

FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNIQUE

AUGUST 2024



STRONGER TOGETHER

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),”

The first quarter in the seat as ED has felt like a firehose of information coming at me and now starting to feel more like a garden hose. I will forever be grateful for all those that have helped me get settled in the role, both internally and externally. There are many good relationships that have been built that empowers the work we do and many more we need to build. Since I first started in the fisheries sector almost two decades ago, so much has changed. The work we do will always need to evolve to meet the needs of First Nations we work with.

It would be a great privilege to spend time with Nations in their communities to listen and share information and I welcome invitations to chat in-person or virtually.

We’ve undertaken the development of a 4-year strategy plan to build off the previous 3-year plan, which comes to an end at the end of this fiscal year. We want First Nations to feel comfortable with it, so will be presenting in draft form at the Annual General Assembly this November.

FNFC was able to be a part of some significant milestones in the past quarter and the efforts of the First Nations delegates at these tables; our partners and of course our staff need to be acknowledged. All continue to work tirelessly to build enabling structures and products to support local efforts to address local issues in relation to fish, water, and habitat. I look forward to supporting all the excellent work you will hear more about this year.

Regards,

Stu Barnes
Executive Director

2024 FNFC Annual General Assembly

The Highly Anticipated FNFC Fall Assembly Returns - November 6 and 7, 2024

FNFC extends our sincere gratitude to all the esteemed guests who participated in our 2024 Annual General Assembly, held on February 21 and 22 at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort. There were over 100 participants, including members of First Nation communities across BC, as well as representatives from the Province of BC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Together, we collectively explored the theme of 'Building a Made in BC Salmon Recovery Approach.' Their presence and invaluable contributions played a pivotal role in the event's success.

For this fiscal year 2024 – 2025, FNFC has scheduled November 6 and 7, 2024, for our Fall Assembly. The location and agenda will be shared closer to the date. We will reach out to Tier-1 via email with more information on registration and details. We eagerly anticipate further discussions and meaningful outcomes at this Fall Assembly.



Picture taken at the FNFC Assembly in Harrison Hot Springs, February 2024

Corporate Services Unit

Phishing Training at FNFC

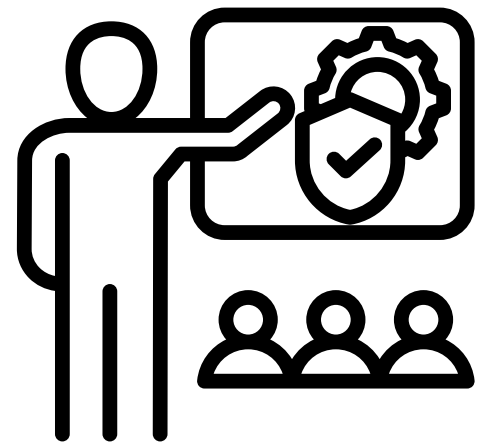
We have seen recently on the news that local government/companies in BC have experienced cyberattacks, such as BC government and London Drugs. The world has changed as a result of Covid, inflation, new working arrangements, and emerging technologies. Unfortunately, this has created new opportunities for fraud and forced companies to make additional investments into IT security.

Over the last few years, FNFC has invested in additional security measures including:

- Sentinel One EDR Agent – end point protection
- M265 Email – multi factor authentication
- DUO Security
- Barracuda Quarantine Notification

Software security helps to combat against:

- Fraudulent impersonations
- Compromised e-mails
- Conversation hijacking
- Phishing e-mails



In June, FNFC staff were provided with annual IT training as a first line of defense against IT fraud, presented by AD Micro Technology. Staff viewed a 5-minute clip of the movie “The BeeKeeper (2024)” which highlighted an example of IT fraud. All staff agreed that the first line of defense against IT scams is the awareness of fraud and that it can happen to anyone at any time. There is not a certain profile that hackers target.

As data breaches and fraud are on the rise, if something seems too good to be true or questionable, it's probably phishing. Here are some tips to keep in mind to avoid falling victim so that we can protect our organization and its data:

1. Double-check that the sender's e-mail address matches who they claim to be.
2. Don't click a link or download from someone you don't know or weren't expecting.
3. Don't reply to a suspicious email or message from an email you don't recognize.

2nd Annual - ISF/FNFC Golf Tournament Update

Thanks to the success of last year's tournament, FNFC has made it official. On September 29, 2023, the First Nations Fisheries Council approved the following motion:

Be it Resolved that:

“To further support the Indigenous Stewardship Fund (ISF) mandate and Save our Salmon campaigns, the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) and ISF approves continuing with an annual fundraising golf tournament that maximizes awareness, relationships, sponsorships and marketing opportunities, until otherwise instructed by the FNFC. The next FNFC/ISF golf tournament will be held in the summer 2024.”

