

FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNIQUE

June 2025



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

“Am.ma Sa’ (Good Day),”

It’s hard to believe how quickly time has flown by as I complete my first year as Executive Director. Reflecting on this past year, both in the office and out in community, I truly appreciate the opportunities I’ve had to engage directly with Nations and partner organizations. Thanks to your continued support, I now feel not only more confident in this role, but also more grounded in my purpose: to serve and support First Nations communities and our fisheries with care and respect.

With the new FNFC Strategic Plan (2025–2030) now finalized, I’m excited to begin putting it into action. I have a full calendar of community visits and engagement sessions planned, and I’m deeply grateful for the warm welcome I’ve received from leadership and community members so far. These visits have created space for open, meaningful conversations that are already helping to guide our work for this fiscal year.

If you would like me to visit your community to present the FNFC Strategic Plan or to share updates on the work we are doing across the organization, please feel free to reach out. It would be my honour to join you. In-person engagement remains at the heart of how we do this work. Setting foot on a Nation’s territory creates the space to listen, learn, and understand firsthand the unique priorities, strengths, and aspirations of each community.

One of our key priorities in the near future is ensuring that the FNFC delegate table includes representation from all 14 regions, especially as we prepare for the next Council Delegate term (2026–2028). Your voices are essential in shaping the path ahead.

I remain grateful for your continued support of FNFC’s work and look forward to our ongoing collaboration and engagement.

