

SEHAB / DFO EXECUTIVE MEETING

Minutes

November 4, 2024

1100 – 1230 hr.

Virtual meeting by Teams

Purpose: Salmon Enhancement and Habitat Advisory Board members meet with the Salmon Enhancement Program (Enhancement and Stewardship Directorates) Executives to discuss key community issues and provide input and advice from the community to senior management on local salmon habitat, restoration, and stewardship.

Present:

DFO:

- Steve Newton: Director, Salmon Stewardship Directorate (SSD), SEP
- Brigid Payne: Director, Salmon Enhancement Directorate (SED), SEP
- Kiran Shanks: Program & Planning Coordinator, Stewardship Partnerships, (SSD), SEP
- Michael Crowe: Regional Manager, Community Involvement Program, SED
- Kelly Binning: Regional Manager, Stewardship Partnerships, SSD

SEHAB:

- Jim Shinkewski: Co-Chair, Representative for Pacific Salmon Foundation
- Stephanie Cottell: Treasurer, Representative for Lower Vancouver Island, Southern Gulf Islands
- ZoAnn Morten: Representative for Pacific Streamkeepers Federation
- Kyle Milburn: Representative for Central East Coast Vancouver Island & Nootka Sound Areas
- Jan Lemmon: Representative for Northern Interior and Northern Coast
- Lee Hesketh: Representative for Thompson: Central Interior, Boston Bar to 100 Mile House
- Angela Kroning, Secretary, Representative for Sunshine Coast

Regrets: Kevin Ryan, Representative for Burrard Inlet, Indian Arm, Vancouver

Secretariat: Angela Kroning/Kiran Shanks

Chair: Jim Shinkewski

Call to Order: 1100

Old Business:

1. Habitat Compliance & Protection - SEHAB advocates for the continued need for enforcement and compliance including violations in and around small streams. Without this part we will always be trying to keep salmon off the brink of extinction <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/pss-ssp/index-eng.html> . Does each Pillar meet with C&P?
 - C&P Program is responsible for the receipt, investigation and enforcement response to all reports of damage to fish habitat, death of fish, and deposits of sediment into fish habitat (i.e., occurrences), which are typically reported through C&P's "Observe Record Report" line
 - Depending on the nature of the occurrence C&P will engage with other federal or provincial regulators to identify the appropriate lead organization
 - For habitat related occurrences, C&P works directly with FFHPP (Fish & Fish Habitat Protection Program) staff, as subject matter experts, and may also involve other subject matter experts within DFO (Species-at-Risk Program, Science, etc.) to assist if/when required.

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- C&P and FFHPP meet regularly at the operational level (weekly to bi-weekly) and at the Manager/Executive level (as needed) to discuss and coordinate on the status of occurrences, upcoming issues, habitat sensitivities, general areas of concern, etc.

2. Small streams are not getting enforcement measures they need. How can this be improved?

Identifying habitat infractions but being told they are not meeting criteria for enforcement because they are historical. No monitoring unless it is a volunteer-based group. An example from Vancouver Island was presented.

Recommendations to DFO –

- Touch base with FFHPP on response. They make decisions on triaging in and out of response framework.
- DFO to send list of stewardship positions and those who respond to community/drought.
- Contact Strategic Advisors with respect to community/drought issues: Amy Wakelin, Fraser & Interior; Shannon Balfry, North Coast; Andrea Goruk, South Coast Area; and Steve Smith, Yukon, Transboundary Rivers

ACTION: DFO to invite presenters from ORR and FFHPP to next SEHAB meeting

New Business: Questions/Issue clarification from October 2024 SEHAB meeting-

1. Roles and responsibilities of who does what, when and why with regards to drought response? Can we have a most up to date list? We are quite sure we saw a diagram in June of what plans were going to be. (Likely that this has/will be updated with this summer's experience.)

ACTION: DFO to send out specific list presented during October SEHAB meeting.

2. Fry trapping under drought emergencies– needing permits – how does this work in real time? No link with respect to salvage trapping on website. This topic would be a good workshop in an upcoming SEP Community Workshop.

- Next steps: The information is on the website, and in the juvenile and adult salvage documents, however it is agreed that DFO should highlight this information ahead of the next drought season.

3. SEHAB recommends that local groups identify and create maps showing where there is an expectation or known problem areas of fry/spawners stranding related to climate change to assist in fry/spawner salvage events.

4. How is DFO information communicated between different DFO departments/programs and Community Advisors/Stewardship Advisors? What is the mechanism?

- DFO is continuing to prioritize communication between DFO programs re: enhancement and stewardship – e.g. meetings and developing protocols. CAs do work in the background with Planning & Assessment.

SEHAB is concerned now that stewardship is separated, that P & A continues to work with this community. Planning and Assessment is involved with SEP programming as well

5. Who can work in water when? For flood mitigation, it appears that the province and municipal governments can work in water anytime even if the water is salmon bearing. SEHAB is seeing examples

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where work is done at the last minute thereby being able to bypass permitting restrictions. It is recommended that dike management and maintenance regulations be modernized to include habitat protection in the face of climate change.

ACTION: DFO will ask FFHPP presenter to speak to this issue at the next SEHAB meeting.

6. An updated *Facts & Figures* booklet is expected to be published by the end of the calendar year.

7. How does Compliance and Enforcement work? There appears to be a lack of DFO monitoring of habitat issues. An example of a small stream diverted to create and fill a constructed lake was presented. Experiences of officers visiting a site and the message that comes back is that the infractions will be labeled as not meeting the criteria of *Harmful Alteration, Disruption or Destruction* (Fisheries Act) because it is not a “major” issue and/or it is historical if >3 years old. As a result, nothing is done on the enforcement side. The definition of HADD and “major” seem to be very flexible.

ACTION: DFO will follow-up on this case.

8. How do volunteer groups or SEHAB affect changes to Fishing Regulations in their watersheds? This has been brought up last year without a clear answer. We were told last year to:
- Use CA and their teams.
 - Get involved with local sport fishing advisory groups.
 - Provide input on the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) through the on-line public engagement plan
- The best way to affect change and to improve the clarity of the Fishing Regulations is to become involved with a local sport fishery group

ACTION: SEHAB to visit [https://www.fishingbcapp.ca/for fishing regulations](https://www.fishingbcapp.ca/for-fishing-regulations)

9. How can community groups get information about habitat banking projects in their areas and the associated restoration plans/practices/projected outcomes? Is there a plan to receive any advice from experienced folks on the ground about the potential efficacy or inadequacy of these projects? For example, transparent peer review. What is the best way to provide input to this project at this time?

ACTION: DFO to flag this point to FFHPP (Biodiversity) presenter, and follow up with SEHAB at the next meeting

Adjournment and Thanks: 1218