

FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNIQUE

December 2023

STRONGER TOGETHER

Photo Credit: Brandon Deepwell

Convene - Elicit - Distill



ABOUT 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:yém̓ nə Siyeʔe?

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

Best wishes to all for this holiday season, we wish you a safe and healthy holiday season, and happy and prosperous New Year!

hay čxʷ qə,

Jordan Point

Executive Director

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC





Executive Director Succession Planning

Process Started with Stu Barnes

After 14 years as the FNFC Executive Director, Jordan Point will be vacating the position and moving into a semi-retired life. The FNFC Executive has accepted the recommended succession plan, for a phased-in transition to be concluded by June 2024. In preparation for his retirement, Jordan has crafted a succession plan. In the spirit of continuity and progress, FNFC announces the appointment of Stu Barnes to the role of Associate Executive Director and will assume the Full Executive Director role by June 2024. As a standing FNFC Council Delegate from Upper Skeena for a number of years, Stu Barnes has a thorough understanding of the FNFC, the complex environment of watershed ecosystems, fisheries and environmental protection, and the fisheries management and policy world. Stu has earned well-deserved respect from colleagues and is a known collaborator who consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to FNFC's mission and values. His appointment was backed by resounding support from all Council regional delegates and exemplifies a seamless leadership shift.

Effective September 1, 2023, Stu Barnes commenced his transitional role, working on an increasing schedule as he leaves previous responsibilities in the Skeena and begins to look into getting to know the team and the operations at the FNFC Vancouver office. He will work 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.



Annual General Assembly (February 21 & 22, 2024)

The First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia (FNFC) is pleased to invite you to attend our Annual General Assembly, which will be held on February 21 & 22, 2024 at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort.

The theme of this year's Assembly is "**Exploring a Made in BC Salmon Recovery Model.**" The Assembly will be a two-day event that brings together First Nations leaders, community members, and fisheries/natural resources staff from across the province. In addition to BC First Nations, we have also invited government partners from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Province of British Columbia and other government agencies to participate in the Assembly.

More information, including details on accommodation, a comprehensive agenda, a formal invitation, and a registration link, will be provided shortly via email.

- **Date:** February 21 & 22, 2024
- **Time:** 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM each day
- **Location:** Harrison Hot Springs Resort, 100 Esplanade Avenue, BC, V0M 1K0



Picture taken of FNFC Staff at the Annual General Assembly, 2022

Corporate Services Unit

Human Resources - New Additions to the FNFC Team

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

Lauren McNeilly – Coordinator, Habitat & Environmental Protections



Tolu Amuwo – Coordinator, Habitat & Environmental Protections



Brett Sparrow – Policy Analyst, Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations



Victoria Bergeron – Coordinator, Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations



Etana Tam – Coordinator, Marine and Coastal Management



Ningning Wang – Communications Manager, Partnerships & Intergovernmental Relations



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

2024

WHOLE OF AQUACULTURE FORUM



**First Nations
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POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Forum

The FNFC is excited to invite you to our FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Forum on February 8 & 9, 2024. These gathering aims to bring together First Nations from across the province to explore the future of aquaculture, focusing on how it can benefit First Nations food security and economic prosperity.

Background:

The theme for the forum is taking a "Whole of Aquaculture" approach to aquaculture development. This is a comprehensive and integrated strategy that looks beyond the cultivation of different aquatic species. It encompasses a broad spectrum of considerations, encompassing a diversity of species and technologies, sustainability, policy, economic viability, and secondary opportunities. The primary goal is to ensure sustainable and equitable advancement, providing diverse prospects to enhance food security and economic well-being for First Nations. This forum builds on the success of our 2020 Aquaculture Forum, aiming to further strengthen a sustainable and diverse aquaculture sector in BC that aligns with First Nations' values and priorities.

Input and dialogue through the FNFC Whole of Aquaculture Forum will inform the development of a FNFC First Nations Aquaculture Strategies Option Paper. This document aims to serve as a roadmap for the strategic development of aquaculture in BC, providing recommendations for policy and regulatory changes that foster inclusivity and diversity within the aquaculture sector.

Agenda:

The forum will be a mix of presentations, engaging panel discussions, and interactive breakout groups featuring expertise from First Nations delegates, alongside representatives from Provincial and Federal authorities. Full agenda is on the registration page.