Regards,



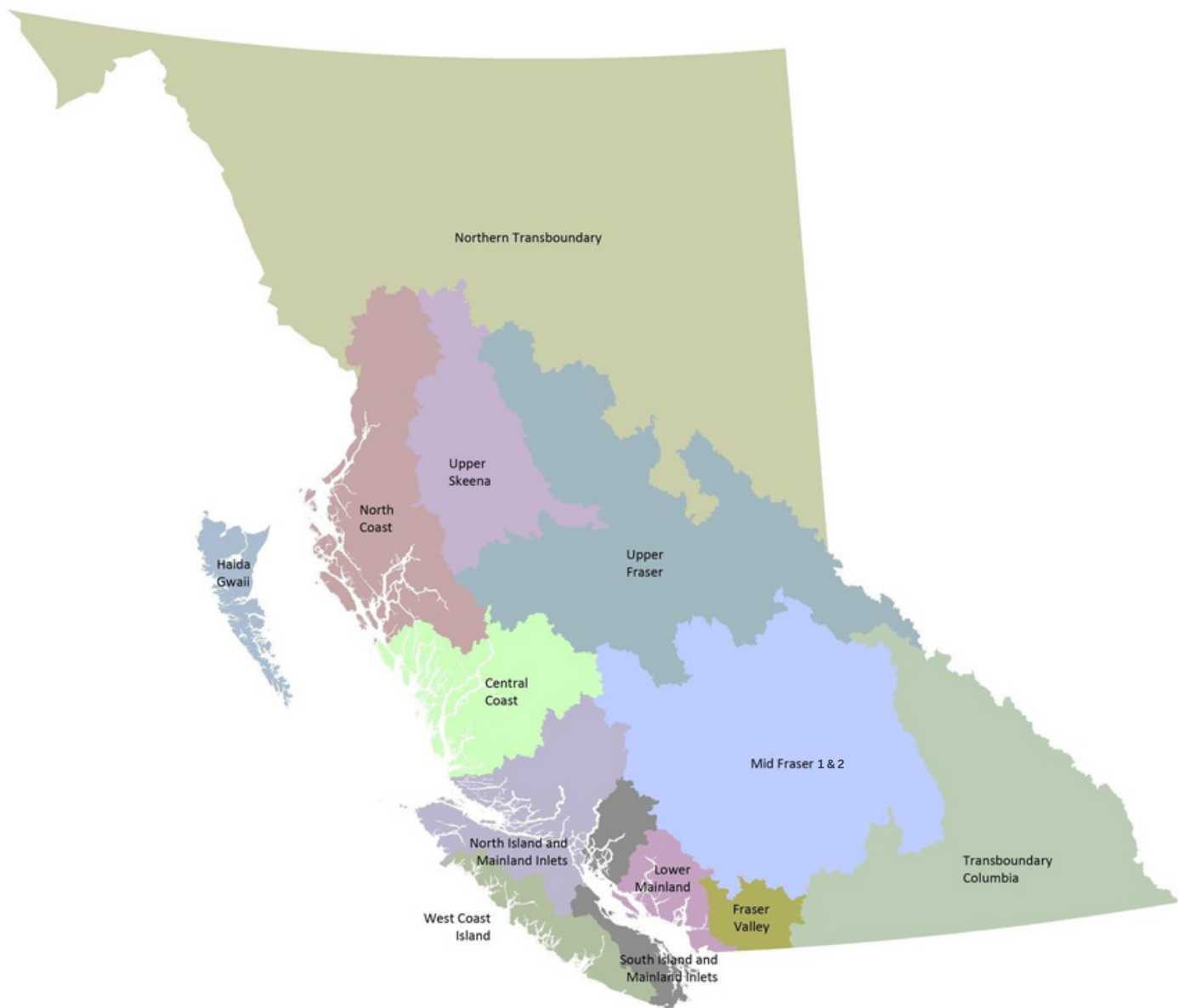
Stu Barnes
Executive Director



Next FNFC Council Delegate Term (2026–2028)

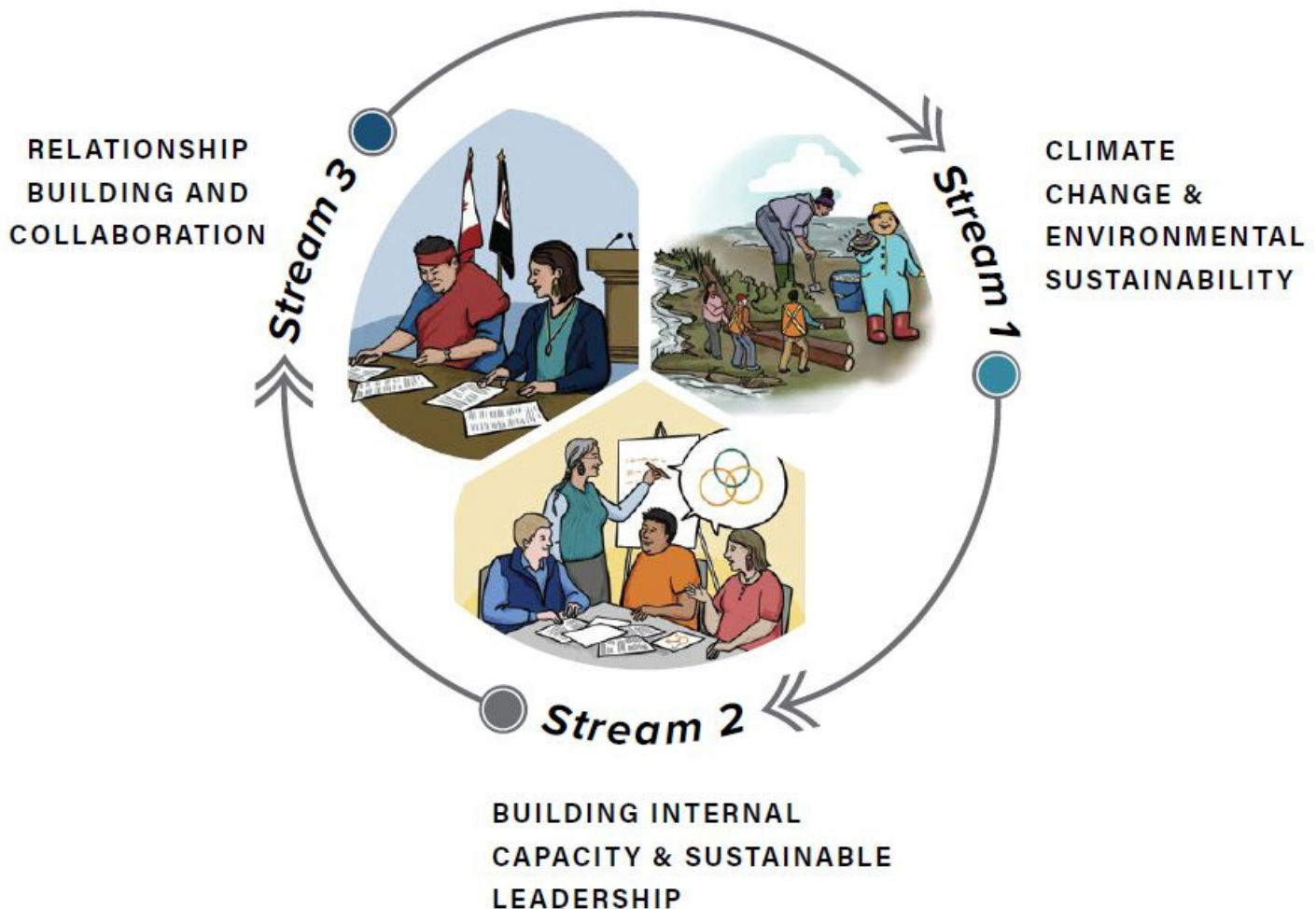
We are currently preparing for the upcoming Council Delegate term (2026–2028). The application and nomination process will officially open in mid-August.

