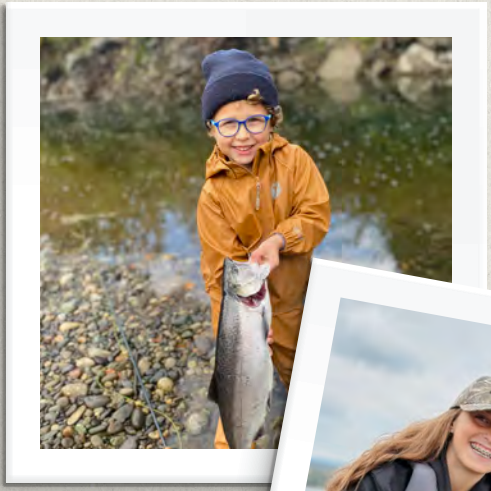
Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC



2025-26

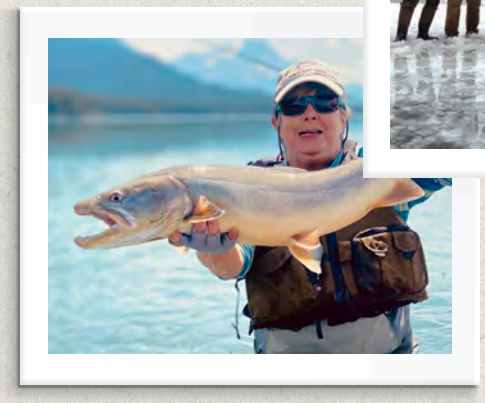
ANNUAL REPORT















Our mandate: To enhance and conserve British Columbia's freshwater fisheries for the benefit of the public.

Message from our President and Board Chair

On behalf of our Board of Directors and senior management team, we are pleased to present the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC's 2025-2026 annual report, providing the financial overview of our organization, and highlighting some of our accomplishments over the past year.

The 2025-2026 fishing season was a positive one on many fronts. Near-record numbers of licence sales resulted in higher revenue than forecast. We celebrated 20 years of the Learn to Fish program, which has introduced 442,000 new anglers to fishing since its inception. And we met the provincial government's stocking requests, releasing 5.1 million fish into lakes around B.C.

To ensure that the Freshwater Fisheries Society continues to grow and release high-quality fish from our hatcheries, we have been planning for major capital projects across most of our facilities. Changes to our Summerland Trout Hatchery were announced for 2026, with more projects coming at our other hatcheries in the coming years. Our organization is committed to investing in renovations and upgrades to both improve energy and water conservation at our hatchery facilities and optimize fish production for the provincial stocking program.

In 2025, the Society also began working with provincial fisheries managers to initiate a systematic review of all lakes currently being stocked. The purpose of this review is to ensure the most effective and efficient use of hatchery fish in stocked lakes while not compromising the quality of B.C.'s recreational fisheries.

In March, the Province of B.C. transitioned the angling e-licence system to the Wildlife Information and Licensing Data (WILD) system. With an estimated 70% of the nearly 380,000 annual, eight-day, and one-day licences bought for the 2025-2026 fishing season being purchased online, we welcome a streamlined and improved licencing system. We acknowledge the provincial government's successful roll-out of the new system, and trust the changes will support the management and administration of B.C.'s recreational fisheries.

We would like to thank our board, management team, and employees for their exceptional work supporting B.C.'s diverse and thriving freshwater recreational fisheries. The culture of innovation and care shown throughout our organization helps ensure that resident and visiting anglers get to enjoy some of the best freshwater fisheries in North America. We also wish to thank the organizations and partners who worked with us over this past year. Many have been strong supporters of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC for years, and countless projects and programs highlighted in this report would not be possible without them! Finally, we are thankful to the anglers of British Columbia. By purchasing a fishing licence, you have helped fund our work. We wish you tight lines, and many more years of fishing in beautiful British Columbia.