Event Details:

- Date: February 8 & 9, 2024
- Location: Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort Conference Centre
1155 Resort Drive, Parksville, BC, V9P 2E3
- Registration is required to attend the Forum.
- Catering: Provided for registered participants
- This event is in-person only.
- Travel Subsidy: Limited funds are available to support travel costs.

Registration is available on the Eventbrite page. Click [here](#) to register.

Your voice is crucial in ensuring that First Nations' perspectives are considered in the strategic development of aquaculture in British Columbia.

For more information on how to register, please contact **Mike Gray** at [**mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca**](mailto:mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).





Photo Credit: Rachel Elliott

HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

Tier 1 Engagement for Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) Wave 3 Topics

FNFC is supporting Tier 1 (First Nations only) engagement regarding the implementation of fish and fish habitat protection provisions of the Fisheries Act.

In 2019, the Fisheries Act was amended to include extended protections to all fish and fish habitat. In an effort to develop new regulations, policies, frameworks, and guidance required to implement the extended protections of the Fisheries Act, DFO launched the Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP). The implementation of FFHPP is supported by a multi-wave engagement framework with Indigenous Peoples and key stakeholders that began in 2021. For the 2023-2024 year, FFHPP is engaging on the following Wave 3 topics:

- Draft Policy for Applying Measures to Offset Harmful Impacts to Fish and Fish Habitat
- Draft Guidelines for Establishing and Managing Fish Habitat Banks
- Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation
- New Interim Standard and Codes of Practice
- Regional Restoration Priorities Plan for the Pacific Region*

* The Regional Restoration Priorities Plan for the Pacific Region emerged out of FFHPP Wave 2 engagement discussions in 2022 and is currently being led by the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) at DFO.



FNFC is coordinating with FFHPP's Pacific Region team to convene First Nations in BC through Tier 1 regional and watershed level engagement sessions to elicit and distill First Nations priorities and interests in regards to the implementation of fish and fish habitat protection provisions of the Fisheries Act. FNFC plans to hold 1-2 engagement sessions per Wave 3 topic following National engagement sessions held by DFO.



The intended outcomes/goals for these sessions are to:

- Identify First Nations in BC's shared priorities and areas of broad concern regarding the implementation of the fish and fish habitat protection provisions in the Fisheries Act
- Increase collaboration between First Nations regarding the regulations, policies, and guidance to support the implementation of the fish and fish habitat protection provisions of the Fisheries Act
- Consolidate feedback and/or recommendations to FFHPP

Initial Tier 1 engagement sessions occurred from October to December 2023. Engagement topics to date have included the following: Introductory Session; Regional Restoration Priorities Plan; Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk; Offsetting and Habitat Banking; and New Interim Standard and Codes of Practice. Engagement sessions will continue into 2024.

If you are interested in attending future Tier 1 engagement sessions, please send an email to **Lauren McNeilly** at **lauren@fnfisheriescouncil.ca**.

First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table Update

The Water Table is a 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 first meetings of the First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table were held in June 2022. The Caucus and Table respectively have meetings approximately every 4-6 weeks. Since June 2022, the Water Table has:

- Co-developed a recommended Intentions Paper for the Watershed Security Strategy (WSS)
- Drafted Terms of Reference for the Water Caucus and Table
- Successfully advocated for a commitment towards kickstarting the Watershed Security Fund

On March 6th, 2023, the province of BC announced the release of the Watershed Security Strategy Intentions Paper for public engagement and a \$100 million investment to kickstart the Watershed Security Fund. The Watershed Security Fund is to be co-developed and co-governed with First Nations to create a growing, permanent stream of funding to support watershed projects and initiatives in BC. The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) is stewarding the Watershed Security Fund in the interim and is in the early stages of meeting with FNFC to initiate the co-development process. The Water Caucus will play a key role in establishing and developing the Watershed Security Fund with REFBC and other First Nations.

Based on feedback and additional discussions, the Water Table continues to co-develop the recommended WSS, building on the Intentions Paper. The WSS is **set to be released in winter 2023/2024. A recommended Implementation Plan will also be co-developed at the Water Table following the WSS to assist with the implementation of the strategy's action items.**



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Next Steps:

- Continue to co-develop the recommended WSS with anticipated release of winter 2023/2024
- Co-develop a recommended Implementation Plan to support the implementation of the WSS actions
- Continue to work with REFBC to support co-development of the Watershed Security Fund
- FNFC will continue to update Chiefs and Council of this process as it progresses.