More details will be shared closer to the date. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the process, please contact **Etana Tam** at etana@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



FNFC Strategic Plan (2025-2030)

FNFC's three streams of strategic action create a continuous loop of improvement and adaptation. Strong governance structures strengthen partnerships which in turn, enhance operational capacity and support sustainability initiatives, reinforcing governance and community trust. This circular relationship ensures that FNFC remains adaptive and responsive to the needs of First Nations communities, continuously evolving to meet the challenges of fisheries management and environmental stewardship.



The FNFC Strategic Plan (2025–2030) is now available for download on our website via [this link](#).

If you would like to receive a hard copy, please contact **Ningning Wang** at ningning@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

PICFI – Business Development Team (BDT) Transition to FNFC

We are beginning the new fiscal year with a new team on board at FNFC! Starting April 1, 2025, the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative Business Development Team (PICFI BDT) has been transitioned to FNFC from Skeena through a flow-through agreement.

The BDT Team works closely with DFO to support new business and training opportunities as well as increased fisheries access for eligible First Nations Commercial Fishing Enterprises (CFEs). Support includes the following:

1. Capacity building, harvester training to support the First Nation CFEs in establishing and implementing business development plans. This includes operational funding, and training, and mentoring support for participation in commercial fishery.
2. Business development efforts to expand or diversify. This includes fisheries access acquisition, fishing vessel and gear acquisitions or upgrades, fishing operations upgrades, commercial fisheries related onshore facilities and diversification.
3. Commercial fisheries access which includes greater access to a diversity of commercial fishing opportunities.
4. Support interested First Nations to venture into the aquaculture business or expand existing aquaculture businesses.
5. Co-manage, co-design, and co-deliver in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

The BDT team is comprised of a team of 5, including 2 Independent Third-Party Evaluators (ITPEs). The team includes: 2 Fisheries Advisors (Christy Whitmore and Jim Dopson), 1 Aquaculture Advisor (Rob Hoegler), and 1 Training and HR Advisor (Alison Krahn). The team is led by Fernando Salazar. The 2 ITPEs are Ngaio Hotte and Molly Voltz.

We look forward to leveraging the team's operational capacity into FNFC's mandate to effectively achieve First Nation's goals and priorities and create transformative change in Pacific fisheries.

Strategic Capacity Building

To support FNFC's capacity-building initiatives, we are pleased to announce that FNFC now has a Human Resource Manager – Jessica Price.

As one of the three key streams in FNFC's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan is to build capacity and support sustainable leadership, Human Resources has developed a series of initiatives focused on strengthening and standardizing internal HR practices. These initiatives are designed to establish a strong foundation for effective leadership support while equipping FNFC staff with the tools and resources needed to thrive in their roles.

1. Events - We have several HR events lined up for this fiscal year:

- a. Our annual All-Staff Summer Event.
- b. The Indigenous knowledge training session took place June 18, 2025. This session helps FNFC staff gain better understanding of Indigenous cultures.
- c. Other Summer trainings sessions will include Insurance Training and Financial Wellness/Banking 101.

2. Ongoing Projects.

- a. Compensation Philosophy Review: Aimed to standardize the overall FNFC compensation philosophy whilst managing FNFC employee performance. We have concluded the first step of the project which is to confirm and standardize internal job descriptions. We are currently establishing and validating both internal and external benchmarks with the help of the MNP group. The last step will be for FNFC senior management to approve the overall compensation philosophy.
- b. Employee Handbook: An update to the current handbook is currently in its final stages. The revised employee handbook aims to improve employee communication and compliance; as well as to provide basic organizational background and hopefully be a reliable resource for everyone to reference at any time.

We will continue to strengthen FNFC's internal processes as we grow. We endeavor to achieve and improve on our operational efficiency with focus on value-added activities to support the FNFC across all levels of the organization.



POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

Relaunch the Economic Coordinating Committee

Advance the economic interests of First Nations in fisheries and aquaculture

FNFC recently convened the first meeting of the reestablished Economic Coordinating Committee (ECC). Originally active from 2018 to 2021, the ECC was paused during the pandemic and has now returned with a revitalized purpose: to unify and amplify First Nations' voices in fisheries and aquaculture transformation while advancing First Nation-led economic development in the seafood sector.

As a Tier 1 First Nations-only space, the ECC brings together leadership from across B.C. to identify collective priorities, navigate policy reform, and provide strategic direction for the transformation of fisheries and aquaculture. Several key initiatives are advancing alongside this work, including the Fisheries Futures Project with Simon Fraser University, the First Nations Commercial Harvest Transformation Initiative, DFO's West Coast Commercial Fisheries Modernization Initiative, and the First Nations Seafood Infrastructure Project.

Among these, the First Nation Seafood Infrastructure Project, jointly led by the FNFC and Authentic Indigenous Seafood, has emerged as a critical starting point. Its focus is on identifying gaps in seafood processing, storage, and transportation that limit First Nations' participation and decision-making power. A draft report has been prepared outlining strategic priorities for infrastructure investment aimed at advancing Indigenous ownership and enhancing control over seafood operations. The ECC will play a central role in shaping and validating the project's priorities to ensure they reflect regional interests and advance socioeconomic benefits for First Nations communities. Following this, the FNFC will collaborate with the ECC to develop a funding and partnership strategy to advance the Infrastructure Project.

Looking ahead, the ECC will continue to convene regularly to coordinate efforts, share information, and provide advice on the transformation of fisheries and aquaculture in B.C. Established by and for First Nations, the ECC provides strategic advice and guidance to support Nation-driven economic development, policy influence, and sector transformation, contributing to long-term economic reconciliation and greater self-determination in fisheries and aquaculture.

Advancing First Nations Leadership in the PST

FNFC Expands Engagement Workshops to Support First Nations Priorities PST Renegotiations

FNFC is currently working with regional First Nations bodies across the province, as well as with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to plan and design the next round of engagement workshops in conjunction with the First Nations Caucus (FNC) and the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

In 2024-25, FNFC received funding from DFO to execute regional engagement workshops to inform First Nations about the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) process and timelines, as well as to work collaboratively to identify First Nations' concerns or issues they wish to see addressed in the upcoming round of renegotiations, which will take place starting in 2026 and running through 2028. The renegotiated articles of the PST are expected to come into effect in 2029.

FNFC was able to deliver four full regional engagement workshops in the last fiscal year, with collaboration from the FNC and DFO. With a renewed mandate from DFO, FNFC will continue and expand this work in 2025–26. The next phase includes reaching new regional bodies for initial workshops and revisiting regions where sessions were already held, to delve deeper into technical issues raised previously.

FNFC will be working with the regional technical staff who are part of the First Nations Caucus to craft and deliver these return sessions together. This is the next step in the iterative process to inform Canada on First Nations' priorities heading into the renegotiation period. These priorities will be taken into consideration as negotiations priorities for Canada during this time. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the FNC and the Tribal Caucus (US Tribes in Washington and Oregon) at the Annual Session of the PSC in Portland, Oregon in February 2025, provides a strong foundation for cross-border Indigenous collaboration, strengthening the influence of shared Indigenous knowledge and values in the negotiation process (photos on the next page). However, the absence of Alaskan Tribes in the MOU does continue to present a challenge towards achieving a totally unified Indigenous voice across the entire PSC.





FNFC is currently planning between 9 and 15 additional workshops across the province to identify regionally significant and cross-cutting priorities. These workshops aim to identify consensus and amplify a unified First Nations voice at an international scale. With the continued success of these workshops providing a strong foundation, along with close collaboration with DFO and continued relationship building with US Tribes, First Nations in BC will be well-situated to deliver a major win for Indigenous values, leadership, management on the global stage.