Here's a quick update on this year's ISF/FNFC golf tournament:

- This year's ISF/FNFC “Save our Salmon” Golf Tournament was successfully completed on July 22, 2024, at the UBC golf course.
 - We had a total of 72 golfers registered for the event.
 - Over 15 corporate sponsors supported the event, and additional funds were raised through auctions, raffles and other activities.
 - The projected surplus from this year's event is expected to be around \$20,000 (an increase over last year's surplus).
 - A big thank you to our team of volunteers (FNFC staff).

Interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities or donating items for our 2025 golf tournament? Reach out to **Karl Dhillon** at karl@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



Winners of the 2024 ISF/FNFC golf tournament

The Indigenous Stewardship Fund and the First Nations Fisheries Council provided their support towards the rescue of k^wiisahi?is “Little Brave Hunter”

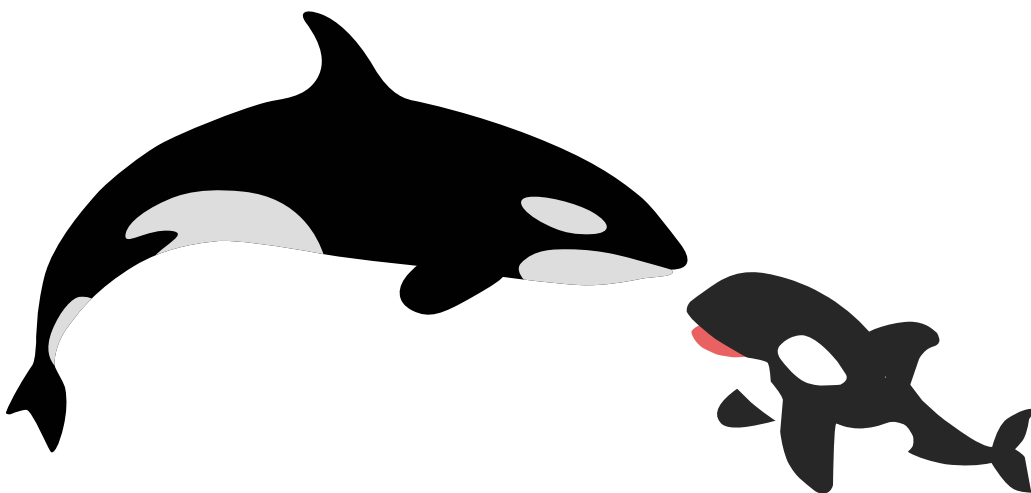
Last April, the Ehattesaht First Nation looked for emergency financial support to assist with the rescue of a young orca that had been stranded. The young orca named k^wiisahi?is (kwee-sa-hay-is) or “Little Brave Hunter”, was stranded in a remote lagoon for nearly a month. It was believed that he was following his mother who was hunting seals. The pregnant mother later died after it beached a lagoon near the small village of Zaballos (Chan, 2024).

The Indigenous Stewardship Fund (ISF) and the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) responded quickly to the Ehattesaht Nation. The ISF, under their emergency funding budget, provided \$50,000 to the Nation to assist with their efforts towards the rescue. The request came at a time when the Ehattesaht Nation was under a state of emergency.

After an evening of feeding and treatment, “Little Brave Hunter” swam out of the lagoon during high tide to swim back into the open ocean (Brougham, 2024). ISF and FNFC congratulate Chief Simon John and the Ehattesaht Nation on their successful efforts.

Brougham, L, (2024, April 26). Trapped orca swam out of lagoon overnight into Espinosa Inlet. Chek News. <https://www.cheknews.ca/trapped-orca-swam-out-of-lagoon-overnight-into-espinosa-inlet-1201186/>

Chan, A., (2024, April 18),. Ehattesaht First Nation launches GoFundMe to recoup costs of orca calf rescue efforts. Chek News. <https://www.cheknews.ca/ehattesaht-first-nation-launches-gofundme-to-recoup-costs-of-orca-calf-rescue-efforts-1200066/>



POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

First Nations Conditions of License

Drafting First Nations Conditions of License for Aquaculture

For many years, the FNFC's Aquaculture Coordinating Committee (ACC) has provided advice and recommendations to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) on their proposed changes to the aquaculture Conditions of License (COL) as part of the license renewal process. However, the FNFC has heard continued calls from First Nations to develop their own COL, aiming for better alignment with First Nations values, priorities, and principles of sustainable resource management. As a result, we will be working with the ACC this year to develop a template for First Nations COLs that will serve as a valuable resource for strengthening First Nations self-determination in the aquaculture industry.

