

Dave Didluck
Regional Director, Reconciliation and Partnerships
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Suite 200, 401 Burrard Street
Vancouver, Canada

Via email:

Dear Regional Director Didluck:

The Salmon Enhancement and Habitat Advisory Board (SEHAB) would like the opportunity to meet with you to highlight the support that community volunteers provide to Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the Pacific Region.

SEHAB is a DFO advisory board which represents the 30,000-strong volunteer aquatic stewardship community working within the DFO Salmonid Enhancement Program and Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative. We provide advice to the Federal and Provincial governments on issues of concern that impact the ability of the volunteer community to help you achieve your mandate.

We, and the volunteers we represent, have a shared commitment of ensuring functioning ecosystems supporting genetically diverse, sustainable and resilient indigenous fish populations.

As advisors to you, and willing partners to assist you in achieving the expectations in the Mandate Letter of your Minister, we request that as you move forward with long-term planning you invite SEHAB to participate in departmental consultations and public engagement to incorporate the experience and insights of our constituents.

We look forward to meeting with you at your convenience. Should you have time in your schedule we will be holding our annual fall meeting in September and would be happy to provide time in our agenda to meet with you.

Sincerely yours,

SEHAB: PSSI FEEDBACK

SPRING 2025

Burrard Inlet, Indian Arm, Vancouver -

My one comment is they used PSSI funds to hire all staff. Several key SEP positions such as Section Lead, Tech's hired using PSSI money. Now what? Will this money continue? What happens to all the positions filled? If there is no PSSI money given all the focus on economy and jobs caused by US tariffs what happens?

No question PSSI money was critical and is making a difference. However funding needs to continue otherwise all the hard work will be lost.

Smithers & Northwest -

There is too much time wasted creating a barrier between First Nations and recreational fisherman. I have talked with many Elders; they want to see collaboration between First Nations and Caucasians. They feel targeted; it is creating too much negative impact.

We need to focus on the commercial fleets having less impact on the salmon fishery. Reduce their catch limits and their nets used. Focus on pirated fishing fleets. Also reduce the impact by the Tyhee test sites. Change it to a fish reel as has been done. I am sure they will agree as netting is not allowing the fish to return.

Allow Chinook fishing again on Skeena 6. The reports don't add up. The river systems in BC are open to fishing hatchery which impedes the wild salmon. Skeena 6 needs to be open for 1 retention again. We need to establish hatchery salmon in higher numbers. Taking away these programs on Skeena 6 hurts recreational fishing

While we appreciate the increased support from DFO staff hired with PSSI funds, and the funding boosts to hatcheries, these boosts were restricted to facility upgrades. Hatcheries also need increased support for baseline/operational costs and paying staff.

Lower Vancouver Island & Southern Gulf Islands -

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)'s current and long-term work under the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI).

From our vantage point—as organizations with over three decades of continuous, boots-on-the ground conservation and restoration work in the watersheds and nearshore environments of British Columbia—we offer the following perspective:

Observations on PSSI Implementation

While we acknowledge the historic scale of investment under PSSI and recognize the good intentions behind the initiative, we must be frank: little of this effort meaningfully targets the foundational causes of salmon decline *or rebuilding of stocks*.

Neglect of Source Control

Urban runoff, failing stormwater systems, aging septic tanks, and marine pollutants are some of the primary, chronic killers of salmon habitat, yet source control remains conspicuously underrepresented in both funding and focus. These are not exciting projects, but they are essential if we hope to move beyond triage. *We have guidelines for discharge that are not being followed. Streams with water should be protected.*

Minimal Action on Marine Debris and Abandoned Vessels

Our decades-long work removing abandoned vessels and marine debris has direct links to salmon recovery through forage fish habitat restoration. Species like Pacific sand lance, which are foundational to the Chinook diet (and by extension, the survival of the Southern Resident Orca); depend on clean, undisturbed nearshore zones. These habitats are routinely destroyed by derelict vessels and toxic leaching, yet such work is treated as peripheral or classified as "non-core."