Legislation and Fisheries Policy

FNFC Policy Forum & Salmon Allocation Policy (SAP)

FNFC Policy Forum 2025

FNFC hosted an in-person Policy Forum in February 2025 (online in April 2025), convening First Nations in BC to discuss the Salmon Allocation Policy (SAP) and the UNDA Action Plan, focusing on measures 36 and 37. First Nations participants contributed to discussions and provide feedback on specific recommendations for a new SAP, and recommendations for measurable steps to advance UNDA Action Plan measures 36 and 37. We appreciate everyone that attended the Policy Forum and contributed to a productive two days of meetings. FNFC is finalizing a report detailing the recommendations developed through the Policy Forum, and will be sharing this through the FNFC listserv and social media.

Salmon Allocation Policy Update

The 1999 Salmon Allocation Policy is DFO's operational guidelines for the allocation of Pacific salmon amongst First Nations, commercial, and recreational harvest groups. In 2018, as a result of the Ahousaht decision, the policy was found to be an unjustified infringement of five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations' (Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht) Aboriginal rights to fish and sell fish. Specifically, the SAP accords priority to the recreational fishery over the five Nations' rights-based sale fishery for Chinook and Coho salmon. As a result, DFO was mandated to undertake a review and update of the SAP to correct the infringement by early 2025.

The SAP Working Group and FNFC continue to develop a series of recommendations to DFO, to collaboratively review and discuss at Tier 2 (First Nations – DFO) and Tier 3 (Multi – Party Working Group) engagements. While the original timeline to wrap up the review was March 31st, 2025, this goal was not reached and remains unclear how the review process will be wrapped up. In the meantime, FNFC continues to facilitate the SAP Working Group to finalize the First Nations recommendations in preparation for future dialogues.

For more information about current policy initiatives, please refer to the FNFC website or contact **Janson Wong** at janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

Restoration Priorities Plan, Knowledge Sharing Forum, and Upcoming Work

Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) – Regional Restoration Priorities Plan

In 2019, the Fisheries Act was amended to strengthen protections for all fish and fish habitat. To support implementation, DFO launched the Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP), which began a multi-wave engagement process with Indigenous Peoples and key stakeholders.

During Wave 2 of FFHPP engagement, participants discussed the need for a framework to identify fish habitat restoration priorities. As a result, DFO's Restoration Centre of Expertise (RCE) began developing the Regional Restoration Priorities Plan (RPP) in the Pacific Region.

In 2025, FNFC and DFO's RCE staff hosted two combined Tier 1 and Tier 2 virtual engagement sessions to gather feedback on the second draft of the RPP. This updated draft incorporated the feedback that was collected during previous engagement sessions and bilateral calls throughout 2024. Summary reports from these sessions were developed and sent to participants for their review prior to being submitted to DFO's RCE team. DFO's RCE team will apply final edits to the draft report which will then undergo internal review before being launched as an evergreen document in Winter 2026.



Knowledge Sharing Forum

FNFC hosted a Knowledge Sharing Forum in Richmond, BC, from March 6 to 7, 2025. This session provided a space for over 50 Tier 1 participants from across British Columbia to gather and discuss topics of interest related to fish and fish habitat stewardship. A "What We Heard" report and resources package were developed and shared with all registrants.



Upcoming Work

The HEP team continues to advance several initiatives that support safeguarding habitat and responding to environmental threats. An environmental scan will be conducted over the Summer of 2025 to identify existing wetland policies and First Nations-led stewardship projects across BC. Following this, two virtual engagement sessions will be hosted in the Fall of 2025 to gather Tier 1 input on the scan. Findings from this work will help inform a list of recommendations for the Province of BC to consider.

Additionally, FNFC's HEP team will support Transport Canada with the Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS) initiative under the Oceans Protection Plan . Upcoming work will focus on sharing the results of the CEMS assessment with First Nations who have not been involved to date, as well as with external stakeholders.

Updates on the Water Table, Watershed Security Fund and Drought Table

The First Nations Water Caucus (FNWC) brings together up to 17 First Nations regional and technical delegates from major watersheds across British Columbia to discuss and identify shared strategic priorities and interests related to fresh water and watershed security.

The FNWC then meets at the BC-First Nations Water Table (Water Table) with representatives from multiple Province of BC Ministries with responsibility for fresh water. The Water Table has drafted the Watershed Security Strategy (WSS) over the last two years but was paused for release due to the election in Fall 2024. The release of the WSS is still currently on hold. In the meantime, the Water Table has begun planning its implementation of the WSS through subcommittees that focus on topics such as governance, policy and legislation, and Indigenous Knowledge.