ANDREW WILSON
PRESIDENT



AL GORLEY
CHAIR

About Us

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is registered under the B.C. Societies Act and operates as a non-profit organization, following the transformation of British Columbia's provincial hatchery program in 2003. Under a 30-year agreement, the provincial government retains management authority over B.C.'s freshwater fisheries, while fish culture, fish health, and other biological and technical services are delivered by the Society.

Our work is largely funded through freshwater fishing licence fees. Every licence purchased supports research, conservation, and educational initiatives; improves angler access; and helps deliver the provincial fish stocking program.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors oversees the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. The Board is comprised of up to six independent members, two members appointed by the Province, and the Society's president. The Board sets policy, provides strategic direction, and monitors the financial and operational health of the organization. The Board of Directors also selects new independent members. The president is a non-voting director responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the organization.

Board members for 2025-2026 are:

George Iwama, *Outgoing Chair*
Al Gorley, *Incoming Chair*
Jamie Ross, *Vice Chair*
Murray Jacobs, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Steve Matthews, *Director*
Mike Ramsay, *Director*
Kathy Ruddick, *Director*
Hillary Ward, *Director*
Andrew Wilson, *President*

Senior Management Team

The President and senior management team are responsible for all operations and programs that the Society delivers. We employ 71 full-time and 51 seasonal staff across our three divisions. Senior management team members for 2025-2026 are:

Andrew Wilson, *President*
Tammy Longbottom, *Director, Human Resources*
Natalie Power, *Vice President, Finance and Information*
Tim Yesaki, *Vice President, Operations*
Adrian Clarke, *Vice President, Science and Recreational Fishing Development*

Business Divisions

Hatchery Operations

We own and operate six major fish hatcheries located in Duncan, Abbotsford, Summerland, Clearwater, Fort Steele, and Vanderhoof. Our hatcheries raise and release trout, char, and kokanee into nearly 800 lakes around the province for the recreational stocking program. The Freshwater Fisheries Society also provides recovery and conservation programs for endangered species, such as white sturgeon. Most of our hatcheries welcome visitors, and offer self-guided tours.

Science & Recreational Fishing Development

Our science and outreach staff provide professional support and leadership for program evaluation, applied research, planning, and development. As well, this division oversees projects to improve access to fisheries and the delivery of our Learn to Fish program.

Corporate Services

Based out of Victoria, this division provides financial, information systems, marketing and communication, human resources, payroll, and administrative coordination to support the Society's business.

Year in Review



1

Recruiting, retaining, and reactivating freshwater anglers



Learn to Fish

In 2025, the Freshwater Fisheries Society celebrated 20 years of delivering the Learn to Fish program. And what a good year! Our instructors taught a record 1,124 sessions to 34,088 participants, including 21,258 youth and 12,830 adults. The original program was developed in 2006 in response to the documented decline in angling activity that followed recreational fishing's peak popularity in the mid-1990s.

In addition to the basics of how, when, and where to catch fish, participants learn about licensing and regulations, fish identification, and proper fish handling. At the end of every class, attendees get to practice what they've learned with hands-on fishing time.

Sessions are delivered to youth and their families, school-children, and community groups, and take place at our hatchery fishing ponds as well as at lakes in municipal, regional, and provincial parks throughout British Columbia. Since its inception, 442,000 new anglers have taken part in the program.

Thanks to the generous support of our title sponsors and funders – the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, B.C. Chrysler Dealers, Columbia Basin Trust, Yamaha, Luhr Jensen, Teck Highland Valley Copper, BC Parks Licence Plate Program, Backroad Maps, Bass Pro Shops, and Canada Summer Jobs – we are able to offer subsidized or free programs to all participants.



380,000 annual, eight-day, and one-day licenses were purchased for the 2025-2026 fishing season – a 6% increase in the number of basic licenses purchased over the previous year.