Feel-Good Projects over Functional Change

Many funded projects appear to be low-impact, short-term initiatives designed to appear active rather than structurally address systemic failures. We are witnessing the rise of make-work ecology rather than a coordinated, results-oriented job creation program rooted in ecosystem function and community resilience

Long-Term Strategic Concerns -

Hatchery Dependence Masks Deeper Decline

Continued investment in hatcheries, without parallel investment in habitat function and water quality, is a dangerous substitution. Hatcheries should not be used as a substitute for habitat loss mitigation, not as political cover for failing to confront entrenched land use issues.

Insufficient Climate Adaptation

DFO's current planning does not adequately incorporate climate change adaptation at the watershed scale. Watershed reforestation, stream shading, urban heat island mitigation, and groundwater recharge must be core tenets of any salmon survival strategy in a warming world.

Lack of Career-Scale Conservation Jobs

Funding structures favour fragmented, one-year project cycles that generate administrative churn and volunteer burnout rather than long-term, community-rooted job creation in habitat

protection and source control. We need skilled labour in watershed maintenance and marine ecosystem restoration, not just seasonal photo ops.

Recommendations for Recalibration:

- Elevate source control as a central PSSI pillar—address urban and rural runoff, septic systems, and stormwater infrastructure head-on.
- Recognize derelict vessel and marine debris removal as legitimate habitat restoration. Fund it accordingly.
- Tie PSSI goals explicitly to forage fish recovery, especially sand lance and surf smelt, to connect nearshore work to salmon and orca recovery.
- Shift toward long-term funding models that support stable, skilled careers in habitat protection and restoration.
- Fund monitoring and evaluation that measures ecological function, not just dollar throughput or social engagement metrics.

Final Thoughts

We remain committed to salmon recovery—not as a campaign slogan, but as a lived practice. But salmon do not spawn in spreadsheets. They do not feed on vision statements. If the habitat is gone, and the water is poisoned, and the food web is broken, no amount of hatchery fish or photo-ops will save them.

We urge DFO and PSSI administrators to prioritize function over façade, and to invest in the quiet, critical work that actually keeps salmon alive.

Just a comment on the Cowichan successful rebuild from escapement less than 1000 Chinook 2 decades ago to the current 10s of thousands.

Why has DFO done nothing to reward this local case study of successful stock recovery? The Chinook fishery is still closed. The DFO bureaucracy cost could be offset through economic openings especially the recreation fishery. DFO has lost its way. It has to stop crying wolf and the sky is falling, and figure out how to reward and encourage the next generation.

The extended PSSI efforts are great and they really help small hatcheries make a difference. Please extend financial coverage for the salmon DNA analysis at the DFO Molecular Genetics lab. We will be sending in around 20 - 30 fin clips from Chinook of unknown origin this year and the cost about \$30.00 each to analyze. As well, we will be doing some E-DNA sampling and are having problems locating a lab to do the analysis as our DFO lab is not yet set up or is in the process of setting up for E-DNA work

(eric.rondeau@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) M G Lab.

Increased and protected salmon habitat results in an increase of salmon stocks: Our biggest roadblock to reverse the decline of salmon is rejections of projects to increase, enhance and expand

habitat by removing log jam and gravel overburden/fish passage barriers. Working with MOTI we were able to do one in stream project last year while we had other potential projects to enhance and improve capacity/habitat declined by Provincial Water Sustainability Act (WSA) Department Authorization Specialists. Reasonings such as "We do not know what would happen if you removed that barrier to fish passage" and "Log jams that become barriers to adult fish passage are part of the natural LWD". Well excuse me because both the MoTI biologist and I know very well which barriers are problems and which are not. One government employee had to ask about the aerial footage images to which direction the water is flowing? Now it is my opinion: that person needs to spend more time in the field. They asked us to draw arrows on the drone images to show which way the water is flowing...so we did.