On March 6th, 2023, the Province of BC announced a \$100 million endowment to establish the Watershed Security Fund (WSF). The FNWC - with FNFC as the secretariat - and the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC), are working together to create the initial structure of the WSF, provide the interim stewardship, and to support the co-development and co-governance of the Fund that will be transferred to a permanent entity in the long term. The WSF supports projects and initiatives that prioritize the health of our waterways, center First Nations rights and knowledge, and reinforce lasting relationships to ensure healthy watersheds and thriving communities for generations. The initial \$100-million endowment will generate a \$3-5 million annual baseline budget for grants and programs.

The WSF has had a successful start in 2024-2025 to fund 54 projects, granting \$12 million into communities over two grants intakes. Demand for watershed security funding continues to increase, with \$75 million in asks across the first two grant intakes. The interim stewards of the Fund are working to grow the WSF through federal, philanthropic, and corporate contributions so that more critical watershed work can be supported. The next grants intake for the WSF will open in the fall of 2025.

The WSF has released a WSF's 2025–2028 Strategic Plan - a guiding framework that sets the course of focus for the next three years. Interim partners worked to identify the WSF's shared vision, values, and priority areas of work. Grounded in First Nations values and a whole-of-watershed approach, this Strategic Plan will support thriving waters, lands, and communities.

Please contact **Jenna Duncan** at jenna@fnfisheriescouncil.ca if you are interested in learning more about the Watershed Security Fund.

In 2024, FNFC convened a bi-weekly Tier 1 Drought Table in response to the growing concerns from First Nations on emergency drought impacts on fish and fish habitat. FNFC will be reconvening this drought table in 2025 with the purpose of providing a space for First Nations and First Nations organizations to come together and communicate broadly on emergency drought issues within their territories. The first Drought Table meeting will be scheduled to start in July 2025.



TIER 1 DROUGHT TABLE

The Drought Table is a space for BC First Nations to communicate broadly and collaborate on emergency drought issues within their territories. Calls are held bi-weekly over Zoom from June to October.



July 2, 2025 – October 2025
Held bi-weekly every Wednesday
11:00AM – 12:00PM

Email Madison at Madison@fnfisheriescouncil.ca for more information and to register.



**First Nations
Fisheries Council
of British Columbia**



PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

Strengthening Relationships with BC First Nations

A key focus of FNFC's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan is to strengthen relationships with First Nations communities across the province to ensure that FNFC is guided by First Nations and remains responsive to their needs.

Efforts are underway to ensure First Nations across British Columbia are regularly communicated with and supported. In April 2025, FNFC brought on a First Nations Engagement Manager to support relationship building with First Nations and provide regular updates to communities on FNFC's work. In the coming months, FNFC will be reaching out to First Nations across BC and conducting visits with interested communities to better understand and respond to their needs and priorities as it relates to fisheries and the health of the aquatic ecosystem.

If you would like to receive an update on FNFC's work or if there is desire to have Stu Barnes, FNFC's Executive Director, come and share with your community, please reach out to **Etana Tam** at etana@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

Salmon and Wellbeing Project: Call for Participants

Understanding the Interactions Between Salmon and the Health of First Nations Communities

Over the summer, FNFC will be conducting interviews with interested First Nations participants on a “Salmon and Wellbeing” project. The main objective is to understand how the decline in wild Pacific salmon is affecting the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health of First Nations communities.

FNFC will use these interviews to create a report and materials that convey the impact of salmon decline on First Nations communities to decision makers and the broader public. A well-researched report on this subject could strengthen the case for resourcing salmon recovery and related initiatives. The report will be sent back to Nations for their own use.

Below are some details for those interested in participating in this project:

- Individuals from all BC First Nations are welcome to participate.
- Interviews will be conducted in-person or virtually by FNFC staff.
- Participants will have control over the use of their interview content and identity in the report. Data will not be shared unless consent is given.
- Honoraria will be available to participants.

Please contact **Tony Graydon** at antonio@fnfisheriescouncil.ca if you have any questions or would like to take part in the Salmon and Wellbeing Project.



Trilateral Salmon Accord Update

Call for Delegates: Wild Salmon Steering Committee

In June 2024, the Trilateral Salmon Accord was signed between the Province of BC, DFO, and FNFC as secretariat for BC First Nations. This agreement established a formal commitment between all three parties to work collaboratively on a joint action plan to save wild Pacific salmon. Efforts are now underway to implement this trilateral process.

