and to investigate limitations and prioritize strategic considerations to attract, encourage, and support the growth and development of RAS salmon aquaculture in B.C.
- The goal of this work was to provide the province with a report that could be used to guide policy considerations around land-based aquaculture in B.C.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) managed the contract with Counterpoint Consulting Inc. and coordinated the work. The model and assumptions were peer reviewed, and the final report titled “RAS Salmon Farming in British Columbia: Economic Analysis & Strategic Considerations” was delivered March 31, 2022.

### Report Scope and Findings:

- The report is based on modelling the costs and revenues for two species of salmon (Atlantic and steelhead trout), three farm sizes (1,000, 5,000 and 25,000 tonnes annually) and two locations (lower mainland and Prince George).
- Regarding species, size, and location, the model shows that:
  - Atlantic salmon yields slightly higher net economic returns than farming steelhead trout;
  - Small farms are not economically viable, but scale economies allow medium farms to survive and large farms to earn reasonable margins; and,
  - RAS salmon farms will be more likely to locate near their end markets; in B.C. that means the Lower Mainland.
- The internal rates of returns for medium and large farms are 5.8 percent and 8.7 percent respectively, which are too low to attract investment without a concerted effort to incentivize development of the sector.
- To attract RAS proponents to B.C., the report recommends focusing on three key drivers:
  - Regulatory certainty and responsiveness;
  - Financial incentives to compete against jurisdictions with lower costs that are closer to key North American markets; and,
  - Infrastructure support, in particular pre-screened sites, and access to hydro power.

### DISCUSSION:

The study is not optimistic and concludes that farming Atlantic salmon and steelhead profitably using RAS presents many challenges. These include significant regulatory uncertainty, high capital cost, low returns on investment, and lack of incentives to locate in B.C. RAS development is possible, but at smaller scales and not in isolation from the larger aquaculture sector currently operating in the province. A large, diverse sector is required to provide skilled labour and help support critically needed supply chains and research, development, and innovation. Furthermore, the regulatory



changes critical for the future development of RAS farms will take several years to put in place. It will take further time for development and construction of projects before the first fish are harvested and only then would a farm be on the path towards steady state operations. Therefore, the report concludes, it will be at least ten years before a significant RAS production sector could operate at a steady state in B.C.

The goal of this work was to support Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly and the Province to better understand the status and limitations of RAS scenarios in B.C. There was no formal commitment by any Ministry to share this with governing partners or the public. However, the report has been referenced in many meetings with stakeholders and industry groups and so there is some expectation the Province will release its findings.

The findings and recommendations are relevant to current provincial commitments around its full participation in the federal 2025 Net-Pen Transition Plan Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC). This committee and relevant working group are focused on developing a plan to shift away from the status quo of the salmon aquaculture industry in B.C. There is a current sentiment from members of the public as well as First Nations and environmental non-government organizations that the federal government's commitment to a transition plan means all open-net pens will be removed and replaced by RAS systems. The federal government has not clarified this point and the SOC have not determined this. Therefore, the report presents a range of RAS scenarios, current limitations, and specific recommendations required to create a viable RAS sector. Sharing the report would allow the public and governing partners to gain valuable insight into the realities of RAS in B.C. while further demonstrating the commitment to realistic and evidence-based decision making about the sector.

This approach does, however, risk negative opinion or response of the report findings from groups wishing to see a removal of open-net pens from coastal waters. Furthermore, there may be an expectation of the Province to commit to the recommendations, including any financial commitments to ensure RAS sector viability as described in the report. Therefore, as per established process, Treasury Board Staff will need to review the report prior to any release. If not released formally, it is likely the report will ultimately be released via a Freedom of Information request.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

If the report is to be shared publicly, the next steps include a Treasury Board Staff review and sharing the document with government partners and stakeholders with a vested interest in the 2025 Transition plan and finfish aquaculture planning in B.C.

#### **Attachment(s):**

1. Counterpoint (2022), RAS Salmon Farming in BC – Economic Analysis & Strategic Considerations, FINAL REPORT.pdf

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#### **REVIEWED BY:**

	Initials	Date
DM	LH	2022-05-17
ADM	JM	2022-05-17
Program Dir/Mgr.	DT	2022-05-17

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## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 18, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**ISSUE:** Update on the report following the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund roundtable sessions hosted by Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly and Bob Chamberlin in 2021.

### BACKGROUND:

- Following the appointment of Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly and the provincial mandate commitment to double the \$42.85 million contribution to B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), a series of proponent roundtable sessions were completed in August 2021.
- These sessions were led by Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly, and contracted First Nations leader Bob Chamberlin, and involved 18 stakeholders representing a cross-section of organizations who had previously received BCSRIF funding in the first two intakes in 2019 and 2020.
- The focus of the session was to collect feedback and advice on developing a more efficient BCSRIF phase two, as well as ensuring Indigenous access to the fund is prioritized.
- A summary report of the feedback was developed (Attachment) and was shared internally amongst natural resource agency staff, the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) BCSRIF Secretariat, and the First Nations Fisheries Council.

### DISCUSSION:

The summary report collected the feedback from participants and Bob Chamberlin and organized it into 11 themes under three categories. These informed five recommendations aimed at improving BCSRIF phase two in terms of accessibility and efficiency for applicants. These recommendations have helped inform the basis of negotiations and planning that is underway currently with DFO's BCSRIF Secretariat for the next phase of the program. While there is no formal tracking or commitment to implement the recommendations, DFO has been receptive to their intent and both provincial and federal teams are actively working on integrating them into BCSRIF. It is expected that the impending launch of BCSRIF phase two will reflect the report's content.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

The purpose of hiring Bob Chamberlin for this work was to bring an Indigenous perspective into planning for BCSRIF phase two. His feedback helped craft Recommendation #2 regarding increasing collaborative management of BCSRIF with Indigenous partners.

### NEXT STEPS:

Staff continue working with DFO's BCSRIF Secretariat to integrate the recommendations into the processes for the next phase of the program this summer.

**Attachment(s):** Provincial BCSRIF Informal Roundtable August 2021 Sessions Report

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### REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM	LH	June 1, 2022
ADM	JM	May 18, 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	DT	May 18, 2022

# Provincial BCSRIF Informal Roundtable August 2021 Sessions

## Summary

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The following document provides a summary of a series of roundtable sessions that were hosted by British Columbia with recipients of the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) in August 2021.