Keep up the good work with PSSI and please speak to WSA folks about projects that protect existing habitat from potential damages and projects to remove barriers to adult fish passage are likely sound when coming from professionals who have been "working in stream" for decades.

Sunshine Coast -

In 2021 the announcement and funding of the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative was a much welcomed program. It focussed on the four pillars of salmon enhancement, harvest transformation, conservation and stewardship and integration & collaboration. These pillars were to be guided by 5 guiding principles: reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; innovative solutions, prioritization of critical salmon populations; enhanced transparency, data and trust; and partnerships and collaboration.

Four years into this novel program, what has been achieved viewed from this particular community-focussed lens?

Certainly the review and modernization of community hatcheries under the pillar of salmon enhancement has made great strides with a full complement of Community Advisors and technical staff. With the publication of the Facilities Management Plan the infrastructure portion of the review may almost be complete with the exception of addressing the issue of provincial water licences and payment for water usage.

With respect to the conservation and stewardship pillar, the Stewardship Directorate got off to a slow start and the very few front line staff (Stewardship Coordinators) are only now becoming familiar with their communities that they are advising. Much remains to be done here and certainly warrants a PSSI Phase II. *PSSI needs to be able to recruit and retain staff who require clear job descriptions, introduction to the existing programs and current staff.*

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples has really moved forward and is of course legislatively (UNDR) required. However in pursuing this principle, many non-indigenous stewards and hatcheries be are concerned that PSSI has failed to "enhance its transparency" or trust in sharing the reconciliation path with this community of non-indigenous volunteers. As an example, the very significant shift-changing tripartite Agreement signed in 2024 between DFO, First Nations Fisheries Council and the Province with

respect to salmon recovery and stewardship has not been publicized nor its' possible effects explained by staff.

Nonetheless there should be a PSSI II to facilitate this new agreement into action. In addition, there needs as ever to be work done on collaboration between the differing federal ministries and programs, the provincial and local governments. This (in addition to communicating with the volunteer community and First Nations) is what the Stewardship Directorate should be doing which will need more staff to accomplish.

Two other components that should be added/emphasized in PSSI II are Habitat Restoration, specifically the Salmon Restoration Centre of Expertise and increased Fish & Fish Habitat Protection. For the former, the with the draft of the Salmon Restoration Priorities Plan almost finalized, this major policy direction needs to be disseminated to the appropriate First Nations, all levels of government and the community hatchery and stewardship groups.

As to the latter, most of the public is well aware of the need to protect salmon and their habitat and they expect DFO to protect these iconic species. The enforcement of the Subsection 36(3) *deposition of deleterious substances* should be returned to the Fisheries Officers from Environment Canada officers who currently enforce it. Secondly, there needs to be increased funding for FFHP to collaborate more closely with the provincial Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship e.g. Riparian Area Regulations. Thirdly, there needs to be a change in attitude from DFO to lay charges regardless of the perpetrator e.g. sewage spills by municipalities, violations of Environmental Conditions from projects assessed under the Canadian/BC Assessment Act and run-of-the-mill land developers. This would require increased funding to hire additional enforcement staff to lay charges and proceed to court as needed.

Haida Gwaii -

There is a concern about the dual role of Community Advisors in remote areas serving both as a point of contact to community hatcheries and to stewardship groups and what would happen to these positions should there not be a PSSI II. See letter from Tlell Watershed Society (December 04, 2024) and SEHAB response letter dated January 21, 2025.

Many of the hatchery volunteers are also the stewardship community. Having one point of entry to DFO (the CA) works as long as the CA is able to get help from other departments

Compiled by A. Kroning, 20250608

Presented SEHAB Meeting 20250609

20250608

SEHAB MINUTES

Tuesday, June 10, 2025
Linwood House/Virtual
3144 Linwood Rd, Roberts Creek

LINK: Zoom provided by Jim S.