Improving Access to Recreational Fisheries

For more than 10 years, we've leveraged funding and support from federal, provincial, and regional governments, as well as local fishing clubs and organizations, to invest in more than 80 fishing docks, 26 boat launches, and improvements in road access. Over the past five years alone, our investment of $881,000 has helped leverage an additional $2,944,967 from grant programs and partner contributions to support infrastructure improvements that help make fishing more accessible for everyone in British Columbia.



In the fall of 2025, we completed two years of projects that were funded primarily through a $250,000 grant from the federal Pacific Economic Development Canada Tourism Growth Program. Under this grant, improvements to public fishing access were focussed on the Omineca, Cariboo, and Skeena regions.

- Seven new fishing docks were installed: three in the Omineca Region (at Windy Point, Clear, and Camp lakes); three in the Skeena Region (at Irrigation Lake, along with two docks at Kager Lake); and one at Nyland Lake in the Cariboo Region.
- To enhance access to a fishing dock previously installed in 2024, a new Recreation Sites and Trails day-use area was developed at Sheridan Lake in the Cariboo Region. The project included construction of a parking area, picnic tables, trail connections, and washroom facilities, creating a more welcoming destination for visitors.
- In the Skeena Region, a 1.6-kilometre section of heavily rutted and muddy road leading to Barrett Lake received significant upgrades to address longstanding drainage issues. Improvements included grading, ditching, and the installation of 10 culverts. At Helen Lake, grading and additional fill have improved conditions for launching trailered boats.

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC also installed a new fishing dock at Rolley Lake in the Lower Mainland.







Fishing BC Cooperative Marketing Partnership

Fishing BC entered its tenth year as a sector association that promotes British Columbia as a premier fishing tourism destination. Established in 2016 by the Freshwater Fisheries Society, BC Fishing Tourism Association, and Sport Fishing Institute of BC, the group receives matched funding from Destination BC's Cooperative Marketing Partnership Program.

Fishing BC strengthens industry collaboration, aligns marketing efforts with provincial and regional strategies, and raises the profile of a tourism sector that supports communities throughout the province, particularly in rural areas. In 2025-2026, the campaign included investment from 15 community and regional tourism destinations and more than 50 fishing tourism businesses across the province. Marketing efforts focussed on encouraging regional travel by B.C. anglers while also attracting and increasing visits from key Canadian and U.S. markets.

With Destination Canada reporting record-breaking tourism numbers in 2025, the investment in the fishing tourism sector was reflected in the strong growth coming from Canadians travelling outside of their home provinces. The number of visiting Canadians purchasing a fishing licence in British Columbia for the 2025-2026 season was up 14% over the previous year.

2

Supporting diverse and thriving recreational fisheries



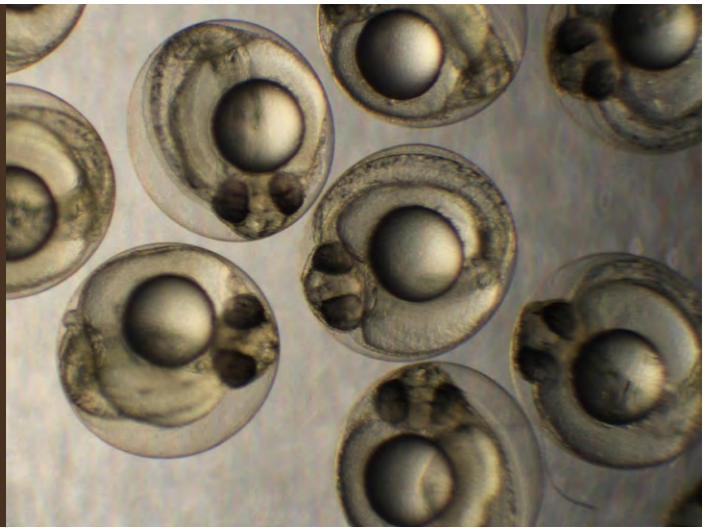
Evaluating Stocked Fisheries

In 2025, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC allocated $344,000 for the evaluation and enhancement of small lakes based on regional and provincial priorities. This included biological and effort assessments of key stocked lakes in all nine administrative regions, as well as support of a fertilization initiative to improve fish growth on select Vancouver Island lakes. In addition, this funding is supporting the evaluation of fishing-effort response to improvements in lake access. The information from these projects will be used to inform stocking decisions, fishing regulations, and other operational considerations made by managers and biologists with the provincial fisheries program.