Launched in 2019, BCSRIF is a 5 year, \$142.85 million contribution program funded jointly by the federal (70%) and provincial government (30%). To date 60 contribution agreements (\$85M) have been signed and over 20 more (Batch 4 and 4.1) are in various stages of negotiations, which will utilize the majority of the remaining funds. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has budgeted funds of \$100M for a next phase for BCSRIF, and B.C., through the mandate of Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly, has committed to doubling the provincial contribution of \$42.85M.

With the new investment on the horizon, consultant and indigenous advisor Bob Chamberlin, and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly undertook consultations with previous BCSRIF recipients to collect feedback and lessons learned that will be applied to ensure an improved and more accessible BCSRIF 2.0. Eleven key themes emerged on a range of topics such as: reducing application reporting and financial forecasting requirements; determining the focus of the fund; supporting long-term projects and preventative actions, and having more priorities driven by Indigenous groups.

### 1. Introduction:

The August 2021 BCSRIF consultations invited recipients of BCSRIF to participate in an informal roundtable regarding their current BCSRIF project (s) to discuss the following questions:

1. How has having BCSRIF support impacted your project? How has your project been going so far?

2. How has BCSRIF support benefited the objectives of your organization overall?
3. How many jobs has the project provided to your organization or others?
4. Are there changes to the BCSRIF program you would like to see?
5. How do you think BCSRIF could better support the recovery of wild pacific salmon?
6. As a result of your BCSRIF grant/project, have you identified any new opportunities or future projects?
7. With your BCSRIF grant were you able to leverage any other funding or in-kind resources?

The roundtables took place on August 17th, 23rd, 24th, 2021. The meetings were approximately one hour. The full list of meeting attendees and meeting details can be found in Appendix A.

Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly chaired each Roundtable. After a brief welcoming statement, he asked Bob Chamberlin to introduce himself and explain his role in the process, then asked each proponent to introduce themselves before making their presentation. Mr. Chamberlin participated in all the roundtables to assist the Province in collecting feedback, successes, and concerns about the program.

Each BCSRIF proponent was given approximately 10 minutes to address the above questions, provide comments on the BCSRIF reporting process and to participate in a short roundtable to highlight any additional items of importance. PSD and Mr. Chamberlin held a short follow up question period to clarify participants' statements made during their formal presentations.

The feedback from these sessions is compiled in this report and will be incorporated into the development of a renewed BCSRIF program in 2022 to make it more accessible and successful in coordinating and respecting Indigenous interests in the fund.

## **2. Summary of Feedback:**

The feedback provided in the roundtables has been organized into three categories: 1) Working with BCSRIF staff; 2) Application and Reporting Process, and 3) BCSRIF Program Feedback. Each category has been further broken up by theme and highlights of feedback can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Category 1: Working with BCSRIF Staff:**

#### ***Theme 1: Working with the BCSRIF Secretariat has been positive.***

Overall, participants agreed that the BCSRIF Secretariat (primarily DFO staff) have been very easy to work with. Several participants noted that staff were flexible, aided in resolving various conflicts, and that staff were able to help participants with reporting. In addition, BCSRIF secretariat had fast turnaround times, as an example, one participant highlighted that that it only took 2 weeks between getting a report submitted, getting comments back, and getting the next installment of funding.

### **Category 2: Application/Reporting Process:**

#### ***Theme 2: Reporting requirements reduced, and financial forecasting simplified.***

Many participants stated that reporting on a monthly or quarterly basis was difficult and more than what was expected from other grant programs. The reporting was difficult for some groups to stay on top of, which resulted in the groups needing to hire specific staff to maintain the reporting and the financial tracking. This was frustrating for some participants as it meant that the BCSRIF funding was spent on an administrative resource and reporting rather than the project objectives. This was especially prevalent for participants of smaller organizations that may not have the same administrative capacity and support as larger organizations such as universities.

With regards to financial tracking and reporting, participants found that the requirements were too granular and required detailed forecasting. For example, one participant mentioned having to forecast the cost spent on postage yearly for the length of the project. The main issue with such detailed financial tracking and

reporting is that multi-year projects will change over time and in the beginning of a project there will be many unknowns. Committing to a detailed spending schedule results in deviations and more time and effort spent by participants and BCSRIF staff on renegotiations for contract amendments. This in turn takes more time away from project work and diverts project time and money to administrative tasks.

***Theme 3: Application process unnecessarily complex – lacking innovation.***

Several participants mentioned that the application process was difficult and extremely bureaucratic. A few participants mentioned that out of all other grant applications, BCSRIF may have been the most difficult application or on the medium to high end of difficulty. It was recommended that since this program is seeking innovation, that it should also function in a more innovative manner.

***Theme 4: Time intake so other funds can be leveraged***

It was recommended that the BCSRIF intake process be timed in such a way that participants can time the funding to be able to leverage other funds. For example, other funding pots such as the Coastal Restoration Fund or Pacific Salmon Commission Endowment Funds, have different intakes, but may all be contributing some resources to a project moving through BCSRIF as its main partner.

***Theme 5: Application process is burdensome for First Nations***

Participants indicated that the proposal-based process does not allow First Nations to drive their strategic objectives as the priorities of the fund are broad and high level. First Nations communities and organizations often have strategic plans that reflect the regional nature of their priorities. BCSRIF priorities are high level and province- or coast-wide, which makes it difficult for First Nations with regionalized strategies to fit within a higher level priority scheme or puts them at risk of being evaluated lower due to less alignment with the fund priorities.

**Category 3: BCSRIF Program Feedback:**

***Theme 6: Increase focus to other species that are not 'red-listed'.***

Several participants mentioned the importance of committing funding towards species that are not currently 'red-listed' or at-risk. While it makes sense to fund species-at-risk (either formally or informally designated), the Canadian Nature Fund already exists for this purpose. A big concern that participants had was that we do not know the status of many local species, sub-species and individual stocks

or runs. BCSRIF should be used to investigate the status of these local stocks to determine the baseline. When the fund and its participants only focus on the red-listed species, then there is potential for yellow-listed species to go into the red, and for blue-listed species to go into the yellow. In addition, BCSRIF should fund projects actively working to restore and protect the habitats of species that may not be red-listed since it is easier and less expensive to prevent the loss of habitat rather than restore previously degraded areas.