What are DFO's Conditions of License?

DFO's COLs are regulatory tools that guide all license holders in British Columbia to ensure legal and responsible aquaculture operations. The COLs cover a wide range of operational aspects, including environmental protection, fish health management, site management, and compliance with reporting obligations. There are specific COLs for different types of aquaculture operations, including marine finfish, shellfish, and freshwater Land-based aquaculture. By adhering to these conditions, aquaculture operators help safeguard the environment and support the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry.

Why First Nations Conditions of License?

First Nations have unique relationships with their lands and waters that encompass social, cultural, environmental, and economic. Developing specific COLs allows First Nations to incorporate their knowledge and priorities into the regulatory framework governing aquaculture. Additionally, First Nations often uphold higher standards for environmental protection and may find that DFO's conditions do not fully meet their stringent requirements. First Nations having their own COLs ensures that operations taking place within their territories are not only environmentally sustainable but also culturally respectful and beneficial to their communities.

By establishing First Nations COLs, First Nations are empowered to:

- **Exercise Sovereignty:** Reinforce governance over their territories and uphold Indigenous Rights and title, as supported by legal frameworks such as UNDRIP and DRIPA.
- **Protect the Environment:** Ensure sustainable aquaculture practices that do not harm lands and waters.
- **Preserve Cultural Heritage:** Safeguard culturally significant sites and traditional practices and support knowledge sharing with future generations.
- **Enhance Socio-Economic Benefits:** Create economic opportunities and build capacity within communities.

How will a First Nations Conditions of License be developed?

- **Research and Analysis:** Review DFO's existing COLs and legal frameworks such as the Fisheries Act, UNDRIP, and DRIPA to identify key focus areas aligned with First Nations priorities.
- **Initial Outline:** Draft an initial template over the summer, covering topics such as First Nations authority, consultation and consent, environmental protection, cultural and social considerations, legal and regulatory compliance, and conflict resolution, as well as specific conditions for different aquaculture types.
- **Engagement with the ACC:** Present the draft to the ACC in the fall for feedback, ensuring the template reflects diverse First Nations priorities.
- **Refinement and Finalization:** Adjust the template based on ACC feedback and finalize it. The comprehensive final report will be shared with First Nations and Crown agencies.

Moving Forward

The development of First Nations Conditions of License is a significant step towards asserting First Nations' rights and responsibilities over their territories. It ensures that aquaculture practices align with First Nation values and contribute positively to the health of surrounding ecosystems and communities. We look forward to working closely with the ACC as we move forward with this important initiative.

For more information or to provide input, email **Mike Gray** at mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



Legislation and Fisheries Policy Updates

Policy Forums 2024 & 2025

As mentioned in the March 2024 Ccommunique, FNFC will be hosting Policy Forums and Salmon Allocation Policy engagements this coming fall and winter. These sessions will be to convene First Nations in BC, focusing further on the UNDA Action Plan, particularly Actions 36 and 37 (legislation, policies and collaborative structures), as well as updates and potential recommendations towards the development of a new Salmon Allocation Policy.

Please “Save the Date” for the following:

- Tier 1 Policy Forum #1 on UNDA Action Plan on October 7th, 2024
- Salmon Allocation Policy Regional Engagement on October 8th, 2024
- Tier 1 Policy Forum #2 on UNDA Action Plan on February 18th, 2025

Further details about these meetings and draft agendas will be provided at a later time.

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



Pacific Salmon Commission First Nations Caucus

First Nations Caucus meeting with Tribes in the US

With the current Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) due to expire in 2028, a major focus of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) First Nations Caucus will be in preparing for the negotiations of its renewal. One key focus is to re-invigorate relationships with Tribes in the United States, and finding opportunities to work together as Indigenous Peoples. Since April 2024, members of the FN Caucus have met the Tribal representatives in Alaska and southern United States.

In April, three members of the FN Caucus Executive Committee travelled to Juneau, Alaska to attend the Tlingit and Haida Tribal Assembly. The FN Caucus delivered a presentation providing an overview of First Nations fisheries in B.C. and First Nations participation at the Pacific Salmon Commission. FN Caucus members also spoke with Alaskan Natives about their subsistence fisheries, and learning about their involvement in Alaskan fisheries. This was the first meeting and there is shared interest to continue dialogue and opportunities to work together.



