

Roundtable Report
October 6,7,8,9, 2024
Kamloops, B.C.
SEHAB Member: Janet Lemon
North coast Area
Community Advisor: Rob Dam

Key Issues:

1. Climate change is on the front burner as floods, droughts and extreme low temperatures have caused many issues for the salmon streams and for all the facilities in our area.
2. Skeena returns of chinook, coho, chum and steelhead are being closely scrutinized by all stakeholders in hopes that returns are increasing.
3. Upgrades are currently happening at many North Coast Hatcheries and there is hopes that funding will continue into the future.

Some highlights of the various groups on the North Coast:

Kitwanga Area: Kitwanga sockeye are being enhanced in collaboration with Gitanyow Nation. Currently brood fish are captured and eggs are shipped to Snootli Hatchery and reared to the fry stage. Fry are then returned via air and released. The approval has been given to build a new facility

Eby Street Hatchery: continues to be an active group. The Zymacord River is now designated as an indicator stream for lower Skeena Coho. They have the capacity to mark with coded wire tags and are increasing their 20-30 K capacity

Deep Creek Hatchery. New Manager Jonathan Minson and have their chinook stream as an indicator. They have collected their target 260+ K

Hartley Bay Hatchery: CEDP The group has a new stream bottom intakes and new streamside intake through BC Salmon Restoration and Innovative funding. With the re-plumbing and repairs they plan to do 20 K as a trial run this fall

Oldfield creek Hatchery: The hatchery is still inactive after the rockslide in November 2021 destroyed the surface water intake. Prince Rupert Salmon Enhancement Society now has McElhanney engineering permitting and panning for the relocation. Wolf Creek in Port Edward has been identified as the preferred location for the new hatchery.

They continue the Stream to Sea with eggs from Hays Creek and will continue the Chinook enhancement at Kloya Creek.

The Lakelse Watershed Society: This group are keeping active with water quality and fry outmigration monitoring. They have an excellent web site with lots of information. The Thornhill Wetland Interpretive Trail project continues and will highlight watershed values and the importance of wetlands.

Stewart: beaver management continues on Clements Creek. Once again beaver dams will be notched into the system to ensure sockeye migration continues unhindered. They continue Stream to Sea school program and have a restoration team there this fall to check log booms and gravel removal.

Kitimat Hatchery: Kitimat River Hatchery has seen an overturn in staffing and production objectives in 2023/2024. Vince Sealy has retired now replaced by Malcolm Wigham as WEM. Kitimat is evolving its production goals to take a more “data-collection” focused approach for 2024-2028 on all programs. These evolutions include Chinook DNA and scale data collection from tributaries and non-historical collection locations in the Kitimat Watershed, Chinook Juvenile trapping to assess natural presence in Stream-Type chinook life histories more accurately, Ad Clipping Chinook and Coho Juveniles and applying CWT’s to Chinook juveniles. Beyond this there are other alterations to the Coho and Chum adult collection programs and have reached the chum target for this year.

Oona River Resources Association/Fred Letts Hatchery: this group has been doing some much need repairs and have completed the entrance deck with yellow cedar decking and natural flagstones. The majority of the 7,100 fry were released in early July with 1500 held back for Rivers Day and another community event. Last fall they decided to not take the 25,000 target as the natural spawning was so good. At the end of August there was a small return of pink salmon and it was a huge bonus to have salmon spawning on the grounds for the College students (who come annually for a field trip in late August) to observe. The annual Rivers Day on the long weekend in August was a huge success and fun for all. This was followed 10 days later by a 5 day wedding celebration of a local young couple. They did the ceremony beside the river under old growth trees. Some of the 60 guests attending had never experienced walking along a temperate rainforest river or releasing fry back into the stream and said besides the ceremony, their hatchery experience was one of the highlights.