### ***Theme 7: BCSRIF fund has enabled collaboration***

Several participants indicated that BCSRIF processes facilitated collaboration via the proposal process and with other organizations. Funding from BCSRIF increased interest in projects, which aided in collaboration with various interested parties. Participants also noted that support from this fund increased collaboration with Indigenous groups. The perception that BCSRIF projects are a safer investment because of government funding opened opportunities and willingness from private and other partners to collaborate and cost-share projects. These opportunities may not have existed without the backing of governments through BCSRIF funding.

### ***Theme 8: Focus on long term project support***

Many respondents indicated that need for long term funding to not only support important work but also avoid losing the capacity and momentum that has been built up. This is particularly important for indigenous partners who have built capacity and expertise and want to continue to do the good work for fish, salmon, and habitat.

### ***Theme 9: Regional and watershed-level priorities***

Several groups highlighted the need for priorities to be regional or at a watershed-level. Regional priorities allow for more tailored and relatable work for organizations and First Nations to undertake in their own communities and territories. Suggestions were to work through tables such as the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM). Additionally, the roundtables related to West Coast Aquatic in West Vancouver Island area may be an additional source of seeking input on local and regional priorities.

### ***Theme 10: Clarity on focus – all fish or just salmon?***

One group highlighted the need to clarify if the fund is supporting salmon or all fisheries and indicated that there is mixed messaging from the Province and from



DFO regarding what is being supported. Another group maintained that while the fund should focus on salmon, it should be open to all fish and fishery-related organizations. BCSRIF has funded projects across wild salmon, aquaculture, shellfish, and other fisheries (rockfish, etc.) however, the main driver is salmon recovery, and this could be looked to be made clearer in public documents for BCSRIF 2.0.

***Theme 11: More priorities driven by Indigenous groups.***

Participants indicated that there needs to be clearer priorities that are Indigenous focused and lead. The need to be more strategic with priorities from Indigenous groups should be clear and should be developed in a collaborative way. Currently, priorities are developed by governments with input from mandate letters and internal subject matter experts, rather than with Indigenous groups.

**3. Recommendations:**

The feedback provided by the roundtables will be used by the Province to develop BCSRIF 2.0 in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). The following outlines some key recommendations based on these roundtables:

**Recommendation #1:** Improve connectivity and accessibility of BCSRIF projects via tools such as interactive maps and workshops.

**Recommendation #1.B:** Work with GeoBC to develop interactive project maps.

**Recommendation #2:** Increase collaborative management of BCSRIF with indigenous partners to help ensure accessibility for First Nations, and so that regional and Indigenous priorities are better reflected in BCSRIF 2.0.

**Recommendation #3:** Clarify focus of the fund and ensure areas complement Provincial priorities and leverage other work such as the provincial wild salmon strategy.

**Recommendation #4:** Look at ways to support work on wild salmon past BCSRIF e.g., Legacy Funding.

**Recommendation #5:** Simplify application process and reporting out on projects to reduce administrative burden.

These actions could help BCSRIF to better support B.C.'s fish and seafood sector, and ensuring the sustainability and recovery of wild Pacific salmon in B.C.

**Appendix 1: Participant list**

Date and Time	Staff Participants	Program Participants	Organization Name	Project Number	Project Name
August 17, 2021 at 9:00 AM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Scott Hinch, Professor Director, Natural Resources Conservation Program	University of British Columbia (Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences)	BCSRIF_2019_058	Enhancing Sustainability of capture & release marine recreational Pacific salmon fisheries using new tools/technology
	Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).  Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor  Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF	Susan Allen, Professor	University of British Columbia (Department of Earth, Oceans and Atmospheric Sciences)	BCSRIF_2019_092	Drivers of Inter-annual variability in Zooplankton Feeding in the Strait of Georgia: A combined model- observation approach

	Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF				
August 17, 2021 at 1:15 PM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture  Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).  Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor  Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries,	Francis Zwiers, Director	Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium	BCSRIF_2019_074	Place-based Risk of Climate Change to Sustainability of BC Wild and Hatchery-origin Salmon
		Jim Lane, Deputy Program Manager	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	BCSRIF_2019_129	Partnership for a novel framework for assessing and managing Pacific Herring fisheries on the West Coast of Vancouver Island

	Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF				
August 17, 2021 at 2:45 PM	<p>Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture</p> <p>Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).</p> <p>Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor</p>	<p>Mark Duiven, Executive Director</p> <p>Tory MacKenzie, Project Manager</p> <p>Stu Barnes</p>	National Indigenous Fisheries Institute	BCSRIF_2019_017	National Indigenous Fisheries Institute Engagement

	Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF				
August 23, 2021 at 9:00 AM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture  Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).  Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and	Aidan Fisher, Fisheries Biologist	Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance	BCSRIF_2019_118	Lower Fraser Coho PIT Barge and Tagging Project
		Nicholas Lapointe, Senior Conservation Biologist	Canadian Wildlife Federation	BCSRIF_2019_137	BC Fish Passage Joint-Venture

	<p>Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor</p> <p>Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF</p> <p>Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF</p> <p>Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF</p> <p>Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector Insights &amp; Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF</p>				
August 23, 2021 at 10:30 AM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for	Kelly Speck, Elected Councillor	Namgis First Nation	BCSRIF_2019_107	Broughton wild salmon restoration project
				BCSRIF_2019_108 B	Phase 2: Independent First Nations' Genomic Lab for BC
		Janvier Doire, Biologist	Skeena Fisheries Commission	BCSRIF_2019_172	Bear River Autonomous Salmon Enumeration

	<p>Fisheries and Aquaculture</p> <p>Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).</p> <p>Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor</p> <p>Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF</p> <p>Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF</p> <p>Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF</p>				
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	Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector Insights & Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF				
August 23, 2021 at 1:15 PM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture  Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).  Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor  Alec Dale, Executive	Angela Kane, CEO Tori Verkaik,	Secwepemcul'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society	BCSRIF_2019_067	Elephant Hill Fire Riparian Restoration Project
		Tracy Bond, Executive Director	Baker Creek Enhancement Society with Nazko First Nations	BCSRIF_2019_071	Plateau Fire Recovery – Riparian Plant Collection and Planting for Restoration of Chinook and Coho Salmon Habitat in the Nazko Area



