

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: Janet Lemon

Area: North Coast

Community Advisor: Rob Dams

Date: November 2015

Key Issues:

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

1. Need for monitoring, baseline information and science to bring credibility, continuity and direction for industry, NGO's, general public while development escalates on the north coast
2. Habitat issues where the issue is reported, response time is not soon enough and by that time damage is already been done
3. Decline this year of coho across our whole area and no way of telling what actual returns are as stream assessment seems to be non-existent to compare returns to brood year escapement

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Stories:

A few examples of successes, failures, challenges.

Failure of the Skeena sockeye returns to come in as predicted with no five-year-old sockeye and small 3-4 year olds returning.

Challenge to meet future stock assessment needs with the retirement of key senior persons in the Prince Rupert Office

Success with the groups in the Kitimat watershed joining together, hiring a professional and beginning baseline water quality monitoring. This will be critical information for the future when air shed problems start to arise as industry increases in the area

Failure of the government authorities steering the Port of Prince Rupert and LNG proponents away from Lulu Island right from the beginning. This has led to a stand off with the company (which has put millions of dollars and large amounts of human effort in planning and replanning to avoid Flora Bank and impacts) and First Nations and their many supporters who see the potential impacts this will have on the Skeena estuary no matter what mitigation is used. A total waste of everyone's energy and money right from the get-go and now we have a tense situation that can easily lead to violence.

Challenge to work in rivers swollen by torrential rains and unusually dark water in coastal streams from increased tannins.

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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)	Why are coho stocks so low this year after bumper years in the past	No actions seem apparent	Stress to DFO the need to compile ocean science to see if there is a correlation between the Blob, ElNino, Interception by Alaska, more warm water predators,
Aquaculture			
Capacity & Core Funding	Need to do scientific baseline studies to prepare for industry increase	Community groups joining forces to hire professional persons who can carry out the work to make it accepted by all	Stress the importance to Fisheries and Oceans to assist in this work

Submissions, Comments from Groups:

The North Coast industrial development (especially areas like Chatham Sound and the Skeena estuary and the areas right up and including the Nass River) need to be monitored continuously to understand the present conditions and to be able to have the ability to assess change with industrial development. This industrial development can be both good (more jobs for this area) and bad if not monitored properly and the adverse effects it could create on marine species especially salmonids. Long term monitoring could be a good start to assessing climate change in our area.

Much of the data collected presently involves water quality testing, marine fish assessments for both juvenile and adults, zooplankton, phytoplankton and benthic invertebrate surveys but are done at such a small scale (project level) that it is hard to ascertain what is happening on a regional level. Much of the data gathered by individual NGO groups on the North Coast presently is done to contradict industry or their consultants that have been hired by industry tasked to get some data for a particular project to satisfy some required environmental assessment. So the result is that different sets of people are sampling the same area at the same time and getting different results that are not accepted by anybody. There needs to be a local lead agency that all groups go through including government agencies, NGO's, industrial consultants, First Nation groups. This agency would have to be a nonbiased group that is tasked with:

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- 1 Assemble a local working group that would comprise people from the different groups so that all assessment projects would be scrutinized for obtainable goals, methodology of the project and gear and measuring equipment that would be used in environmental or industrial assessments. There would have to be a consensus by the group that everybody is comfortable with the methodology so that a project is not slated as being biased towards environmentalists or industry.
- 2 All past data should be available to all groups including data that has been collected through government agencies, NGO's and industry. All future data collection would go through this agency process so that duplication of the data would be avoided and those funds could be used for other assessment work.
3. In proposed industrial areas and especially if the industrial work is long term there should be long term monitoring programs that should be paid by industry and done at such a scale to determine if there are short term local effects or long term regional effects. This work should be done through this agency so that all parties have privy and input into information gathered and analyzed for improving the environmental effects of industry.
- 4 Regional and local baseline over time will allow to discriminate not only the effects of industrial development but also will be key to isolating and understanding the effects of climate changes which would enhance our understanding of events such as El Nino or La Nina and their effects on the biotic environment.