ATTENDING:

SEHAB:

- Jim Shinkewski: Co-Chair & Rep for Pacific Salmon Foundation (ip)
- Stephanie Cottell: Treasurer & Rep for Lower Vancouver Island, Southern Gulf Islands (ip)
- Angela Kroning: Secretary & Rep for Sunshine Coast (ip)
- ZoAnn Morten: Membership & Rep for Pacific Streamkeepers Federation (ip)
- Kevin Ryan: Rep for Burrard Inlet, Indian Arm, Vancouver (ip – morning)
- Jan Lemmon: Rep for Northern Interior and Northern Coast (ip)
- Paul Cipywnyk: Rep for Lower Fraser North (ip)
- Kyle Milburn: Rep for Central East Coast Vancouver Island & Nootka Sound Areas (virtual)

Regrets: Leandre Vigneault: Chair, Haida Gwaii
Marjorie Lieuwen; Alternate Rep for Smithers & Northwest BC

Time Item

0900	Call Meeting to Order- Jim Shinkewski
0905 -	<p>Tyler Storgaard voted in as Alternate to Paul. ACTION: Paul to meet with Tyler.</p> <p><u>Arising from Old Business -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter of Introduction to Dave Didluk, Associate Regional Director General, PSSl. Draft letter reviewed by all. ACTION: Angela to put on letterhead and send to Jim to sign. Will review which email to use to send letter• ACTION: Angela to ask Alison Krimmer: A/Hatchery Reform Biologist, to send link to latest version of Drought Management BMP ACTION: SEHAB after reading BMP, to send comments to Paul to compile.
	<p><u>Business New -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed Action Items arising from Monday, June 09th, 2025 meeting –see Minutes.• SEHAB brochure/envelope distributed by Steph; she will mail out to absent SEHAB members.
1030 - 1045	<i>Health Break</i>

1045 – 11:30	<p><u>RHQ Preparations:</u></p> <p>From Old Business -</p> <p>1. Deep Bay is an example of well documented habitat violations showing a lack DFO response. ACTION: SEHAB asks for a meeting between QEP and whoever can be involved in decision-making process from DFO. Concern that a lack of meaningful action by DFO, may result in community resorting to historical guerilla restoration tactics.</p> <p>From New Business -</p> <p>2. SEHAB would like to meet with Susan Chambers (PSSI) – ACTION: Could DFO help to arrange this meeting please.</p> <p>3. ACTION: Byron Nutting (A/Director Salmon Stewardship Directorate) to ask Susan Chambers what can be shared with SEHAB re PSSI II proposal and budget.</p> <p>4. SEHAB would like to know if SEP funding will be secure when and if PSSI funding changes.</p> <p>5. SEHAB recommends that the phrase “community and local knowledge ” be put back into all policy documents.</p> <p>6. SEHAB requests that guidelines be provided to local communities as to how to approach and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and protocols into community enhancement and stewardship projects.</p> <p>7. Facilities Management Plan: SEHAB recommends that Erica send the populated draft plans to the CA's to share, once done, SEHAB will notify their constituents that individualized plans are on their way.</p> <p>8. Community Recognition – SEHAB requests an update request for exemption on community recognition. This request is time sensitive, e.g. recognition of 50 year volunteers.</p> <p><u>Date & Time of next RHQ meeting</u> - June 18 @ 3:00 PM</p> <p>- SEHAB Secretary Required</p> <p>- Attendees: Kyle, Steph, Paul (maybe), ZoAnn, Jan, Kevin .</p> <p>Regrets: Jim, Angela, <i>Note: Secretary Needed.</i></p>
11:30	Adjourn
1200	Depart Linwood House for afternoon of field trips, lunch en route.
1300-1400	<p>Tour of Sargeant's Bay Provincial Park, Halfmoon Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very informative tour hosted by Director Dave Spicer, Sargeant Bay Society & Jim Wilson Sunshine Coast Community Advisor
1400-1500	Carpool to Sakinaw Lake DFO Fish Way, Pender Harbour
1500-1615	<p>Tour of Sakinaw Sockeye Fish Way (DFO/Sechelt Nation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted by CA Jim Wilson who provided the interesting history of the

	fish way and its modifications to facilitate the identification and enumeration of the sockeye and coho spawners and smolts using, for example, PIT tags.
1615-1730	Return to Accommodation

