

Our Vision: Pacific Region communities living sustainably within the natural limitations of healthy ecosystems supporting abundant and biologically diverse Pacific salmonids.

Our Mission: SEHAB C.A.R.E.S. SEHAB is the voice of the volunteer community dedicated to:

Communicating

Advocating

Representing

Educating, and

Supporting its endeavours.

SEHAB and the community have a shared commitment of ensuring functioning ecosystems supporting viable, genetically diverse and abundant indigenous fish populations.

SEHAB Member: Jim Armstrong

Area: South Fraser River

Community Advisor: Bob Schaefer

Date: January 17, 2015

Key Issues:

What top three points can you distill from community input to take to DFO RHQ?

1. Lack of DFO Enforcement action- community groups are unable to generate enforcement action and response to fisheries issues in their communities
2. Lower returns of Chinook, Coho and Chum at the community hatcheries
3. Lack of DFO support when fisheries issues occur, cannot seem to get assistance from staff. CAs are being laid off at the critical times, unsure of the future of the SEP due to lack of DFO staffing.

Stories:

A few examples of successes, failures, challenges.

I have provided examples in the individual reports from the community groups. I think that 2014 was not a very positive year for most of us due to lack of DFO support.

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Issues Specific to SEHAB's Work Plan:

SEHAB Work Plan	Local Issue, Specific Examples	Actions by Community or DFO	SEHAB Opportunity
Wild Salmon Policy (Stock Assessment, Habitat)	Higher Chinook and Coho returns at NES, Little Campbell. Tynehead had good returns of Chinook. Wild habitat being degraded under new Fisheries Act and lack of habitat enforcement	Community is at the brick wall with trying to get DFO to take action when "serious harm" is being caused to fisheries habitat. No response or lack of reasonable action to correct the problem	Stocks are down. No real assessment is being done by DFO. Lobby for improvements and action.
Aquaculture	low returns to the hatcheries. Nicomekl Enhancement Society had zero Chum return to spawn in 2014. Low survival rates for Coho at Little Campbell.	DFO needs to halt Chum fisheries in Strait of Georgia. Actually take enforcement action when habitat is being degraded.	Lobby for more action, information, contacts for community
Capacity & Core Funding	Hatcheries are not at their capacity levels due to low returns and/or survival rates (i.e. Coho). Difficult to work through DFO funding maze due to complexity of the requirements for submission of funding requests	Community needs to increase capacity dramatically in Lower Mainland to meet spawning requirements. DFO needs to provide more funding and advise when requested	Assist communities to build capacity in seeking the funding opportunities. Lobby DFO for assistance in the communities

Submissions, Comments from Groups:

See Attached reports from hatcheries and CA.

Community Reports.

1. Little Campbell River –

DECEMBER 2014 - Rev 1 Jan 3, 2015 Little Campbell Hatchery-2014

2. Special Events:
3. 1-Released approximately 15,000 Coho Fry by community members attending our Annual Salmon BBQ as held on June 15.
4. 2-Distributed approximately 3,300 Coho Fry to A Rocha Canada for their release into the LCR during their RiverFest event as held on Saturday, June 7/14.
5. 3- LCH volunteers released approximately 5,500 Coho Fry into Fergus Creek .
6. Salmon in the Classroom:
7. We were pleased to host 78 tours, involving 1,970 students, 624 adults for a total 2,591 visitors.
8. Operations:
9. LCH Committee reviews and revises on an on-going basis our operating procedures to ensure “Best Management Practices “and “Fish Health Managements Plans” are being implemented and maintained in the most efficient manner. This review includes all operational aspects including utilization of volunteer hours, site conditions, electrical/mechanical reliability, controls, and documentation.
10. In conjunction:
11. 1- Installed auto transfer switches to ensure start-up of a second rearing channel pump in the event of an overload and shutdown on the operating pump.
12. 2- Acquired a pH and ammonia meter for regular testing of water quality and un-ionized ammonia. Implemented bi-monthly sampling and testing of pH and un-ionized ammonia levels at different stages of water use. Results are compared to maximum acceptable levels.
13. 3- Major renovation of the classroom facility was completed in time for hosting “Salmon in the Classroom Students, early March to early May.
14. 4-Acquired a new rearing channel pump and motor to be immediately available in the event one of two pumps fail when both pumps are required. (When fish loading becomes high just prior to their release as smolts)-
15. 5-Replaced defective control panel for the back-up propane pump for water supply should the submersible pump in the well fail. (While we have a new replacement pump and motor in-house, removal and re- installation in the well could take several days)
16. 6-Installed paddle control switches and ultrasonic devices and to measure discharge flow and water levels in the rearing channels. These units are monitored by our alarm company.
17. 7- Installed upgraded lighting at the clipping station, sourced high quality clipping scissors and reviewed clipping procedures to assist in achieving 100% clip rate for hatchery reared Coho, Chinook, Steelhead and Cutthroat.
18. 8- Installed new guy wires and steel posts to support a new lightweight 3” open predator net for our Coho Pond. Last February, the heavy snow load on our previously installed 1” open net bent most of our recently installed steel posts.
19. Incubation:
20. We have experienced disappointing Coho survival rates and are investigating in conjunction with DFO.
21. River Returns:

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- 22. Chinook:
- 23. While somewhat lower than last year, we were surprised at the number of US Fish counted. It is believed they originated from the Green River Hatchery in Washington State.
- 24. Coho:
- 25. Good return although lower than last year which was one of the largest on record. (Approximately 30% hatchery)
- 26. Chum:
- 27. Counted approximately double the numbers that have been returning in recent years.
- 28. Cutthroat:
- 29. Lower than last year to date, but within normal variation.
- 30. We were also delayed in obtaining angling permits from DFO/Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC which has also reduced the numbers of available brood stock.
- 31. Steelhead:
- 32. Returns continue.
- 33. Note:
- 34. LCR water flows significantly increased during late Nov/Dec and we estimate many Coho and Chum bypassed our counting fence during these flood conditions.

2. Community Advisor – Bob Schaefer

Jan 15/15

Activities and Projects, South of Fraser and Eastern Fraser Valley

Community Hatchery Facilities/Streams

The Little Campbell River saw strong Coho returns this past fall. The Chinook run was average, with one first being the number of adipose clipped Chinook that returned to the Little Campbell. This facility vent clips their juvenile Chinook, and therefore it is thought that the adipose clipped Chinook have come up from the Green River in the US.

2014 marked a difficult year for both the Nicomekl River and Mclelland Creek in regards to environmental damages from commercial activity. Very few salmon returned to either stream, and alternate sources of brood stock were drawn upon. Headway has been made in containment and remediation of these waterways.

The Serpentine River had good returns of Coho, Chinook, and Chum.

The Little Chilliwack River had a strong Chum return this year, and the plan for next spawning season is to gather our Chum brood stock from the Little Chilliwack River for the Skowkale First Nations hatchery.

This past year the Skowkale hatchery in Chilliwack has had a new well pump installed, along with an incubation water chiller, uv sterilization system, and an upgraded backup recirculation system to keep water flowing during power outages.

At the Little Campbell Hatchery, in the near future I will be switching over the methanol dispensing system from using a peristaltic pump to a gravity feed system where a constant drip will be used to keep unionized ammonia levels in check. Also, maintenance has been performed on their standby generator.

Stream and Habitat Projects

A few notable items in regards to habitat projects include further work on the Hopedale Channel project. In 2014 there was off-channel habitat creation and replanting of vegetation which involved live staking, potted stock and seed planting. In all, over 9200 plants were planted. On the books is the completion of the Trestle Channel, and installation of a new intake for this channel.

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As well, the Chilliwack Rotary Club is spearheading a resurfacing of a lengthy portion of walking trail along Hopedale Channel Project, along with adding signage and informational kiosks at various points along the trail. Silverdale wetlands

Nicomekl Enhancement Society

We are still experiencing the effects of the Township of Langley East Langley Watermain horizontal drilling failure immediately upstream of the hatchery. To date all 2014 stream enhancement work has been negated due to the continued silting of the stream. It has changed the river hydrology causing the relocation of spawning gravels to downstream of the hatchery and silting of the spawning bed within the hatchery reach. Benthic invertebrate assessments by Erin Clements and Angela Danyluk in August and again in November have indicated that the diversity has decreased significantly and only "pollutant tolerant" invertebrates are now present in the stream within the affected reach.

It is unlikely that any Coho fry that will be released later this spring will survive in the historic habitat downstream of the water main failure, as there are no nutrients to provide food for them during their growth stage.

Our return of wild Coho outnumbered returning hatchery fish in 2014; many were undersized and/or had eggs that could not be taken due to number of dead eggs per female. Survival of the eggs has also been an issue with significant "kill off" after shocking process.

No Chum returned to spawn within the hatchery reaches in 2014. Additionally our normal stream for collection of Chum has been seriously affected by several chemical spills in 2014 and no eggs would have been taken from fish spawning in McCellan Creek due to these spills.

Our Youth Hatch coordinator was selected by the Pacific Salmon Foundation to receive the student grant for a student assisting with community groups supporting fisheries.