	<p>Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF</p> <p>Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF</p> <p>Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF</p> <p>Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector Insights &amp; Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF</p>				
August 23, 2021 at 2:45 PM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Jason Hwang, Vice President	Pacific Salmon Foundation	BCSRIF_2019_040	Determination of Bottlenecks Limiting Wild and Enhanced Juvenile Salmon and Steelhead Production in BC using PIT tags and Spatially Comprehensive Arrays
				BCSRIF_2019_045	Innovation for community-run terminal fisheries – scientific foundations for adaptive management of salmon

	Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).			BCSRIF_2019_112	Percy Walkus Hatchery Upgrade
				BCSRIF_2019_136	Salish Sea Salmon Action Plan
				BCSRIF_2019_192	Winter Salmon Survey in the Gulf of Alaska
	Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor				
	Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF				
	Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF				
	Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF				
	Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector				

	Insights & Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF				
August 24, 2021 at 9:00 AM	<p>Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture</p> <p>Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).</p> <p>Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor</p> <p>Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and</p>	Astrid Niemann-Zajac, Sr. Manager Partnerships and IGR	First Nations Fisheries Council	BCSRIF_2019_017	National Indigenous Fisheries Institute Engagement

	<p>Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF</p> <p>Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF</p> <p>Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF</p> <p>Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector Insights &amp; Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF</p>				
August 24, 2021 at 2:45 PM	Fin Donnelly, MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Tom Reid, Restoration Technician	Nature Trust of BC	BCSRIF_2019_041	Enhancing Estuary Resiliency: An Innovative Approach to Sustaining Fish and Fish Habitat in a Changing Climate
		Dennis Rutherford, Science Advisor	Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association	BCSRIF_2019_061	Improving Sustainability of British Columbia's Commercial Spot Prawn Fishery and Prawn Stocks
		Kate Miller, Manager Environmental Services	Cowichan Valley Regional District	BCSRIF_2019_130	Cowichan River Salmon Restoration program - Sustainable Water Supply - Engineering

	<p>Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Science, Policy and Innovation Division with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries (MAFF).</p> <p>Robert Chamberlin, Chamberlin and Associates Consulting : Sole Proprietor</p> <p>Alec Dale, Executive Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wild Salmon Branch (FAWSB), MAFF</p> <p>Mike Turner, Director, FAWSB, MAFF</p> <p>Jack Garnier, Executive Assistant, Ministers Office, MAFF</p> <p>Volha Kibitkina, Project Management Analyst, Sector</p>				
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	Insights & Corporate Initiatives Unit, MAFF				
Email		Elida Peers, Secretary-Treasurer	Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society	BCSRIF_2019_005	Creation of Salmon Conservation Facility
		Marc Guimond, Hatchery Manager	Seymour Salmonid Society	BCSRIF_2019_100	Seymour Watershed Restoration Project

## Appendix 2: Themes and related quotes

<p><b>Theme 1: <i>working with the BCSRIF Secretariate has been positive</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liked how Tyler from DFO helped with conflict resolution regarding a boundary issue.</li> <li>- Flexibility of DFO has been amazing. In addition, BCSRIF staff only took 2 weeks between reporting, comments, and additional funding.</li> <li>- Happy with management and interaction.</li> <li>- Likes the structure of SRIF, program is well run with good intensions.</li> <li>- BCSRIF staff have been very flexible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 2: <i>Reporting Requirements Reduced and financial Forecasting Simplified</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I hesitate to say that I have never seen an application which appears to focus so much on bureaucracy and what note goes into what box, as opposed to actual accomplishment. I am totally aware that there must be accountability in every way with public money and have never hesitated in supplying copies of invoices and all reports required, in fifty years of this – like the reporting as it enforces accountability but would love it if BCSRIF was less bureaucratic, there is a lot of paperwork.</li> <li>- has been involved with a lot of grant programs – BCSRIF sits in the middle to high end especially for financial reporting.</li> <li>- Report was straight forward.</li> <li>- Found reporting to be straight forward, but under the NNTC umbrella and able to access other reports such as accounting.</li> <li>- Less reporting preferred - roll the reporting into other reporting requirements for other funders (consistent reporting requirements)</li> <li>- Reporting was tough - had to hire staff to help with reporting, quarterly financial reporting makes sense but maybe not deliverable reporting, level of detail in contribution agreement is high - may trigger more amendments as a result.</li> <li>- Reporting was okay - had lots of help from Yvette - has not been too onerous, needed to transfer funds to future years; budget was very detailed and difficult to change over the life of the project. Like other funders such as PSF.</li> <li>- Namgis has had 10-year funding agreements - had discussed trust fund transfers to reduce bureaucratic detail- too much detail in budget requirements (for example, asks to break it down by yearly postage spend). Had to hire a specific person to address the reporting and financial budget tracking.</li> <li>- Reporting - there were some changes recently which caused confusion. In the future if there are changes, would be good to explain a bit more to reduce confusion. Lay person understanding vs. academic reporting perspective.</li> <li>- Grand reporting is costly - just want to get the information out so that they can focus on the project.</li> </ul>

*- Application process for the fund is administratively burdensome – the most painful experience – way to develop a process that is not that burdensome administratively – proposal-based projects is not strategic. Reporting monthly or quarterly – a lot of the funds received are used for maintaining the administrative load vs the project over the long term – challenging already for those communities short on capacity. Lump sum awards would be better. Negotiation and contribution agreement process is extremely detailed – can't predict how a multi year project will play out as things will shift. Can't box everyone into the same reporting structure as different organizations have different capacities.*

### **Theme 3. Application process unnecessarily complex – lacking innovation.**

*- Looking for innovative program administration and delivery.  
- With all the computer-skilled and well-educated personnel that administer your funding assistance program, I am surprised that there hasn't been a reporting system devised with one database that can provide answers to all the questions you require us to spend time on?*