Tuesday, June 11, 2025
Linwood House

0900	Submit expense claims, volunteer hours & roundtable reports; issue reimbursement cheques
1000	Depart Linwood House
1100	Ferry Departs Langdale

SEP COMMUNITY WORKSHOP JUNE 2025 LETTERS OF SUPPORT:

Good Morning

Honourable Minister Lebouthillier,

Pacific Region Director General

By February the (SEP) Community Workshop 2025 team should have been sending you invitations to open this community planned Workshop. This invitation has been extended since the first SEP Community Workshop held in 1991. These workshops are put together with a team from DFO and SEP volunteers in different communities within Pacific Region every two years. 2023 had a last minute hiccup due to travel restrictions but we all felt that given we had two years to get the next one through the new process for travel and attendance of vital DFO staff we would be able to have comfort that the workshop would proceed. I am writing as it's now February (workshop is held in May) and the SEP community is fearing that having no decision to proceed by department is making the decision that the workshop will be forced to be cancelled.

I won't ramble on about the workshop as it's easier to share the link on past (from when internet began) workshops

<https://www.sepcommunityworkshop.ca/history/index.html>

and a quickie wrap up video from SEP Community Workshop 2023 (please watch all 9:20 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_STwBulYqk&t=5s

I asked a few people if we should have a SEP Community Workshop and here are the replies I received **in less than 24 hours**.

Take care ZoAnn

Here are some SEP volunteer community thoughts on the SEP Community Workshop:

- Allows volunteers to meet with other SEP community members and network and learn from each other.
- The workshops are extremely informative in teaching volunteers on best practices

- Volunteers don't ask for much. We do this because we see how important the volunteer activities are to salmon survival. SEP workshops are one small way the DFO can thank volunteers. I honestly can't imagine successful salmon survival without volunteers
- DFO needs to buy into and support ways to recognize the value of community hatcheries. Aside from CA's and tech's I get the impression middle and senior managers at DFO do not appreciate the work done by volunteers.
- There needs to be a fundamental shift in thinking at DFO. Support, recognition and encouragement of volunteers needs to be a priority.
- All we hear is First Nations in everything said and done when attending DFO meetings. Community volunteers are ignored. That's just wrong and eventually those community volunteers will migrate to areas where their efforts are appreciated and recognized
- I am writing to express our appreciation of the SEP Community Workshops. The volunteers that put their valuable time into the variety of community-based salmon enhancement are, in a large part, motivated by the supportive community of their co-volunteers and like-minded DFO staff. Together with the opportunity to get updated in person with latest technologies, approaches and experiences, I feel that these workshops are key components to keeping the SEP program going. While technical updates and reviews are quite effective as on-line events, in-person workshops build community far better.
- It is extremely important that the SEP Community Workshop continues. The established schedule has been consistent for many years, and many folks rely on information gained at the workshops to enhance their knowledge and gain up-to-date information on various enhancement and fish related activities. With a drop in the consistency of the workshops, there is the real danger that there will be no further workshops, or there will be the perception that the workshops are no longer perceived as important by Fisheries and Oceans.
- Have past SEP Community Workshops been of value to you, to your group? Yes! There have been times when I needed information on various stream features or inhabitants, education or restoration information, or the need to bounce an idea off colleagues.
- It is imperative that the workshop remain in-person, as one of the main draws of this workshop is the sharing of ideas, projects, and getting to meet some of the DFO folks in person. Allegiances and alliances are formed, and information is shared - not just via workshops, but by sharing within groups and participants.
- I believe these workshops are very valuable to the SEP hatcheries. Yes, we should have them annually.