FNFC is urgently seeking expressions of interest from technical and operational salmon experts and knowledge holders to join the Wild Salmon Steering Committee, which is a Tier 1 caucus of First Nation delegates who will inform the Trilateral Salmon Accord process.

The Wild Salmon Steering Committee will play a critical role in establishing the governance model for the Trilateral process, setting First Nations' salmon recovery priorities, and providing direct input and advice to the Tier 2 Trilateral Salmon Table alongside representatives from the Province of BC and DFO. FNFC is working to form a regionally representative caucus of 12-18 delegates, reflecting the diversity of First Nations from across the province.

FNFC presented virtually on the Trilateral Salmon Accord process to the Union of BC Indian Chiefs on June 12th, and presented in-person at the First Nations Summit meeting on June 26th.

Please contact **Tony Graydon** at antonio@fnfisheriescouncil.ca for all inquiries regarding the Trilateral Salmon Accord.



**First Nations
Fisheries Council**
of British Columbia

Indigenous Stewardship Fund

The charitable entity of the First Nations Fisheries Council

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Supporting critical, community-driven projects that uphold Indigenous stewardship and respond to environmental challenges, ISF currently operates through two key programs:

Salmon Resiliency Fund

Launched in 2023, the Salmon Resiliency Fund is a partnership between the Indigenous Stewardship Fund (ISF) and the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC). With \$700,000 in available funding, the fund supports Indigenous-led salmon and watershed conservation projects in B.C., with a minimum of \$50,000 per project. It aims to strengthen First Nations stewardship and address the decline of wild salmon.

Apply now: [Salmon Resiliency Fund](#)

Climate Emergency Fund

Launched in 2024, the Climate Emergency Fund—also a partnership between ISF and FNFC—offers \$300,000 in rapid-response funding for Indigenous-led restoration projects in B.C. addressing urgent ecosystem threats like wildfire, drought, and species rescue. It supports the integration of traditional knowledge and science in stewardship efforts.

Apply now: [Climate Emergency Fund](#)

Our Contact

Phone: 778.379.6470

Address: 602 – 1200 West 73rd Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6P 6G5

Location: Airport Square Retail

Hours: 8am – 5pm, Mon – Thu

Website: isfund.ca



**Indigenous
Stewardship
Fund**

*ISF Funded 2024 Project:
Seabird Island Band*



Donate today and follow us!

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 **Instagram:** instagram.com/isfundca

 **YouTube:** youtube.com/@isfund

 **Email:** info@isfund.ca



EVENTS

Now in its third year, the **ISF/FNFC Save Our Salmon Golf Tournament** returns on **Monday, July 21st** at the **University Golf Club in Vancouver**. This annual event brings together community members, partners, and supporters to celebrate and strengthen **Indigenous-led stewardship**.

So far, the tournament has raised **\$30,000** in support of ISF's educational and awareness campaigns, with a goal of reaching **\$100,000** in 2025. Participants enjoy a full day of golf, community connection, and advocacy, followed by dinner, an awards ceremony, and a fundraising auction—all contributing directly to the protection of Pacific salmon and aquatic ecosystems.

To register or inquire about sponsorship, contact Sharan Kooner at sharan@isfund.ca.

MEET THE ISF TEAM

For general inquiries or to connect with us, feel free to reach out or click [here](#) to learn more:

Jordan Point, Executive Director

 jordan@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

Karl Dhillon, Chief Financial Officer

 karl@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

Kristy Kam, Marketing & Communications Manager

 kristy@isfund.ca

Sharan Kooner, Campaigns Manager

 sharan@isfund.ca

Yasmin Passos, Grants & Proposals Manager

 yasmin@isfund.ca

Samuel Seneviratne, Finance Manager

 samuel@fnfisheriescouncil.ca



**First Nations
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**Indigenous
Stewardship
Fund**

A MESSAGE FROM SHIP AND RAIL COMPENSATION CANADA

The Ship and Rail Compensation Canada – Ship Fund compensates anyone affected by oil spills from ships or boats. Visit www.ship-rail.gc.ca/ship to find out more about what damages and losses are covered and how to submit a claim. Download the [new Checklist for fisheries](#) today to be ready to recover costs and protect your community when it matters most!

Contact Information:

Ship and Rail Compensation Canada

Indemnisation Navire et Rail Canada

 www.ship-rail.gc.ca | www.navire-rail.gc.ca

 830-180 Kent Street, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0N5





FNFC Communique - June 2025