### **Theme 4: Could time intake to leverage other funds**

*- Should restructure and reschedule timing to adjust to other funding cycles.*

### **Theme 5: Application process is burdensome for First Nations**

*- Proposal based process does not allow First Nations to drive their strategic objectives as the priorities of the fund are broad and high level.*

### **Theme 6: Increase focus to other species that are not red-listed.**

*- More research on loss of biodiversity, more research into hatcheries, freshwater issues (heating up during heat waves), look at cumulative effects of land use practices along with barriers. Culvert remediation - how effective is it? More information regarding catch and release - especially to the public regarding best management practice regarding catch and release could expand this work into other fish species like pink and chum.  
- Focus on prevention aspects of keeping species from being listed; Canadian Nature Fund is for listed species. For example, Bulkley watershed is not eligible for funding from CNF or BCSRIF.  
- Sprinkle SRIF funds around focus in specific areas - colour coding scheme for strategy work - ted strategy is different than yellow strategy. Strategies still needed for all areas to see maintenance in green and improvements in the yellow and red zones.  
- Would like more project and support for innovation and science projects, sustainable fishery practices. There is a large benefit from non-salmon fisheries. Nice if BCSRIF does not lose sight of that.*



<b>Theme 7: BCSRIF fund has enabled collaboration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DFO in-kind support you need the core funding to be able to get other people interested in participating</li> <li>- did some collaborative proposal writing with OKIB, etc. Also worked with First Nations groups on the preservation of salmon values</li> <li>- Developed new working relationships out of UBC and academia, more interactions with biologists.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 8: focus on long term project supports</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Great to build project, but then funding stops. Built up a lot of capacity, don't want to lose that momentum. No legacy funding - Lots of people want to participate, but hard to keep that up because not sure if there will be funding in the future.</li> <li>- The program should continue to support long term projects that go past the funding window - support is sometimes lost after funding is no longer available.</li> <li>- Provide funding for long term projects.</li> <li>- Extend the BCSRIF funding to ensure that maintenance and monitoring of our established conservation/enhancement structures in the watershed can continue.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 9: Regional Priorities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priorities should be on a regional basis.</li> <li>- best placed to implement regional/regional-based approach. Work through the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) organization to assist if possible, best placed to implement a regional or area based approach, already all work together. Efficient way to implement the approach with BCSRIF</li> <li>-Develop a framework and area-based priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 10: Clarity on focus – all fish or just salmon</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the fund supporting Salmon or all fisheries? – There is just a lot of confusion about this. There is also mixed messaging from the province and from DFO regarding what is being supported – some alignment and clarity on that would benefit the delivery of the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 11: More priorities driven by Indigenous groups.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there needs to be clearer priorities that are Indigenous focused and lead. Need to be strategic and encourage collaboration. Priorities are driven by program administrators rather than Indigenous groups.</li> </ul>

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 30, 2022  
**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship  
**ISSUE:** Species at Risk Conservation in BC

### BACKGROUND:

There are currently 1400+ species and ecological communities considered to be at some level of risk in B.C. by the Conservation Data Center (i.e., red, blue and yellow lists); 233 of these are listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). B.C. is the most biodiverse province, and the one with the highest numbers of species at risk (SAR) in Canada.

Species declines, resulting in biodiversity declines, are primarily due to five main factors: habitat loss or alteration; invasive species; overexploitation; climate change; and pollution. Addressing threats can be complex needing to balance social, cultural, economic, and environmental considerations.

Of the 233 SARA-listed species that occur in B.C., 96 have finalized federal Recovery Strategies that include the legal identification of 'critical habitat' (CH) (totaling ~28 million ha). CH is a delineated area in which specific features and attributes necessary for species survival are identified. These features and attributes are not to be destroyed or rendered ineffective (require 'effective protection'). On non-federal land about 12% of the CH in B.C. has at least partial protection.

Provincial government actions to recover species at risk are identified in Implementation Plans (IP). IP are collaboratively developed with Indigenous Nations and stakeholders and approved by provincial Cabinet to define both the population and habitat objectives and approach that will be taken to recovery species at risk. There are IPs for Northern Goshawk, Marbled Murrelet, Southern Mountain Caribou, and Whitebark Pine (Five Needle Pine IP - in development).

B.C. is among the provinces and territories with the highest percentage of protected areas in Canada. Approximately 19.6% of the province is under some form of protection (15.5% in parks and permanent protections and 4.1% as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs)).

Legal protection of SAR or their habitats is provided through multiple B.C. statutes: Wildlife Act (WA); Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA); Oil and Gas Activities Act (OGAA); Mineral Tenure Act; Ecological Reserves Act; Park Act; Land Act, Private Managed Forest Land Act.

### DISCUSSION:

In some cases, the provincial population and habitat recovery objectives set out in an IP do not meet the full expectations of SARA. For example, SARA requires the recovery of Southern Mountain Caribou to their full historic range, an objective that could take more than a century to reverse habitat disturbance and which may not be possible given the effects of climate change. Provincial recovery objectives for Southern Mountain Caribou are to stabilize population (stop decline) and begin population growth. As "safety net legislation" SARA does not consider provincial authority in setting population and habitat objectives.

For species without an IP, the current provincial regulatory framework is complex and has limited ability to provide protection for SAR against threats from all sectors. The use of regulatory tools available for the protection of individual species and their habitats generally requires that the species be provincially listed. However, the lists of species are outdated (i.e., some have not been updated for over 15 years), there is no clear process to update and maintain these lists, and the habitat tools of individual statutes apply only to specific sectors, activities, and/or taxa. The gaps in the provincial regulatory and legislative framework are part of the reason of federal intervention under SARA.

The number of listed SAR is expected to increase in the coming years due to continued threats to biodiversity and climate change. As SARA is “safety net” legislation it does provide protection for species and habitats. However, the species-by-species approach requires extensive resources to manage, and it has no means of resolving conflicting scientific opinions in the identification of CH. B.C. and Environment Climate Change Canada are collaborating on several initiatives to help address these challenges.

**Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR):** Government has committed to implementing all 14 recommendations of the OGSR including the paradigm shift towards prioritizing ecosystems health and biodiversity. Work on assessing steps to implement this recommendation are underway and include options for a declaration for the conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity in B.C., as well as legislative tools to support this declaration.