- I am writing on behalf of the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed to express our support of the SEP Community Workshops. We have been fortunate to attend several of these events and have found them extremely valuable for both the educational and networking opportunities that are provided.

-It is very difficult to find continuing education programs that provide reliable and current information relevant to healthy salmon populations and healthy oceans. The SEP workshop not only provides learning experiences but inspiration for both professionals and volunteers to continue our efforts in protection of healthy aquatic environments.

-Please continue this important biannual workshop. Your past efforts are appreciated very much and will be critical for our future. Thank you.

-Hi! Other Maple Creekers will be so pleased that there is talk of having another workshop soon.

-We hated the thoughts that there wouldn't be another. We do learn a lot when we get together with the CAs and other streamkeepers.

-Looking forward to hearing that it is a done deal and we'll be gathering together again.

-The SEP community workshop has always been a really great forum for all of us to receive technical info, research, hear about current/emerging issues as well as to network amongst our fellow stewards. It helps generate ideas with a view to doing a better job with stewarding our watersheds. As an engagement tool, it should also provide the opportunity for DFO teams to directly engage for feedback vs. receiving the various surveys to respond to. We didn't have as much CA participation at the last because of the travel restrictions which was unfortunate because when we further talk about ideas or issues raised during the workshop, it is typically our CA as the initial point of contact to try and move those things forward.

-I'd support having the workshop in 2025 as a face to face.
hay čxʷ qə (thank you)

-SEP workshops have huge value to the volunteer community. The amazing training opportunities and sharing between volunteer groups are very important in maintaining and enhancing the incredible productivity of our volunteer community.

-I was wondering if there will be a SEP community workshop this year.

-I can not always attend but I have found the workshops helpful to meet other streamkeepers and learn what they have been doing. As volunteers, it is a great way to educate the SEP volunteer workshop and make us feel appreciated. It is inspiring to learn about other volunteers and their DFO community liaison at the workshops as well as learn more about what

is happening here in BC.

-Thank you for your role with DFO volunteers. Your support has been amazing over the 30 + years I have been volunteering for streams and wetlands.

- How important is it to your group that the SEP Community Workshop 2025 be held this Spring as per the established biennial schedule?

Very! SEP community people have allocated May long weekend for this for decades. We plan our garden planting, work days off, babysitting, house and pet sitting and family budgets in advance to ensure we can travel to the workshop.

Predictability and dependability are not just good for major project reviews but also in training and education of a public willing to volunteer and self-fund their contribution to SEP and Canada.

The rest of the year is just too “salmon busy”.

-Have past SEP Community Workshops been of value to you, to your group? That is where we learn the Why of what we are doing and the outcomes not just the outputs of their collective contributions.

It is curiosity and cross training - between and among the presenters, DFO staff and the attendees that the future questions and hypothesis form that guide the entire program to improved practices and increased success.

Success is health and genetic diversity and abundance of salmon and flourishing ecosystems.

-The Crown would not have this level of success without volunteerism and willing compliance by the public. To cause no HADDs nor poach no fish. Training, education and support of the workshop keep this reciprocal relationship between the public and the crown in track. For a pittance!

-Is it important to have this in-person or would an online version be a replacement? DFO like everyone else has read the hundreds of reports and assessments of the 5 year “experiment” of work from home and zoom to a meeting. It is not the same! One of best documented outcomes of in Person conferences, daily in person work, and in classroom learning is that the attendees’ questions and conversations are a huge documented part of the learning. In addition, meeting others in person doing similar work and building relationships with them gives the SEP volunteer an alternate to their super busy Community Advisor when they have a question or want to borrow equipment.

