

**FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

COMMUNIQUE

Summer 2023



STRONGER TOGETHER

Convene - Elicit - Distill



ABOUT THE FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL OF BC

Fisheries and aquatic resources are foundational to First Nations' communities, culture, well-being, identity, and way of life. We work to protect aquatic resources and habitat and help First Nations build a strong, coherent voice on Pacific fisheries and aquatic resources by:



Facilitating strong province-wide collaboration



Building and maintaining First Nations capacity



Amplifying the voices of rights holders

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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT UNIT

Message from the Executive Director

ʔi ʔə ce:p ʔəw ʔəy ʔaí, Si:yém nə Siyeʔe?

“Greetings: Are you all well, my esteemed friends (relations),”

As we write this communique, we know that there are many priority matters of concern facing all of us in our respective territories. Record temperatures and drought conditions are adding to already poor conditions for our salmon populations and their survivability. We also continue to press both the federal and provincial governments to create space at the table, to more effectively advance our interests consistent with UNDRIP and DRIPA. We are making incremental progress on this collaboration. It is important for us to continue to work together and develop consistent, and coherent messaging to government.

Key high level communication areas we continue to advance are:

- The Trilateral Accord Dialogue, on a shared Salmon Strategy, which is being facilitated by 4 Directions (Dan George).
- The Water Sustainability Strategy, and development of the Water Security Fund with BC First Nations co-designing and co-developing these strategies.
- The BC Net Pen Transition Plan, the Pacific Salmon treaty, In-Season planning - coordinated by members of the FN caucus members from the PSC panels.
- A Refresh & Updating the FNLC/FNFC MOU
 - o Emergency response scenarios / Fire, and atmospheric water events/ flooding, that impact fish habitat
 - o Drought and long-term water management – how to allocate responsibilities and organizational activities.

As organizations, we have differing mandates, and may have nuanced positions and approaches to address these critical matters – so it will be important for us to develop coherent and cohesive positions, and to design the appropriate processes on diverse environmental and fisheries related matters. To support this work, the FNFC will be staffing a new member in September who will be the point of contact and coordinate our collective and shared priorities.

Further detail can be reviewed by the sector reports in the following pages.

Thanks, and take care!

hay čxʷ qə,



Jordan Point

Executive Director

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC



Executive Director Succession Planning

Process Started with Stu Barnes

In a connected but separate stream - After an impressive 14 years of leadership, unwavering dedication, and transformative contributions at FNFC, Jordan Point has decided to embark on a new chapter in life, embracing a well-deserved retirement. In preparation for his retirement, Jordan has crafted a succession plan, which we are now delighted to share.

In the spirit of continuity and progress, FNFC announces the appointment of Stu Barnes to the role of the Associate Executive Director. As a FNFC Council Delegate from Upper Skeena for 11 years, Stu Barnes has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to FNFC's mission and values. His appointment, backed by resounding support from the Board and all Council regional delegates, exemplifies a seamless leadership shift.

Effective September 1, 2023, Stu Barnes will commence his role as Associate Director, working closely alongside Jordan Point to ensure a smooth and phased-in transition. Over the course of the next year, this collaborative approach will ensure the preservation of organizational knowledge and vision. Looking ahead to the future, FNFC anticipates June 2024, when Stu Barnes will officially assume the esteemed title of Executive Director.

Spring Assembly (February 21 & 22, 2024)

The National Aquatic Fisheries Forum will be taking place in Nanaimo in October 2023, as many of you will be attending – the FNFC has decided to postpone and reschedule the FNFC Fall Assembly to a time that will not conflict with this event. As such, the FNFC is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated Spring Assembly, scheduled for February 21 and 22, 2024.

This event will be hosted in the home Territory of our Sto:lo colleagues at the esteemed Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) and will take place at Harrison Hot Springs.

More information including registrations and agenda items for this event will be updated on the next Communique.