**Nature Agreement:** Negotiations on a Canada-B.C. Nature Agreement are ongoing. The Agreement is expected to further enable federal-provincial partnerships on conserving and restoring habitat, strengthening ecosystem resilience to climate change, and assessing, through policy pilot projects, how to address SARA related challenges.

**The Conservation Priorities and Species Listing (CPSL):** This project focuses on existing legislation and non-regulatory options to support SAR. Updating the SAR list(s) under FRPA and OGAA is an action with potential near-term results to give decision makers up to date information and access to legal tools (habitat designations) for SAR. A cross-ministry committee that includes Indigenous Technical Advisors is currently reviewing the proposed procedure for identifying candidate species as well as a list of approximately 50 species to potentially add to the FRPA and OGAA list(s).

CPSL is also developing a Species and Ecosystems Management Stream (SEMS) Framework. This is a proposed process to filter species into different management streams where they can be further prioritized for management action. Listing species as SAR under existing legislation is part of the “Recovery” management stream.

**Together for Wildlife Strategy:** The strategy includes commitments to update the Wildlife Act, prioritize regional multi-species planning, including considerations and objective setting for all prioritized wildlife, as well as reviewing the Conservation Lands Program and other related actions.

**The Environmental Mitigation Policy (EMP):** The EMP is a broad provincial policy that outlines how to mitigate impacts on environmental values and offset habitat losses associated with development impacts. When applied consistently and in co-ordination with overarching provincial objectives and frameworks, the EMP has a fundamental role in supporting environmental sustainability, economic growth, and advancing reconciliation. As the first province to implement an environmental mitigation policy, B.C. is seen as being on the leading edge, and there is great demand from proponents and others for further guidance. The next steps will be to update the EMP and its associated procedures,

and to examine policies currently developed by other jurisdictions such as those for target-based outcomes, no-net-loss and net-gain objectives.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

Prioritizing the protection of SAR, biodiversity and ecosystem health aligns with Indigenous worldviews and is expressed in various Indigenous knowledge systems, laws and traditions and remains a key point of interest for Indigenous Peoples.

While Indigenous Nations are involved in the development of implementation plans for SAR, until recently, there was very little collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, organization, or governments on the development of recovery plans (recommendations to recover SAR) and related SAR processes. Work is underway to assess how to expand the development and review process in alignment with reconciliation commitments

### NEXT STEPS:

The Province is developing the path forward to protect species at risk, stewarded wildlife and ecosystems and to safeguard B.C.'s biodiversity through a number of collaborative initiatives.

Work with the federal government is well underway and the Province will be collaborating with Indigenous Nations seeking their input and guidance, and engaging with interested parties (including environmental non-government organizations, academia, industry) and communities to develop and implement the new paradigm shift.

### PREPARED BY:

Excedera St. Louis  
Species at Risk Recovery Specialist  
Ecosystems Branch  
(778) 698 4385

### REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM	LH	May 31, 2022
ADM	DM	May 30, 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	Daphne Dolhaine	

## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 27, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**ISSUE:** June 9, 2022, meeting with Watershed Watch Salmon Society

### BACKGROUND:

- Minister Osborne's Office requested the June 9, 2022, meeting with Watershed Watch Salmon Society (WWSS). Potential topics of discussion suggested by WWSS include:
  - B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy development and alignment with federal Wild Salmon Policy;
  - Salmon aquaculture and provincial support for the federal commitment to transition to closed containment by 2025;
  - Watershed Security Strategy and Fund and *Water Sustainability Act* implementation; and,
  - Floodplain management and flood recovery.
- WWSS is a non-profit self-described advocacy organization that aims to "defend and rebuild B.C.'s wild salmon". It was founded approximately 20 years ago and has more than 10 staff based in Vancouver. The WWSS Executive Director is Aaron Hill.

### DISCUSSION:

#### 1. B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy development and alignment with federal Wild Salmon Policy

B.C. is developing salmon strategies that will work to restore wild salmon populations in partnership with Indigenous Nations and the Federal Government. Fish passage and habitat restoration are expected to be a component of B.C.'s Wild Salmon Strategy.

#### Key Messages:

- B.C. is continuing work on a salmon strategy. Fish passage, flood control and overall habitat and water protection remain key considerations of future actions.
- B.C. recognizes the need for ensuring flood structures are fish-friendly and the importance of the Fraser Delta area to wild salmon stocks.
- We are working with the Federal government and Indigenous Nations to ensure that any provincial work on wild salmon is complementary with Canada's Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative and in line with our United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples commitments.

#### 2. Salmon aquaculture and provincial support for the federal commitment to develop a plan to transition from net-pens by 2025

On March 10, 2022, the Premier's Office sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau detailing the provincial stance on a 2025 Transition Plan, while committing B.C. to join Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) transition process and calling for appropriate supports. DFO Minister Joyce Murray is set to decide whether to renew 79 remaining farms licenses which are set to expire June 2022. B.C. is participating in this process via a Strategic Oversight Committee (Assistant Deputy Minister-level) which is set to meet this June.

#### Key Messages:

- B.C. respects DFO's authority in making decisions about salmon farm licensing and protecting wild salmon.
- Canada must realize though that those decisions will have significant implications for B.C. workers, families, and coastal communities. It will also be a significant decision in light of our reconciliation objectives.

- This is broader than DFO can provide on its own and requires a complete federal response that includes social and economic agencies.
- B.C. has put in place transition supports for workers and communities affected by new protections of Old Growth Forests. We need a similar approach from Canada that provides for economic opportunities for workers, communities and First Nations.

### **3. Watershed Security Strategy and Fund and Water Sustainability Act implementation.**

B.C. is currently developing a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund that builds on efforts inside and outside of government to ensure our water and watersheds are respected and valued for all they provide.

#### **Key Messages:**

- Public engagement on a Watershed Security Strategy discussion paper ended on March 18 and we are preparing a what we heard report to be released late summer.
- Overarching themes we heard during engagement include reconciliation, climate change and governance of watersheds.
- We recognize that we need to manage our watersheds, so they are more resilient to climate change impacts like flood and drought.
- We will continue to collaborate with key partners as we develop options for the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.
- We expect a draft Strategy to be released for public engagement later this year.