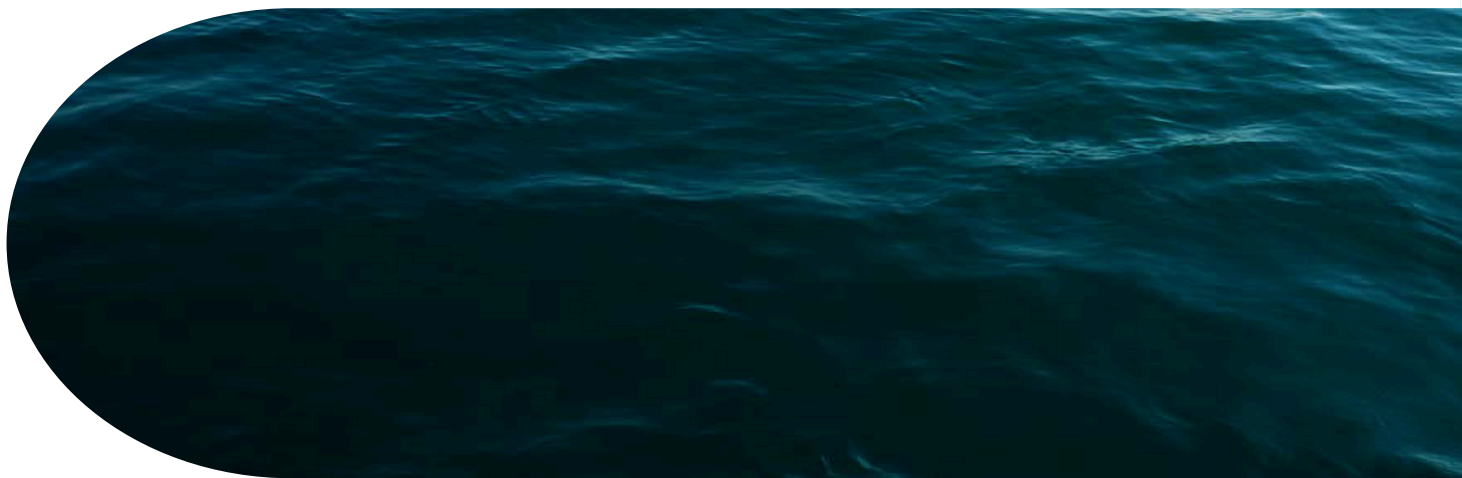
In June, a contingent of FN Caucus members consisting of FN Caucus Executive Committee, Fraser River Panel and Fraser River Panel Technical Committee met with a delegation from Tribes in the southern US. The meeting was hosted by Lummi Nation and brought together Indigenous members of the Fraser River Panel to share experiences and perspectives.

There, participants discussed a number of topics relevant to Fraser River fisheries, as well as shared an overview of the domestic Fisheries Management processes that First Nations and Tribes participate in. The workshop's success highlights the significant progress made by the FN Caucus and US Tribal Caucus in formalizing and building their relationship outside of the regular PSC schedule.

The FN Caucus consists of 30+ First Nations delegates who participate at the PSC process (Commissioners, Panels and Technical Committees) and brings forward collective concerns and advice on fisheries management from First Nations in BC. Working together, FNFC and the FN Caucus are striving to increase the role and participation of First Nations in the PSC process, and to support First Nations rights.

The Caucus has made several recent achievements in its relationship building efforts, including forming a steering committee and working groups with the US Tribal Caucus, (a group of delegates from Tribes in the southern United States who participate at the PSC), with the goal of developing an MOU and building a formal relationship between Tribal and First Nations delegates at the PSC. Work has progressed positively and will be ongoing through the Summer with the intent to finalize and sign the MOU in the coming year.

The FN Caucus has also been working to prepare itself and First Nations in BC for upcoming PST treaty negotiations. As part of these preparations, the FN Caucus will be engaging with First Nations to provide an overview of the PSC process, and to hear feedback from Nations on topics of broad interest to be included in negotiations. FNFC is working closely with DFO to coordinate a series of engagement workshops across the province to ensure that Nations have their voices heard. These workshops will begin early in the negotiation schedule and continue throughout the process to ensure Nations remain informed on the progression of the negotiations.



In the coming months, FNFC and the FN Caucus look forward to continuing to engage with Nations and making progress in the important work being done at the PSC. More information on upcoming engagements will be forthcoming as details are finalized and dates set.