FNFC - DFO Joint Executive Committee (JEC) & Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meetings

After a long and cordial working relationship, Rebecca Reid retired from DFO as the Pacific Regional Director General, and we wish her every success as she moves on to the next chapter of her life. We also would like to welcome Susan Chambers, who has been appointed the Regional Director General (RDG), Pacific Region effective July 24, 2023. The FNFC President and Vice President were able to introduce themselves and met with the new RDG in Campbell River.

As part of our ongoing collaborative Accord, FNFC and DFO recently convened our regularly occurring Commitment to Action (C2A) process, and were able to collaborate at the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) and Joint Salmon Committee (JSC) meetings, to share dialogue on the Salmon outlook for 2023.

The agendas are broad and diverse, and encompass a diverse range of topics, such as the Net Pen Transition Plan – where FNFC has tabled a whole of life cycle approach to the aquaculture agenda, called FNFC Transition Open-Net Pen Plan Blueprint. We are also engaging both the province and federal governments in a new initiative called a Trilateral Accord - concerning Salmon Protection and Restoration shared by all 3 levels of government. These meetings served as vital platforms for joint efforts towards the preservation and restoration of salmon populations and enhancing fisheries management practices.





CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

Join us at the Save our Salmon Golf Tournament!

We are thrilled to announce the First Nations Fisheries Charity Fund Society's (doing business as the Indigenous Aquatic Stewardship Fund) upcoming Golf Tournament, taking place on Monday, September 11th, 2023, at The University Golf Course in beautiful Vancouver, BC.

This event promises to be a day filled with camaraderie, excitement, and a shared commitment to protecting our precious aquatic ecosystems.

What to Expect

Get ready for an unforgettable day of golfing, networking, and fun activities for all participants. Whether you're a seasoned golfer, new to the game or a non-golfer, this tournament offers an inclusive experience for everyone. Enjoy the stunning greens of The University Golf Course while connecting with like-minded individuals passionate about preserving our environment.

Banquet and Prizes

After an exhilarating day on the course, we invite you to join us for a buffet-style banquet where you can have some wonderful food and share stories with fellow golfers and industry professionals. We have some incredible auction items lined up and prizes to be awarded to the top golfers. You won't want to miss this opportunity to win amazing rewards while supporting a vital cause!

Why Sponsor?

By becoming a sponsor for the Save Our Salmon Golf Tournament, you can directly contribute to the conservation efforts of the Indigenous Aquatic Stewardship Fund. Your support will help us implement crucial initiatives that protect and restore salmon populations, preserving the delicate balance of our aquatic ecosystems. Sponsors will receive prominent visibility throughout the event, gaining exposure to a diverse audience and showcasing their commitment to environmental stewardship.

To learn more about participating as a Golfer or a Sponsor email Isabel Gonzalo, IASF Program Manager at isabel@iasfund.ca.

Our website has just launched as well! Please visit us at www.iasfund.ca to learn more about our initiatives.

New Additions to the FNFC Team

Over the last several months, we've added a few more staff to the FNFC Team!

Brooklyn Carey – Manager, Partnerships (Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations Unit)

Hanna McComber – Manager, Government Relationships (Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations Unit)

Megan Stewart – Coordinator, Marine and Coastal Management (Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations Unit)

Isabel Gonzalo – Manager, Charity Fund (Corporate Services Unit)

Tram Lu – Coordinator, Executive Communications (Executive Management Unit)

Feel free to reach out to make an introduction to our new staff and congratulate them for joining the FNFC!



Photo Credit: Rachel Elliott



Photo Credit: Noah Kussin

POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

Publication of the *First Nations Open-Net Pen Transition Plan Blueprint Recommendations*

This document is the culmination of activities and engagements that FNFC held over the last 18 months and includes a broad spectrum of feedback that FNFC have heard from First Nations in BC that have participated in these meetings. It summarizes broad advice from First Nations across BC and distills into key elements and themes that the transition plan blueprint for open-net pen fish farms should include. We recommend that federal and provincial governments continue to engage and work with First Nations, support a coordinated and collaborative approach to protect wild Pacific salmon, and support recovery activities that target the numerous factors that are contributing to the decline of wild salmon.