-DFO SHOULD NOT be afraid of strong intra-sep community relationships. We don’t need to be “handled or controlled.” We need to be supported, educated, trained and trusted.

-I am very much looking forward to attending SEP Community Workshop 2025 this spring. I book my vacation time to be sure I am in town for these amazing times with community. When we say "community" we mean the SEP (salmonid enhancement and streamkeeper) volunteers other CEDP and Fed hatchery people, DFO science, resource restoration, stream to

sea education, 1st Nations, ENGO's and others who all work together for the preservation and protection of salmon. These workshops began in 1991 and have been held every 2 years since then. The energy of the room is refreshing, positive energy where we get reinvigorated to continue our works for salmon. Volunteers pay their own way to this workshop as it is THE workshop for and about them.

-The SEP family is so unique that I understand that it's hard to imagine but please find a way to allow the DFO folks who we value to be at this workshop to interact with others who as struggling to save salmon. I had thought the PSSI funds would strengthen the ties with DFO and the rest of SEP community to strengthen the strong foundation we have all worked so hard on. Please build on

this foundation do not take it down or start totally anew. People who work with salmon need to travel, need to be outside allowing them the flexibility to do their jobs, to meet with and help educate their team.

****SEP is a community, a team, a family.**

-SEP Community Workshops are of great value to both DFO, the volunteer community and of course to Pacific salmon! The biennial in-person workshops are so important in providing opportunities for education and networking between and within government and communities.

-SEP community workshop has given me the opportunity to update myself with new Enhancement techniques and equipment, latest information. On climate change, etc., and most importantly, a chance to meet new and old volunteers and dfo staff to exchange information and share in our common passion for salmon and healthy eco systems. Living on the North Coast, we do not have the opportunity to attend many workshops. It is often 2 day travel time and expensive. Sep gatherings can offer so much in one weekend and also gives you a chance to get to know better the area where it is hosted.

-I have attended 3 SEP workshops, Port Alberni, Nanaimo and Quesnel. They were all very good both, for knowledge sharing and networking.

1. The focus on DFO research and the presentation's by the researchers has been very valuable, particularly at Port Alberni. I remember that some of the findings on the impact of hatchery fish on wild stocks were not welcome by the SEP participants but getting that knowledge out has led to quite a bit of reflection and improved hatchery processes. SEP workshops can be a catalyst for improvements.

2. The Nanaimo workshop had an incredible number of displays from the various Streamkeeper groups. The evening with the participants circulating and viewing other groups' information seemed to trigger a plethora of ideas for salmon enhancement projects. It seems to me that after Nanaimo, many groups embarked on salmon habitat restoration projects. The SEP workshops can stimulate action...if other groups can do it, we can too.

3. All the workshops had some "hands on" training on fish handling and hatchery management which helped many of the participants improve practices at their facilities. I think training on a few of the Streamkeeper Modules would be good for new Streamkeepers. Perhaps a refresher

on Streamkeeper Module could be a focus of a workshop.

4. The networking events have all been fabulous, the train ride at Port Alberni, the Barkerville trip at Quesnel, and the Sturgeon facility tour in Nanaimo all created opportunities to get to know other Streamkeepers. The events may seem a bit extravagant, but I think they were worth it.

5. I found the workshops most valuable when I was new to Streamkeepers.

-Glen Parker

P.S.: I still use the mugs that were given to participants at each workshop. The beauty of the hand made, salmon themed mugs, is much appreciated.

-As many SEP teams are led by aging volunteers, as the retired folks love to do useful things (and thus have more “free” time to offer) I find the best education upcoming generation of volunteers (who look to eventually replace outgoing team mates) can get is from the DFO level of experts! The presentations and workshops are the best method to provide the most current best practices to most new volunteers as well excellent updates for the current streamkeepers and hatchery supporters.