**First Nations
Fisheries Council**
of British Columbia

HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

Recap of Restoration Priority Planning Engagement

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 the FFHPP is supported by a multi-wave engagement framework, with Indigenous Peoples and key stakeholders, that began in 2021.

In Wave 2 of FFHPP engagement there was discussion around a Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities. As a result of this discussion, next steps were determined by DFO to develop regional restoration priorities. The Regional Restoration Priorities Plan in the Pacific Region is being developed by DFO's Restoration Centre of Expertise (RCE).

In spring 2024, FNFC and DFO's RCE staff hosted combined Tier 1 and Tier 2 engagement sessions to gather input and feedback on the draft Restoration Priority Plan for the Pacific Region. Four in-person and one virtual session were held in various regions across BC throughout April and May of 2024.

These sessions provided an opportunity for Tier 1 participants across BC to share their perspectives and priorities relating to the restoration of fish and fish habitat. Regional DFO staff joined the engagement sessions to provide updates on restoration projects and priorities in the area and to answer Tier 1 participant questions.

Summary reports for these sessions are currently being developed and will be shared with participants prior to being sent back to DFO. These reports will help inform the next iteration of the Restoration Priorities Plan for the Pacific Region which is currently being developed by DFO RCE staff and is set to be released in early 2025. This plan will be an 'evergreen' document which will be reviewed regularly to reflect changing restoration goals, sources and priorities.

Regional Restoration Priorities Plan



RRPP Engagement Session, Virtual, May 7, 2024

Michelle Buchholz | **CASSYEX** CONSULTING

Session summary from the virtual Restoration Priority Plan engagement session on May 7th, 2024.
 Developed by Michelle Buchholz from Cassyex Consulting.

Updates regarding the Restoration Priorities Plan for the Pacific Region can be found on the Let's Talk Pacific Salmon webpage, and feedback can be directed to DFO.PAC.PSSInitiative-InitiativeSSP.PAC.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

The Co-Development of a New Watershed Security Fund

New Funding Opportunity to Advance Watershed Resiliency

The First Nations Water Caucus brings together up to 15 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.

On March 6th, 2023, the Province of BC announced a \$100 million investment to kickstart the Watershed Security Fund (the Fund). The Fund is being stewarded in the interim by the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) and the Water Caucus, with FNFC as the secretariat to the Water Caucus.

The Water Caucus, FNFC, and REFBC are prioritizing a model of co-development. As well as creating an effective process and mechanism for working together to ensure that First Nations voices and perspectives are included in watershed initiatives and projects across the province, and to set a precedent for a new model of collaboration and stewardship.

In its first year, the Watershed Security Fund will be granting \$7-\$10 million dollars, administered across two intakes, to projects that advance the resiliency of watersheds while adhering to a framework of reconciliation and pursuing collaborative relationships to steward the restoration and conservation of healthy watersheds.

Applications were separated into three different funding streams:

- Stream 1 (Headwaters): provides funding up to \$50,000 for early forming or smaller projects that are in a stage of exploration and learning or partnership and relationship building.
- Stream 2 (Creek): provides funding up to \$150,000 for small to medium scale projects that are further along in design, development, collaboration, and implementation than headwaters.
- Stream 3 (River): provides funding up to \$500,000 for larger scale projects with stronger foundation of prior work and partnerships, collaboration, and a readiness to implement.

Applications for the first granting program opened between June 3rd and June 26th with funds set to be distributed in October 2024. A second application intake will open in Fall 2024/Winter 2025 and funds will be awarded in Spring 2025.

Please email info@watershedsecurityfund.ca if you are interested in learning more about the grants program.

PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

Marine and Coastal Management

Connecting with Community Through the Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS)

Building relationships with First Nations communities is central to the work of the Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) team in advancing First Nations' shared priorities in the marine space. The incorporation of community and Indigenous Knowledge into marine programs is also an essential part of the MCM team's work. One program where we are building relationships and supporting the incorporation of these types of knowledge is through the Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS) initiative in southern B.C. in partnership with Transport Canada.

The CEMS initiative is currently in its assessment phase, and FNFC convenes a committee of First Nation delegates – the Ship Movement and Vessel Management Coordinating Committee (VMCC) – to guide and contribute to the work of CEMS. To support relationship building, the MCM team has been holding CEMS workshops in the communities of VMCC members since Spring 2023. So far, workshops have been held in the territories of the Lekwungen peoples, Cowichan Tribes, T'Sou-ke First Nation, Semiahmoo First Nation, and Malahat Nation. At each workshop, there is space created for the host Nation to share the marine work that is being undertaken in their territories. This enables space for knowledge sharing, connection, and relationship building among Nations in southern B.C.