Through the engagements, First Nations identified several crucial themes that the process should uphold:

1. Whole of Salmon Life-cycle
2. Whole of Aquaculture Approach
3. Respect for First Nations self-governance and self-determination, and
4. Protection of First Nations Investments.

The report also recommends a set of guiding principles to be adopted as part of the transition plan, together with a series of technical considerations to inform the development of the transition plan. A summary of SWOT analysis of alternative species and technologies that First Nations may wish to consider is also presented.

By design, this Blueprint is not a prescriptive document. FNFC have heard clearly from First Nations in BC that the development of the transition plan should uphold Canada's adoption of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), respect First Nations self-governance and self-determination, and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Its intent is to provide various options and information to support First Nations to communicate and work together in the protection and recovery of wild Pacific salmon, enable First Nations to evaluate the net benefits relative to their unique circumstances, and to select options that works best for their community. First Nations in BC have diverse interests and priorities that can inform the development of the transition plan.

Click [here](#) to find a copy of the First Nations Open-Net Pen Transition Plan Blueprint Recommendations.



PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

Trilateral Salmon Engagement Sessions Wrap Up

FNFC hits the road to listen to First Nations representatives

The early summer months have proven to be rewarding as the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC continues to work to advance imperative work around forming a Trilateral approach for Wild Pacific salmon recovery.

Three engagement sessions were hosted: one virtually to allow a range of representatives to attend, one in Vancouver and one in Prince George. FNFC extended invites to regional First Nations groups and representatives in order to ensure a plethora of regional perspectives and aspirations were present. The goal of these sessions was four-fold:

1. To share an update on the trilateral initiative with First Nations representatives.
2. To discuss whether the high-level issues identified so far in the trilateral initiative are priority issues or whether anything critical is missing. The priorities were laid out as follows:
 - a. Climate Adaptation (temperature and flow management, cumulative impacts, etc.)
 - b. Governance, Resource Management, and a Coordinated Approach
 - c. Habitat Restoration
 - d. Monitoring
 - e. Recovery Plans
 - f. Watershed Security
3. To discuss what immediate and short-term opportunities may exist that can be addressed at the Trilateral Table.
4. To discuss how a delegate nomination and selection process would work for the Tier 2 Steering Committee.

These sessions are vital to the future work that will be undertaken in this Trilateral approach to salmon recovery in BC. Representatives from the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the provincial Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) also attended these sessions to demonstrate their commitment to this trilateral initiative and answer any comments or concerns.

As we continue to move this work forward, there will be an engagement summary report produced in order to ensure that the voices present at the sessions were properly captured and documented.

Over the next few months, FNFC will be delivering an expression of interest package to First Nations delegates as well as updated resolutions for the Trilateral Salmon Accord.

Marine and Coastal Management Program Updates

Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS) in partnership with Transport Canada (TC)

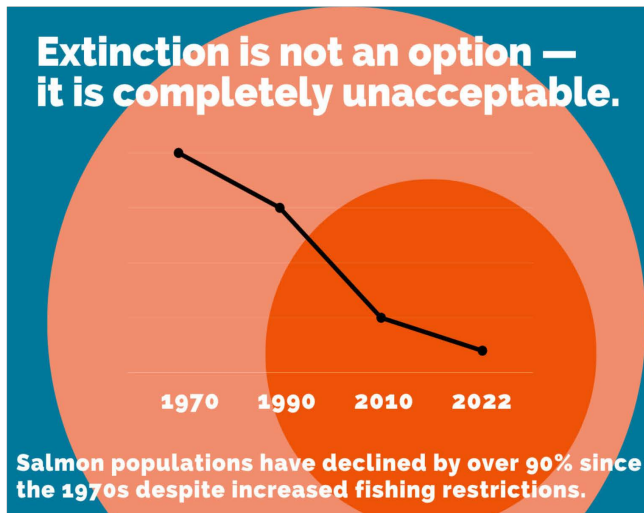
The CEMS pilot project for the south coast of BC focuses on developing a regional cumulative effects assessment for marine shipping impacts. The assessment is designed around values identified by First Nations participating on the Ship Movement and Vessel Management Coordinating Committee (VMCC). After an extensive two-year scoping and pre-assessment phase, this project is now entering the assessment. FNFC, Transport Canada (TC), and the VMCC collaboratively developed a scope of work to bring on third party contractors, ESSA Technologies and LGL Limited, to support the regional assessment. Throughout the winter and spring of 2023, assessment methodologies have been developed with ESSA and LGL. This technical work will continue into the summer. The regional assessment continues to inform and be informed by First Nation sub-regional cumulative effects assessments, and FNFC supported a Knowledge Sharing Forum earlier this spring to share project methodologies and findings.