### **4. Floodplain management and flood recovery**

WWSS have identified over 1,500 km of potential habitat disconnected from the main stem of the Fraser River by more than 150 flood gates, pump stations and dikes. WWSS have indicated that approximately \$100 million(M) over 10 years would be needed for salmon-safe flood control upgrades in the Lower Fraser alone. The BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) has supported Resilient Waters project phases 1 (\$600,000) and 2 (\$2.6M) which focus on identifying, prioritizing and conducting preliminary scoping of opportunities for flood control infrastructure upgrades and fish habitat restoration. WWSS, who is a partner in the project, held an event to mark the second phase of the project in December 2021 in which Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly participated.

#### **Key Messages:**

- The Province has been a strong supporter of this work both through BCSRIF and the Healthy Watersheds Initiative.
- We are particularly pleased to be supporting through BCSRIF the important work of Resilient Waters in preparing communities for climate change and reconnecting vital wild salmon habitat by advancing collaborative efforts to upgrade flood control infrastructure in the Lower Fraser watershed.

#### **PREPARED BY:**

Rebecca Wardle  
Senior Policy Analyst  
FAWSB  
236 478 2417

#### **REVIEWED BY:**

	Initials	Date
DM	LH	June 3, 2022
ADM	JM	May 27, 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	DT	May 27, 2022

## DECISION NOTE

**DATE:** May 2, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship.

**ISSUE:** Minister's direction required on British Columbia Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) Priorities.

### RECOMMENDED OPTION:

**Option 2 (to update the current BCSRIF priorities) is recommended as it ensures B.C.'s ability to set priorities as an equal partner with the federal government, which will in turn support investments in areas of key importance to B.C.**

### BACKGROUND:

- Launched in 2019, BCSRIF is a five-year, \$142M provincial (30%) and federal (70%) program that supports the protection and restoration activities for priority wild fish stocks, in particular salmon, and ensures the long-term environmental and economic sustainability for the B.C. seafood sector.
- The province contributed \$42.85M to BCSRIF, the largest provincial financial commitment to protect wild salmon in the past 20 years. Canada invested \$100M over five years and has committed an additional \$100 million in the Federal Budget 2021 to expand the program, extending the program to 2026 (now a 7 year program compared to the original 5 year program).
- As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship (LWRS) has become the provincial program lead, taking over from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.
- Working to double the size of BCSRIF is included Minister Osborne's 2022 Mandate Letter and the Premier has made public statements regarding doubling the size of the fund, which has been consistently oversubscribed (nearly \$500M in funding sought by applicants to date).
- Over 90 projects have received support from BCSRIF, which is open to Indigenous communities, industry associations, environmental non-governmental organizations, commercial enterprises, and academic institutions.
- Although BCSRIF is a 5-year program, as of January 2022, nearly the entirety (98.5%) of the fund has been allocated to single and multi-year projects spanning the five-year period.
- As a cost-shared program between the federal and B.C. governments, applications must receive joint approval by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Province.
- Projects are vetted using a variety of criteria, including jointly agreed to BCSRIF priorities reflecting provincial (please see Appendix 1) and federal objectives. Current BCSRIF priorities include:
  - Aquaculture and the changing environment.
  - Species of concern rebuilding (Fraser steelhead, chinook and coho research).
  - Species of concern rebuilding (selective fishing).
  - Species of concern rebuilding (habitat restoration).
  - Community hatchery upgrades.
  - Increasing innovation to support the sustainability and economic stability of B.C. fisheries.

- The BCSRIF Framework Agreement details that the Steering Committee (comprised of one Federal and provincial Deputy Minister representative) shall act as the principal forum to plan, coordinate, and set priorities relating to the three pillars (innovation, infrastructure, science partnership) of the BCSRIF Program. Typically, the ADM and DM committees endorse the set of joint priorities developed by staff at both agencies.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

DFO have indicated that they are moving ahead with Phase 2 of BCSRIF and will be using it as one of their key tools to deliver their \$647M Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI). Canada is waiting for B.C. to inform them of their decision on whether they will provide an additional \$42.85 for the next phase of BCSRIF. Currently no provincial funds have been secured. DFO has indicated that it will proceed with BCSRIF without the Province if necessary and that input on the priorities and information on funding are needed urgently as they are already in year 2 of 5 of their PSSI. The province needs to consider how it wishes to respond to DFO quickly or it could risk not being part of setting the priorities for BCSRIF.

Provincial staff have reviewed the former BCSRIF priorities and have proposed updates. The proposed provincial priorities (see Appendix 2) have been developed and reviewed by natural resource ministries (ENV, MIRR, FLNR, AF, TRAN) along with documents prepared by the First Nations Fisheries Council, the Wild Salmon Advisory Council, and Minister Osborne's and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly Mandates letters.

s.13; s.17

If the recommended provincial priorities are supported, LWRS and DFO officials will negotiate common priorities for the next BCSRIF intake call. A final decision on BCSRIF priorities would be made by Deputy Ministers at BCSRIF Steering Committee (see Appendix 3).

#### **OPTIONS:**

s.13; s.17



**Option 2 (recommended): Update BCSRIF Priorities.**

s.13; s.17

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Option 2.

Approved / Not Approved:

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Josie Osborne, Minister

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Date

**Attachment(s):**

- Appendix 1: Current Provincial Priorities
- Appendix 2: DRAFT List of Provincial Priorities
- Appendix 3: Program Governance Structure

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**Appendix 1: Current Provincial BCSRIF Priorities**

**Note:** These lists have formed the basis of B.C.'s negotiations with DFO to develop joint BCSRIF priorities and therefor does not represent final BCSRIF Priorities.

**British Columbia Founding Strategic Priority Areas (April 1, 2019):**

Strategic provincial priorities are as follows:

- Responding to Wild Salmon Advisory Council recommendations, including the protection and maintenance of healthy and diverse salmon populations through habitat protection and restoration, as well as existing community-based hatcheries.
- Investing in the implementation of recommendations coming from the Government-to-Government process with three First Nations regarding salmon farming in the Broughton Archipelago.
- Implementing recommendations resulting from the Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Council on Finfish Aquaculture.
- Advancing the Provincial commitment to implement the principles of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation actions as it relates to fisheries and seafood.
- Addressing the significant funding gap in the seafood sector related to innovation and competitiveness, with the goal of developing and maintaining programs supporting the shellfish, wild harvest, and aquaculture industries.
- Working with the sport fishing industry and DFO to action elements of the Vision 2021 plan which aims to maximize the social and economic benefits of the sport fishing industry to B.C.
- Responding to conservation challenges and the potential listing of species (e.g., steelhead).

