

**Round Table Report**  
**February 2025 SEHAB meeting**  
**Lynn Lee, Haida Gwaii Alternate**

**Community Advisor: Erin Harris**  
**Stewardship Advisor: Trevor Sower**

## Summary

1. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are directly related to DFO
  - **Split of SEP work into an Enhancement Directorate (ED) and Stewardship Directorate (SD) and this transition still of concern for Haida Gwaii**, particularly since there seems to be uncertainty surrounding future of Stewardship Directorate funding over the long-term – community groups have been getting some additional funding from PSSSI in addition to SEP funding for their CIP grants and are worried about what will happen to this funding if PSSSI does not continue.
  - Related to that, questions about what will happen with PSSSI funding to community groups if the program does not continue – **will PSSSI money go back to SEP so they can continue to support the work of stewardship and enhancement groups to at least the same degree as before the PSSSI split?**
  - **Concerns about the level of support that a remote Stewardship Advisor (SA) who is not on Haida Gwaii will be able to deliver to community groups**; Travel for the SA seems to be difficult so there is little ability for the SA to support field activities when needed; Also concerns about lack of local knowledge that a remote SA might have and limitations in terms of the advice they may be able to provide for stewardship activities on Haida Gwaii (e.g., fish fence installation and removal, exploring smolt trapping programs).
  - **Concern about the split into an ED and SD causing additional communications and coordination challenges for the high level of collaboration between many of the enhancement and stewardship groups on Haida Gwaii** – a lot of knowledge and capacity sharing among the groups which is currently facilitated by having one DFO person, the CA, aware of what all the groups are doing and what they need. At present, CA and SA both support the Haida Fisheries Program but if the Haida Fisheries work moves entirely to SA without CA involvement, that would make communications and collaborations much more challenging.
  - **No consultation from DFO about the change to ED and SD before it was implemented**, given it directly affects the volunteer groups who have been working with DFO for decades.
  - **Volunteer groups on Haida Gwaii are interested in more assessment to better understand the effects of their enhancement and stewardship activities on the streams they work on**; Groups would appreciate opportunities for more collaboration among the groups, ED, StAD and SD biologists/staff to collectively discuss and share expertise and resources to achieve this improved understanding.

2. Any positive things that are directly related to DFO
  - **Haida Gwaii community groups very thankful for continued CA and CA technician support, and Community Involvement Program PIP grants for financial support for their programs;** Having a CA based on Haida Gwaii, these grants and hands-on DFO support in the field are critical for them to continue their volunteer activities.
  - Haida Gwaii groups very **happy to have a CA and commend Erin Harris** for all of the support she has given to community groups.
  - **Thanks to DFO from the TWS** for addressing their letter related to potential changes to Stewardship Directorate; TWS appreciates that the **CA will officially continue to support** their program and that they will not be moved to the SA.
  - Haida Gwaii community groups are continuing to do the work supported by the SEP, and Haida Fisheries Program work is currently supported in practice by the CA as they have for many years, and now the SA remotely.
3. Any things coming up that DFO should know about
  - None to report at this time.
4. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are related to other agencies.
  - None to report at this time.

## Group Reports

Project updates for Feb 2025:

- TWS fence upgrades to floating panels; Exploring idea of a smolt program on the Tlell with Haida Fisheries and DFO North Coast Stock Assessment Division (StAD); Haida Fisheries Program (HFP) and SEP help with fence installation and removal; Fence operations has primarily been funded by NC StAD, speaking to the importance of collaborations to make everything run.
- Haida Fisheries and Hecate Strait Streamkeepers (HSSK) planning to explore smolt enumeration on the Honna River; Haida Fisheries and HSSK coded-wire tagged (CWT) and clipped 38,000 fry on the Honna last year with tags paid by StAD, but no funding for that expected from StAD in years moving forward; HSSK wanting to know the effects of their hatchery on wild coho in the Honna; currently taking genetic samples for the Pacific Biological Station (PBS) but additional information from CWT is also important to gain a better understanding of the stock; Adipose clipping will allow HSSK to make in-season decisions about which fish to use for broodstock – contributions of resources and expertise would greatly contribute to the success of these projects.
- Old Massett Village Council (OMVC) Marie Lake CEDP obtained more funding from PSF last fall – this includes improved access to net pens, as well as purchasing health and safety supplies; BCSCRIF funded upgrades to residence for hatchery staff, new or renovated storage facilities, net pen docks including ladders and railings, and new egg take shed last year; Broodstock collection successful in 2024 spawning season for coho and chinooks.

- OMVC, HSSK and Port Clements enhancement group also collaborate on SEP work in the Mamin River.
- Concerns about drought and low water flows in streams in community of Skidegate; Led to development of a high level draft restoration plan for T'am Gandlaay (Mission Creek) supported by Skidegate Band Council (SBC) with the help of the CA, Resource Restoration Unit (RRU) staff and contractors; In 2024, RRU staff put in riparian shade structure, baffles in concrete by the playground, and digging for deeper pools in lower end of creek with Skidegate Band Council (SBC); Contractors NHC and MTE recommended some highway culvert improvements to SBC that they are exploring this year, as well as improving habitat in the reach above the anadromous barrier, and assessing the potential to impound some water at Spirit Lake that could be control-released when needed; In 2024, a plan was put in place to trap and transport fry with the assistance of community members and the Skidegate Youth Center if water is too low in the summer – same plan for 2025.
- HSSK, MTE and potentially HFP exploring potential to conduct a habitat restoration project on the Pallant River near the former Pallant Creek hatchery site with PSF – oxbow in the river may breach soon and cause close to 1-km of habitat loss, therefore would benefit from erosion control to maintain that stretch of prime spawning habitat.
- In 2024 spawning season, generally good pink year but incredibly high pre-spawn pink salmon mortality in some streams early in the season with lots of fish in the creek and low, warm water; Poor chum year; Poor coho year for the Tlell.