Development of a Coastal Marine Strategy (CMS) with the Province of BC

The Province of BC is co-developing a Coastal Marine Strategy with First Nations in BC. FNFC has provided strategic direction to the province during development and has supported engagement with First Nations. This spring, FNFC co-facilitated a series of technical sessions that convened coastal First Nations to evaluate and develop draft actions to achieve the outcomes outlined in a collaboratively written Intentions Paper that was released last year. Feedback from these sessions will inform the first draft of the Coastal Marine Strategy which will be drafted over summer. In addition, FNFC and an Indigenous intern from Clear Seas Center for Responsible Shipping held an Indigenous Youth Summit on the Coastal Marine Strategy in February of 2023 to ensure that perspectives of First Nations youth are included in development of the Coastal Marine Strategy.

For more information on the Trilateral Salmon Engagement Sessions, please contact: **Astrid Niemann-Zajac, Sr. Manager, Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations.**

E-mail: astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca



Save Our Salmon Coalition (SOS Coalition)

In February 2023, the Save our Salmon (SOS) Campaign was launched in coalition with the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC, the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance, and the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance.

The mission of SOS is to influence policy and decision makers in the protection and restoration of wild Pacific salmon populations and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations. We are also looking to highlight Indigenous leadership in this sector. Through collaborative partnerships, community engagement, and scientific research, we work to promote policies and practices that support the recovery and protection of BC wild Pacific salmon populations. We advocate the recognition of Indigenous rights and knowledge in BC wild Pacific salmon conservation and rebuilding efforts. We understand that by working together, we can ensure the long-term health and viability of BC wild Pacific salmon populations, and the ecosystems and communities that depend on them.

Through the Save Our Salmon campaign, we hope to amplify the importance Indigenous led conservation practices in the recovery of BC Wild Salmon populations.

Visit the [SOS Coalition website](https://www.soscoalition.ca) for more information!



For more information about the Save Our Salmon Coalition, please contact: **Brooklyn Carey, Manager, Partnerships**

E-mail: brooklyn@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table

The Water Table is a new collaborative process that is comprised of regional delegates from the First Nations Water Caucus and multiple Province of BC ministries with responsibility for fresh water. Table delegates make consensus-based, co-developed recommendations to provincial and First Nations' decision-makers about matters of mutual interest related to fresh water and watershed security of province-wide interest. The First Nations Water Caucus brings together up to 15 First Nation regional delegates from major watersheds across British Columbia to discuss and identify shared strategic priorities and interests related to fresh water and watershed security.

The Caucus and Table hold meetings approximately every 4 weeks. Since the first meeting in June 2022, the Water Table has:

- Co-developed a recommended Intentions Paper for the Watershed Security Strategy
- Drafted Terms of Reference for the Water Table
- Advocated for a commitment towards kick-starting the Watershed Security Fund

On March 6th, 2023, the province of BC announced the release of the WSS Intentions Paper for public engagement and a \$100 million investment to kick-start the Watershed Security Fund (The Fund). The first task of the Table is to co-develop a Watershed Security Strategy and the Intentions Paper is a stepping stone towards a co-developed strategy. As part of this process, the Water Caucus sought to build upon existing First Nations-led initiatives and strategies. Priorities were identified through this process, and were integrated into the 5 Policy Intentions in the paper.