On Sunday, January 11, 2015, we dedicated our stewardship centre in honour of Magnus Lundt who passed away in 2014. It is now the Magnus Lundt Stewardship Centre which we are very proud of.

Salmon River Enhancement Society

Letter from Doug Gilroy expressing their frustration with DFO over the ELWM failure at the Salmon River (same project as at the Nicomekl Enhancement Society hatchery)

Hello Jim,

I am writing to summarize the status of correspondence and responsiveness with the DFO regarding conditions at the Salmon River, Salmon River Tributaries and wetland related to the water pipeline installation.

1) Telephone calls were placed to the area supervisor Don Kanut as early as May 2014. At that time Don was new to the position and was unaware of the plan for the pipeline, he promised to contact TOL to introduce himself and enforce the requirement for an application for permits to

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support the activity.

2) Follow up telephone calls to Don confirmed that TOL had submitted an application and I understood that a permit was issued for the plan to horizontal bore under the Salmon River mainstream. Details of the application and the permit could not be obtained from DFO. Concerns for damage to riparian areas, habitat in and around the tributaries and wetland were discussed but Don explained that the permit had been issued and that he was unable to take further action based on that approval.

3) Following the start of work when the extent of damage was clear, another call was placed to Don Kanut. He suggested that a call should be made to DFO Triage Mike Englesjord. The call was made in November 2014, the call went to an answering machine so a message for Mike was left with a return number. There has been no response to date.

4) 1 Dec 2014 a letter was sent to Ms Sue Farlinger expressing concerns for TOL disregard for habitat in the project. The letter was later forwarded to Ms Bonnie Antcliffe on 3 Dec 2014. This document is attached for your reference.

5) On 8 Dec 2014 a response from Bonnie Antcliffe was received explaining that the TOL had filed an application detailing a method that would not do "serious harm to fish" and so no authorization was required. Attached for your reference.

6) I wrote a note to Bonnie Antcliffe (from me personally, not from SRES) thanking her for the new DFO policy and level of freedom now available to property owners with land in riparian zones based on a promise not to seriously harm fish. Also attached for your reference. There has been no response to date.

Additionally, aside from the ELWS pipeline project, in mid August 2014 I placed a call to DFO Triage regarding an apparent chemical spill in the Salmon River mainstream somewhere upstream from our property, unrelated to the ELWS project. A thick sludge was building up in the river. No one from DFO attended to investigate. Instead the call was deferred to Environment Canada. 28 Aug 2014 I received a call from Roy Kendal at the Environmental Enforcement Directorate requesting more information and I immediately sent pictures to him. I heard nothing until Roy sent an apology on 29 Sept 2014. By that time all signs of the problem had disappeared.

Overall a very sad state of affairs.

TOL is clearly in a conflict of interest while running projects involving sensitive and protected habitat and their authority to establish and enforce streamside protection by laws. The obvious incapacity at the DFO to provide adequate authoritative oversight under current federal policy or timely response from Triage is a substantial mistake with potentially disastrous long term consequences.

I hope this is helpful in your preparation for the SEHAB meeting. If there is anything else I can do to assist please advise.

Best regards

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Habitat improvements were done on Stewart Creek in Yarrow, adjacent to private property. Over 900 plants were planted, and reed canary grass was removed. These activities improved approximately 408 square meters of salmon habitat.

Further work to the Silverdale Wetlands in Mission was carried on in the spring and fall of 2014. Some of the work that was done was to shade out reed canary grass with native vegetation planting, and provide UFV students with learning and involvement in applied science projects. This past fall the FVWC has undertaken maintenance of know Salish Sucker habitat around Agassiz by cutting back blackberry, checking condition of planted stock, and doing invasive plant species control.

On the books for consideration is expanding the spawning habitat on the Little Chilliwack River. I am also engaging with some landowners whose land borders Luckakuck Creek, and working toward agreement with them to have native riparian vegetation planted along the stream bank adjacent to their properties. This comprises approximately 200ft of frontage.

During 2014 the ACES streamkeeper group in West Lake Erroll has focussed on Japanese Knotweed removal, and are making headway. As well the Miami River streamkeeper group has been continuing with invasive plant removal from the banks of the Miami River in Harrison, planting native vegetation, and conducting ongoing water quality monitoring. Interpretive signs have been prepared, and installation of these signs is expected to happen early this year.

This is a sample of activities and projects in the area that I serve as Community Advisor.

Recognition and thanks for these go to the FVWC, FVRD, Chilliwack and Mission Rotary Clubs, UFV, MOT, SVES, Kwantlen First Nations, DOM, Miami River Streamkeepers Society, Aces Streamkeepers group, and all others who have partnered with financial and in kind support.

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