Upper Kootenay Burbot Recovery Initiative

A burbot conservation fish-culture initiative for the Upper Kootenay passed a proof-of-concept trial, and has been expanded into a multi-year project. Led by the Ktunaxa Nation Council and Province of B.C., funding has been secured for a five-year agreement to rear wild burbot juveniles in captivity at the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC's Kootenay Trout Hatchery location.



Habitat Restoration in the Nechako River

A common effect of flow regulation by dams is an accumulation of sand and fine sediment, which infills the pore spaces between larger gravel and cobbles in the riverbed. These spaces are essential for larval white sturgeon, since they provide newly hatched sturgeon an environment that is safe from predators.

In 2025, the Freshwater Fisheries Society entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to help facilitate and administer habitat restoration work of the gravel beds in the Nechako River. Work included fabricating a gravel cleaning apparatus; cleaning and restoring the substrate within a spawning reach of the Nechako River; taking core samples of the riverbed to support future planning and evaluation; and video monitoring of the restoration. The work is being done in partnership with Carrier Sekani Tribal Council through the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative Technical Working Group.





Scholarships

Since 2008, the Society has awarded $97,500 in scholarships, supporting 60 students at various levels of post-secondary education. The scholarships recognize outstanding commitment to academic pursuits in the field of freshwater fisheries, and are available to students enrolled in fish culture or natural resource management programs at educational institutions in British Columbia. Four students received $1,500 in tuition credit to advance their academic pursuits in 2025.

3

Innovative and responsible freshwater fish culture

Raising and Releasing Fish to Support Recreational Fisheries

Each year, in consultation with provincial fisheries biologists, we stock trout, kokanee, and char – from fry to a catchable size – to provide recreational fisheries for B.C. anglers. Depending upon the fishing pressure and lake productivity, some lakes may be stocked many times per year, while other lakes are only stocked every two or three years. In the fiscal year 2025-2026, our hatcheries raised and released 5.1 million fish into 661 lakes around the province.

To support the Province's anadromous steelhead program, we also assisted in the release of juvenile fish into a small number of coastal streams. Fish for the steelhead program are raised in a combination of Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC), Community, and Federal hatcheries.

Small Lakes Recreational Stocking

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION	COASTAL & WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT		EASTERN BROOK TROUT		KOKANEE		RAINBOW TROUT	
	FISH STOCKED	LAKES STOCKED	FISH STOCKED	LAKES STOCKED	FISH STOCKED	LAKES STOCKED	FISH STOCKED	LAKES STOCKED
Vancouver Island	8,480	8			6,948	2	138,257	48
Lower Mainland	4,400	6					93,952	33
Thompson			104,750	28	194,700	16	742,950	150
Okanagan			26,950	17	12,800	4	437,223	110
Kootenay-Boundary	71,781	12	14,250	9	137,700	15	228,134	82
Cariboo			50,500	7	1,007,639	19	1,210,875	93
Skeena			19,000	5	4,300	2	53,500	15
Omineca			53,250	10	85,800	4	199,000	40
Peace			12,000	3			24,700	11
TOTAL	**84,661**	**26**	**280,700**	**79**	**1,449,887**	**62**	**3,128,591**	**582**

Coastal Rivers Recreational Stocking

ADMINISTRATIVE REGION	PROGRAM	STEELHEAD	
		FISH STOCKED	RIVERS STOCKED
West Coast – Vancouver Island	Federal	49,940	1
	Community		
	FFSBC		
South Coast – Lower Mainland	Federal	149,802	4
	Community	18,700	1
	FFSBC	57,459	2
TOTAL		**275,901**	**8**