**British Columbia Priority Areas for 2020-21 and 2021-22:**

- For fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Province will prioritize projects as follows:
- Community Hatcheries Infrastructure Upgrades
  - Restricted to existing hatcheries.
  - Focused on innovations or upgrades to improve efficiency and sustainability.
- Selective Fishing
  - Restricted to addressing by-catch of species of concern.
  - Appropriate commercial industry and First Nations involvement/partnership required.
- Shellfish, Wild Harvest & Aquaculture Development
  - Focused on strategies to support traceability, innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability in these industries.
- Protecting and Restoring Habitat
  - Limited to addressing habitat projects for species of concern (e.g., Fraser steelhead and chinook).

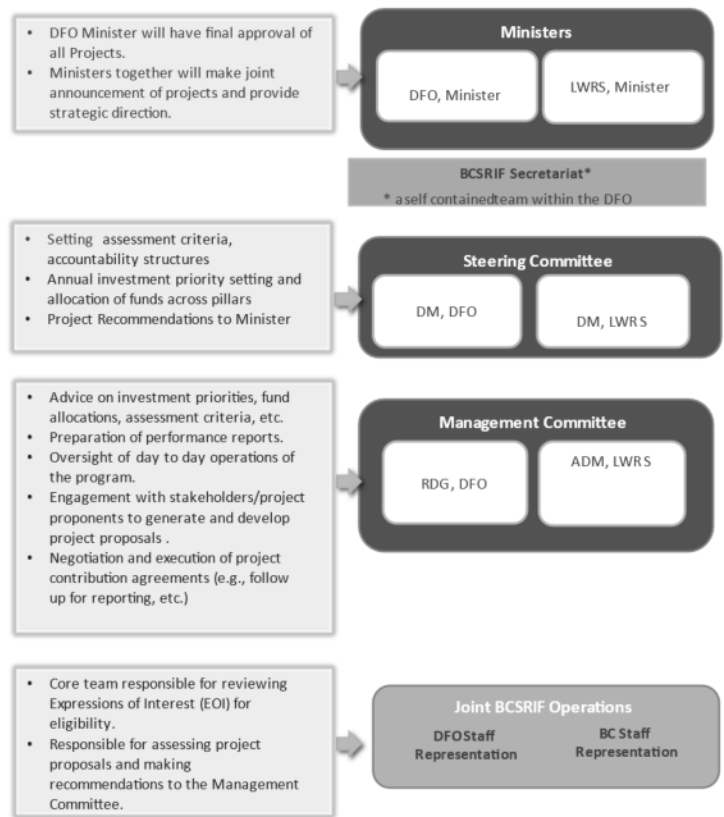
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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.16

Appendix 3: Program Governance Structure

BCSRIF Program Governance Structure



## MEETING NOTE

**DATE:** May 31, 2022

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

**REGARDING:** Meeting with BC Dairy Farmers regarding water security, agricultural water availability (livestock watering and irrigation / climate change)

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Jeremy Dunn, General Manager; Sarah Sache, Vice-Chair of BC Dairy; Dave Taylor, Director of BC Dairy

### SUMMARY:

- B.C.'s dairy farmers are represented by the not-for-profit BC Dairy Association (BCDA). Past BCDA meetings with the Province focused on environmental sustainability actions, water licensing, and compliance and enforcement of agricultural and environmental management.
- Water is of high interest to B.C. dairy and cattle farmers, including water licensing and scarcity, requests for a livestock watering policy and Agricultural Water Reserves.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION AND MESSAGES:

#### Watershed Security Strategy and Fund (WSS+F)

- Public engagement on a discussion paper for the WSS+F ended on March 18, 2022 and the ministry is preparing a 'what we heard' report to be released later this year.
- Feedback from dairy farmers included supporting agricultural water storage and water delivery infrastructure, seeking increased use and development of *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) planning and protection tools and agriculture water reserves, and prioritizing water availability for food security.
- The ministry will continue to collaborate with the agriculture sector as we develop WSS+F options.

#### Water Availability

- Seasonal drought and water shortages are increasingly affecting B.C. In Summer 2021, several WSA Temporary Protection Orders were issued across the province to reduce the strain on aquatic life and restore flow volumes to ensure the survival of culturally, ecologically, and economically important aquatic species like salmon.
- These water restrictions impacted many irrigation licenses and dairy farmers by extension. Dairy-specific economic impacts were unclear but likely exceeded hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- By developing a WSS+F, the Province aims to strengthen the resilience of our watersheds and better manage for climate change impacts and crises like flooding and drought.

#### Water Licensing and Livestock Watering

- Many ranchers using extensive rangelands (private and Crown) lack WSA authorization to divert and use the surface water needed for their livestock (e.g., water from streams).
- Livestock watering remains defined as an "industrial" water use purpose. All industrial livestock watering (groundwater and surface water) requires a water licence.
- Government engaged on a livestock watering policy intentions paper in 2018. Regular feedback from the agricultural sector includes the creation of licensing exemptions for livestock watering. The development of this policy has been paused since 2021.
- We encourage all those who require a water licence to apply. FrontCounter BC is available to assist water users with authorization and application requirements.

**Agriculture Water Reserves (AWR)**

- Designated Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands are not automatically granted water rights as water use needs vary by operation. Owners of ALR land who wish to irrigate their land from a stream or groundwater source must apply for and obtain a water licence.
- The WSA allows for establishment of an AWR as part of a Water Sustainability Plan (WSP). This would ensure that water currently used for agriculture remains available for agricultural use by limiting water transfer to other uses. As we develop the WSS+F and continue WSA implementation, more WSPs and AWRs will likely be proposed. The ministry looks forward to continuing collaboration with the agricultural sector.

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**REVIEWED BY:**

	Initials	Date
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ADM	JM	20 May 2022
Program Dir/Mgr.	SM	20 May 2022