Since the beginning, the VMCC has led this initiative by determining the scope and co-developing assessment methodology. The VMCC is currently working to ground-truth the results of the assessment. Tools for community engagement, such as workbooks and presentations were created to assist committee members with gathering community knowledge to inform the assessment. Surveys are also being developed to incorporate community and Indigenous knowledge that will inform the vulnerability criteria of the connections (i.e. value components) for the assessment. The MCM team has also extended support to committee members and their communities to ensure that community and Indigenous Knowledge can be included in the assessment as desired by Nations.

Creating opportunities for relationship building and the incorporation of community and Indigenous knowledge are two central ways that FNFC supports Nations as they work towards a CEMS assessment in southern B.C. that best serves their priorities!



CEMS Highlight: In April 2024, FNFC presented alongside Transport Canada and Gordon Planes from T'Sou-ke First Nation at the International Association for Impact Assessment Conference in Dublin, Ireland. This was a unique opportunity to showcase the collaborative approaches being taken in CEMS on an international stage.



Historic Signing of the Trilateral Salmon Accord and Declaration

Trilateral Salmon Accord and Declaration Signed on June 21st, 2024

The Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C. have signed a trilateral accord to urgently address the decline of wild Pacific salmon.

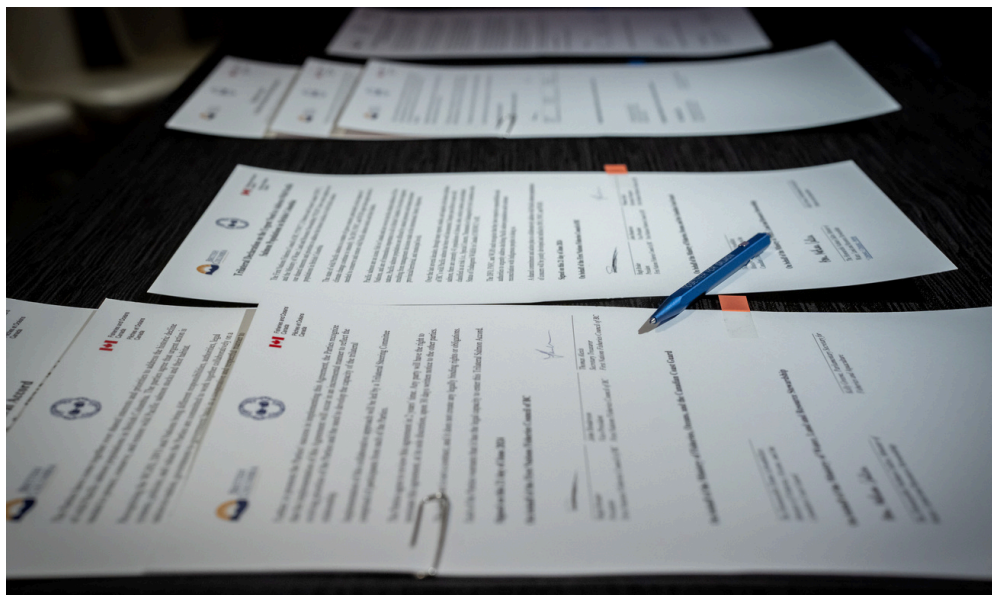
Signed on National Indigenous Peoples Day, this agreement represents a historic joint commitment between the Federal Government, Province of B.C. and the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C. to take urgent action to safeguard the species for future generations.

The timing of the signing event is notable, given that wild Pacific salmon holds great cultural significance for First Nations across B.C., conserving and rebuilding wild Pacific salmon populations is crucial to preserving these significant cultural practices.

The Trilateral Accord and Declaration to Address the Decline of Wild Pacific Salmon between the three parties establishes a collaborative process to align and coordinate work on shared wild Pacific salmon recovery priorities. This represents a transformative step that will help the signing partners develop long-term comprehensive strategies and share resources to address the decline of wild Pacific salmon in a coordinated matter. Jointly developed priority areas of focus include climate adaptation, ecosystem monitoring, habitat restoration, recovery plans, and watershed security.



The accord was signed by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Honourable Diane Lebovthillier, the British Columbia Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Kelly Greene, and John Henderson, Vice-President of the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C.



For more information, please send an email to **Hanna McComber** at hanna@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



FNFC Communique - August 2024