Conservation stocking support for recovery programs

In addition to the recreational stocking program, we provide conservation recovery support to the Province for endangered species. In 2025-2026, we provided services to assist in recovery initiatives for the following sturgeon populations:

- Nechako white sturgeon – 330 juveniles released into the Nechako Watershed
- Columbia white sturgeon – 120 juveniles released into the mid- and upper-Columbia system









Automating Fish Measurements

Automated fish measurement technology continues to be developed and refined in our hatcheries. This helps staff collect length, weight, and other biological information during routine fish movements and sample counts. By capturing more comprehensive and accurate biological data – without increasing fish-handling time or staff effort – the technology will help strengthen monitoring programs, support more informed management decisions, improve data quality, and increase the efficiency of routine hatchery operations.

The adoption and use of the new technology enables us to quantify fish attributes at a scale that was previously impractical, and supports our strategic objective to produce high-quality fish to fulfill provincial recreational fishery and conservation goals.



Partners and Sponsors

Our primary and contractual partner is the Province of B.C. through the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. We work closely with and support the province's Fish and Wildlife Branch and regional fisheries biologists.

To deliver many of the research, outreach, and conservation initiatives we are involved in, we rely upon the financial support of our valued partners and sponsors.

Research and Development

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Simon Fraser University

University of British Columbia

University of British Columbia – Okanagan Campus

University of Victoria

Angler Access

District of Houston

Pacific Economic Development Canada

Province of British Columbia

Learn to Fish and Outreach Programs

Backroad Maps

Bass Pro Shops

B.C. Chrysler Dealers Association

BC Parks Licence Plate Program

B.C. Wildlife Federation

Canada Summer Jobs

City of Victoria

Columbia Basin Trust

Victoria Fish and Game Protective Association

Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation

Luhr Jensen and 13 Fishing

Mawer Investment Management Ltd

Mosaic Forest Management

Pacific Salmon Foundation

Teck Highland Valley Copper

Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd

Sturgeon and Kokanee Recovery Programs

BC Hydro

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

District of Vanderhoof

Ktunaxa Nation Council

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

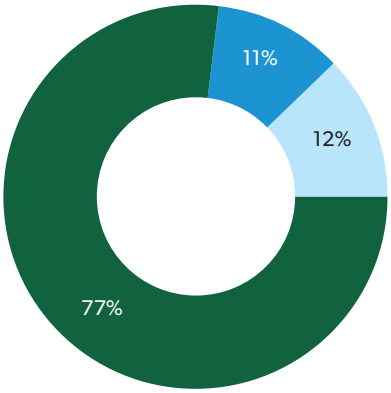
Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund

Rio Tinto

2025-26 Financial Results

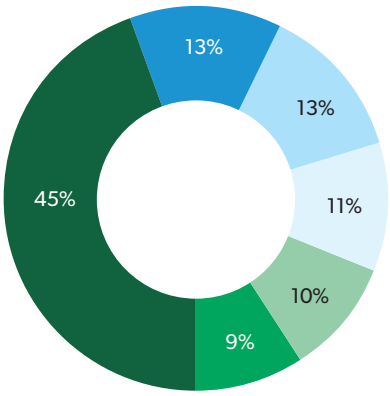
Revenue Sources ('000)

Freshwater Fishing Licence Fees	$	12,758
Province of B.C.		1,788
Partners and Sponsors		2,031
TOTAL	**$**	**16,577**



Program Costs ('000)

Recreational Stocking Program	$	7,073
Administration and Support Services		2,071
Conservation and Restoration		2,011
Outreach, Marketing and Development		1,757
Facility Upgrades and Innovation		1,581
Research		1,387
TOTAL	**$**	**15,880**



For a complete set of audited financial statements, please contact the Vice President, Finance and Information at (250) 414-4212.















PHOTO CREDITS

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Your licence dollars at work.

100% of freshwater fishing licence fees go toward making fishing in B.C. even better.



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