The initial \$100 million investment is being stewarded in the interim by the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC). The Fund is to be co-developed and co-governed with First Nations, and will create a growing, permanent stream of funding to support watershed projects and initiatives in BC. The Water Caucus will play a key role in establishing and developing the Fund with REFBC and other First Nations.

Next Steps

- Continue to co-develop the Watershed Security Strategy
- Develop additional structures to support engagement at a Tier 1 level
- Begin development of the Watershed Security Fund with REFBC
- The FNFC will continue to update Chiefs and Council of this process as it progresses, and seek support including through resolutions as appropriate.

Developing a Bio-cultural Framework for Water Assessment

The First Nations Fisheries Legacy Fund (FNFLF), with operational support from FNFC, has developed and implemented a Biocultural Indicator Framework to assess the health and status of water and fish habitat in the Lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet. The framework was developed in partnership with the University of British Columbia's Centre for Indigenous Fisheries (CIF) and in collaboration with community members and staff from the Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Musqueam, Tsawwassen, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. This initiative was guided by the collective interest of the six FNFLF First Nations in developing a water assessment tool, similar to the Māori Cultural Health Index, that would incorporate First Nations values for watershed health in management decisions.

A series of workshops and interviews, with community members and staff from the six FNFLF First Nations, shaped the selection of three bio-cultural and two Western science-informed indicators to include in the framework. The developed framework offers a culturally relevant and comprehensive approach to communicating watershed values and priorities that promote social, cultural, economic, and ecological resilience. Findings from initial data analysis identified that weaving together knowledge systems provided the most complete understanding of water and fish habitat health.

Some outcomes of this project include:

- Bio-cultural Manual that shares processes and lessons learned to support water stewardship work.
- Recommendations paper that identifies ways to meaningfully include Indigenous Knowledge systems in water and fish habitat management by incorporating bio-cultural indicators.
- Aquatic ecosystem data from 16 pilot sites.

The FNFLF intends to continue building on this work to assist the six FNFLF First Nations in meeting their water stewardship goals. Future work may include training for FNFLF First Nations on how to collect and analyze data using the various components of the framework. This initiative was funded through the Indigenous Habitat Participation Program from 2020-2023.

UAV Habitat Mapping for Wild Salmon Stewardship Update

The First Nations Fisheries Legacy Fund (FNFLF), Okanagan Nation Alliance, and Skeena Fisheries Commission, with support from the University of Victoria Map Shop, are continuing work on the UAV Habitat Mapping for Wild Salmon Stewardship project. This project integrates community mapping with geospatial technologies to enhance First Nations' capacity for the monitoring and management of wild Pacific salmon habitat. The initiative has entered its third year with significant progress in building First Nations' capacity through training, practical experience, and collaborative innovation.

Some outcomes of the project include:

1. Multi use high-resolution datasets that can be used beyond the lifetime of this project.
2. Standardized methodologies and protocols for community-based watershed mapping and monitoring that incorporates Indigenous Knowledge.
3. Salmon Habitat Assessment Framework Document that supports BC First Nations in the implementation of environmental stream flows and community planning for salmon stewardship.

Year One was spent building capacity by establishing partnerships, recruiting and training personnel, and purchasing equipment. The project team began Year Two by evaluating all initial activities and addressing areas of improvement. By the end of the second year, all three First Nations partners had begun Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) training, community mapping training, and data collection to develop UAV Rapid Salmon Habitat Assessment methodologies. Data has been collected with UAVs at ten sites of concern for salmon habitat across BC, two of which were located in the Lower Fraser River region.

In the third year, all three First Nations partners will continue to collect data and engage in community mapping to support the development of local datasets and standardized methodologies. The project team will develop a methodology framework and a set of training materials for other First Nations to access if they would like to carry out similar work. This project received three-year funding from the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund in 2021.



Tl'azt'en Smokehouse - by Darren Haskell



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