The B.C. First Nations Water Table met with Minister Nathan Cullen during the November meeting in Victoria on November 7, 2023.

If you would like to learn more about the Water Caucus and Table, please send an email to **Madison Rattai** at madison@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

First Nations-Led Solutions and Collaborative Partnerships Lead to Wild Salmon Survival in the Face of Extreme Drought at Bridge River Rapids.

FNFC partnered with the Xaxli'p Nation (formerly known as Fountain Band), Xwísten Nation (Bridge River Indian Band), Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance, Pacific Salmon Foundation, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), to rescue the stranded salmon at the Bridge River Rapids. This collaborative effort enabled thousands of salmon to migrate upstream to their spawning grounds after being stuck at the drought-stricken rapids.



Photo Credit: Brandon Deepwell

Under the leadership of the Xwísten Nation, with support from the Xaxli'p Nation, solutions were developed to ensure the fish could pass the rapids. These included deploying large sandbags to form a makeshift fish ladder and using a spider excavator to widen the passage. Following two days of site work, the majority of the stranded salmon had successfully navigated through the area.

This initiative is just one of many critical initiatives that FNFC and our partners are taking to support First Nations-led solutions as communities respond in real-time to the ever-changing threats affecting wild salmon.

To witness the process, visit the website of our partner, [Pacific Salmon Foundation](#), and watch the video detailing how it was accomplished.



Photo Credit: Brandon Deepwell



Photo Credit: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)



Photo Credit: Brandon Deepwell

Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping Update

The Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping initiative (CEMS) is a pilot project working to develop a regional cumulative effects assessment on marine shipping impacts on BC's South Coast based on values identified by participating First Nations on the south coast. The project is currently in the assessment phase, and FNFC in partnership with Transport Canada, and our third-party contractors, ESSA and LGL, are working together with First Nations on the Ship Movement and Vessel Management Coordinating Committee (VMCC) to assess the impacts of vessels at rest, vessels underway, and vessel discharges. Throughout fall 2023, FNFC has been supporting in-person technical workshops in the communities of participating Nations, and discussing how the VMCC wants to inform assessment methodologies and knowledge contributions. In the new year, the focus of the committee will be to discuss data sharing and storage, and further engage with First Nations communities on observations of marine shipping impacts through one-on-one engagement sessions.



BC's Coastal Marine Strategy Update

FNFC has been supporting the development of the BC Coastal Marine Strategy (CMS) since 2021. Last winter, FNFC worked with an Indigenous intern to create the Coastal Marine Strategy Indigenous Youth and Young Professionals Summit in response to increasing interest for youth and young leaders' voices to be included in the development of policy. The summit outcomes were captured in a What We Heard report, co-written by FNFC and our intern. This report will be used to inform the CMS draft which will be distributed by the Province of BC to all coastal First Nations this winter. FNFC's focus over the winter will be engagement with First Nations leadership on this draft and developing recommendations for the implementation stage of this work.



Indigenous Aquatic Stewardship Fund

During 2023, the Indigenous Aquatic Stewardship Fund (IASF) experienced a successful year of development and growth.

In February, Isabel Gonzalo assumed the role of Program Manager, building onto our capacity building efforts within the IASF. Since then, collaborative efforts with the FNFC have resulted in the development of several aquatic conservation initiatives.

In September, we successfully hosted our inaugural Golf Tournament Fundraiser. This event was marketed under the “Save our Salmon” campaign, gained widespread awareness, support, and generated a financial surplus of \$15,000. Next year, these surplus funds will be invested into capacity-building initiatives geared towards empowering First Nations youth pursuing knowledge in the aquatic conservation space. Stay tuned for, details of our 2024 Golf Tournament. In November, the IASF and FNFC formed a strategic partnership to launch a pilot grant program: The FNFC Wild Salmon Resiliency Fund. The IASF will be administering a granting program of \$500,000 towards salmon conservation efforts.

As 2023 comes to an end, preparations for the upcoming year are already underway. The IASF is excited to continue its commitment to expanding its impact on aquatic stewardship and conservation. We are enthusiastic to continue to grow and have a positive impact in the years to come. a diverse audience and showcasing their commitment to environmental stewardship.

To learn more about IASF, email Isabel Gonzalo, IASF Program Manager at isabel@iasfund.ca. Our [website](http://www.iasfund.ca) has just launched as well! Please visit us at www.iasfund.ca to learn more about our initiatives.



FNFC Communique - December 2023