- Volunteers are willing to travel great distances at their own expense to attend these learning opportunities

- These workshops let us know that DFO appreciates and respects the thousands of volunteer hours contribute to the health of salmonid stocks
- Workshops support the environmental and community educational work of volunteers by providing opportunities to learn from experts, scientists and fellow volunteers
- Cancelling SEP workshops sends the message that DFO does not value the work of volunteer stream stewards

-How important is it to your group that the SEP Community Workshop 2025 be held this Spring as per the established biennial schedule?

It would great to have spring SEP2025.

-Have past SEP Community Workshops been of value to you, to your group? **It's an excellent venue for cross exchange of ideas, best practices, emerging knowledge**

-Is it important to have this in-person or would an online version be a replacement? **In-person is definitely preferable; it's about being together and having time for informal and formal conversations**

I look forward to hearing more.

-Have not missed a workshop since 1995 and the only downside was the necessity of a virtual workshop in 2021. The educational sessions are invaluable in bringing us up to date on new techniques and opportunities. The interaction with other streamkeepers/enhancement people also uncovers new information, some of which is enlightening to DFO attendants. Please don't break the cycle as this often is the omen of a downward death cycle of a very valuable

program.

- I have worked for, or have been involved with SEP for 45 years. The SEP Community Workshops are the essential heart & soul of the program. Over the decades governments, policies and personnel have changed but the continuous thread binding the volunteers, their groups and other groups together are the Workshops. Attendance by DFOSEP employees is also critical as it helps orient new staff to the CIP folks, and the veteran DFO staff gets to reaffirm their relationships with the community.

-Many of us have attended over the years and find them incredibly helpful. Not only in learning new info and new skills, but simply the experience of being with others who understand what we do. It is an extraordinary experience. In no way would online replace this. It is unfortunate to hear this since most of us in our group are volunteers putting in our own time to do our stewardship and paying our own way, accommodation etc. to go to SEPS.

There has to be a perk to the hundreds of hours many of us are doing in a year, some more, this is important to us!!! Super important to value volunteers. These events are just perfect. Sure hope you can find your way forward to keep them going.

-As a working girl who needs to book off for vacation time still...

I am wondering if there is a SEP/DFO weekend coming up this year, and if so, date/place please!! I hope you have had some restful days over these holidays!!

Cheers,

-Will there be a SEP workshop in 2025? Who should interested members contact? Our hatchery is undergoing a major operational change and we have a great need for training and peer support. The SEP conference is a vital link between our organizations.

-I hope you are well. I am just checking in to see if there is going to be a workshop/conference for SEP this coming spring? If so, what dates is it? I would like to get this in our calendar ASAP so staff can attend.

-I have found the in-person SEP workshops truly invaluable. They provide streamkeepers and SEP volunteers with important opportunities for education and networking. Mossom's water quality monitoring program and our decision to pursue streamkeeper training were influenced by one of the workshop sessions offered at SEP Nanaimo in 2019.

Building in-person connections with other streamkeepers, SEP volunteers, and DFO helps foster and develop relationships that are critical to support the important work that streamkeepers and SEP volunteers do. In-person workshops allow for improved teamwork and collaboration, opportunities for hands-on learning, better resource accessibility, and improved engagement.

I've met colleagues, outside of SEP, who attended the SEP conference in Port Hardy and reported how much they gleaned from the event. They spoke highly about the workshops they

attended and how inspired they were from the conversations they had with streamkeepers, SEP volunteers, and DFO volunteers.

Online workshops do not offer the same opportunities for networking, connection, and engagement that an in-person event does. It would be a shame to see this important event discontinued due to funding concerns.

-I saw that you'll be hosting the SEP community workshop in May and that's something I would have loved to be at. Maybe a speaker or topic around how important water planning is going to be moving forward to ensure sustainable salmon populations and how the volunteer community should/could be thinking about water planning as an important tool in the salmon enhancement toolbox (and their potential role.....)

-I really enjoyed the Port Hardy workshop and am looking forward to attending the next one. Any clues as to where that will be?????