The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC was formed as a non-profit organization on March 26, 2003. Working in partnership with government, industry, and anglers, our goal is to make fishing in B.C. even better through the enhancement and conservation of B.C.’s freshwater fish resources.
On behalf of the Board of Directors and our senior management team, we are pleased to present the 2019-20 annual report for the Freshwater Fisheries Society.

While our revenue has remained flat over the past few years, inflationary price pressures have caused strains to our budget. We are committed to maintaining the quality of our services while finding ways to reduce cost and improve efficiencies. Working with our partners in government, we are also looking for ways to maintain and enhance our financial position through new and existing revenue sources.

We’d like to take this opportunity to thank our Board of Directors, government, academic partners, sponsors, angling clubs, and staff for their support and contributions to our successes. We’d also like to thank the anglers of British Columbia who purchase freshwater fishing licences each year. The majority of our revenue comes through your licence fees. This report outlines just some of the ways we’re investing these funds back into the resource. We encourage you to drop us a line and let us know how we’re doing.

Andrew Wilson, President
Jon Pew, Chair
Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC

100% of freshwater fishing licence fees are invested back into the resource.
THE SOCIETY AT A GLANCE

Board of Directors
The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is governed by a Board of Directors. Our Board is comprised of up to five 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 president is a non-voting director responsible for the ongoing operations and management of the organization. New independent members are selected by the Board of Directors. Board members for 2019-2020 are:

Jon Pew, Chair
Gord Argue, Vice-Chair
Bill Camden, Secretary/Treasurer
Jamie Ross, Director
George Iwama, Director

Scott Barrett, Director
(provincial government appointment)

Mike Ramsay, Director
(provincial government appointment)

Andrew Wilson, President

Senior Management Team
The President and senior management team are responsible for all operations and programs delivered by the Society. We employ 77 full-time staff and 48 seasonal staff across our four divisions. Senior management team members for 2019-2020 are:

Andrew Wilson, President

Tammy Longbottom, Director, Human Resources

Natalie Power, Chief Finance and Information Officer

Adrian Clarke, Vice President, Science Division

Tim Yesaki, Vice President, Operations Division

Dana Atagi, Vice President, Sport Fishing Division
Learn to Fish and Rod Loan

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is working to remove barriers to fishing, and to engage and inspire a whole new generation of anglers through our outreach programs. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, funders, and partners, we’re able to deliver most of these programs to new anglers free of charge.

Learn to Fish was developed in 2006 in response to the documented sharp decline in angler participation throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. Since the program’s inception, we have taught 311,850 youth and their families the basics of how, when, and where to catch fish in fresh water.

30,450 Learn to Fish participants at 844 different sessions across the province.

In 2019, 30,450 new anglers participated in the Learn to Fish program, of which 60% were youth and 40% were adults. Our outreach team taught 844 sessions across the province, including new ones in the Peace Region during the summer of 2019.

Through our Rod Loan program, new anglers can try fishing without having to purchase gear. Fifteen Tourism Visitor Centres and five Freshwater Fisheries Society hatcheries loaned out Luhr Jensen spinning rods with matching reels, along with a box of basic fishing tackle. Anglers can borrow this fishing gear for a few hours or for the week.

Improving Angler Access

Working with provincial and regional governments, partners, and anglers, we’ve been investing in trails, boat launches, and fishing docks, thus ensuring that everyone – from avid anglers to beginners – has access to their local freshwater fisheries.

In 2019, we supported the installation of six new fishing docks: Isobel and Skmana lakes (Thompson-Nicola region); Dugan Lake (Cariboo region); Lazy and Susan lakes (Kootenay region); and Yellow Lake (Okanagan region). With additional investments in their pathways and ramps, the docks at Isobel and Yellow lakes are accessible to anglers in wheelchairs.

Six new fishing docks. Since 2015, docks have been installed in 42 communities across the province.
Community Fishing Pond

In 2019, we welcomed our first visitors to the new community fishing pond at our Clearwater Trout Hatchery. Over 1,900 anglers cast their lines during drop-in fishing, birthday parties, and school and community Learn to Fish programs. And thanks to funding from the Wells Gray Community Forest Association, the construction of a large pavilion provides shelter as well as a fantastic outdoor classroom for educational programs.

353,500 licenced freshwater anglers. 80% are B.C. residents.

Fishing BC – Co-operative Partnership to Market B.C.’s Fishing Tourism Sector

In 2019-20 (as a part of Destination BC’s Co-operative Marketing Partnership Program), an affiliation of the BC Fishing Resorts and Outfitters Association, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, and Sport Fishing Institute of BC marked its fourth year of promoting the fishing tourism sector. The intent of this co-operative alliance is to drive industry collaboration, align industry marketing efforts with provincial and regional strategies, and connect industry to the provincial brand.

The creation of Fishing BC has enabled the fishing industry to more effectively market sport fishing provincially, nationally, and internationally; to raise the profile of the sector; and to increase angling-related economic activity throughout rural B.C. In 2019-20, 16 community and regional tourism partners took part in this marketing program. Campbell River, Chilliwack, Fernie, Fishing Highway 24, Golden, Kamloops, Nelson, Port Hardy, Prince George, Squamish, Sunshine Coast, Tofino, and Ucluelet continued their partnership, with Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Cranbrook, and Harrison Hot Springs joining the expanding program.
70th Northwest Fish Culture Conference

From December 3rd – 5th, 2019, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC hosted 362 attendees at the 70th Annual Northwest Fish Culture Conference in Victoria. Professionals from government, Indigenous, and privately run hatchery facilities throughout the Pacific Northwest came to learn about advances in fish culture techniques and applications. Over the three-day meeting, industry experts presented current research on fish-production strategies; fish health and nutrition; monitoring and assessment; genetics and physiology; conservation culture; and advances in infrastructure and hatchery technology.

New Fish Trap for Dragon Lake Egg Station

In addition to our six freshwater fish hatcheries, we operate a seasonal trout distribution centre in Prince George, and nine egg-collection stations situated throughout the province. In the summer of 2019, once egg collection was finished, we replaced the aging fish trap at our Dragon Lake station. The new fish trap will improve the conditions for adult rainbow trout, which are held in the trap prior to spawning each spring.
Raising and Releasing Fish

In consultation with provincial fisheries biologists, we stock trout, kokanee, and char into 800 lakes around the province. In 2019-2020, our hatcheries raised and released over 4.8 million fish – from fry to catchable-sized – to support the provincial recreational stocking program. We also assist in stocking juvenile steelhead and coastal cutthroat trout in a small number of coastal streams to support the Province’s searun trout enhancement efforts.

SMALL LAKES RECREATIONAL STOCKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Region</th>
<th>Coastal &amp; Westslope Cutthroat</th>
<th>Eastern Brook Trout</th>
<th>Kokanee</th>
<th>Rainbow Trout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FISH STOCKED</td>
<td>LAKES STOCKED</td>
<td>FISH STOCKED</td>
<td>LAKES STOCKED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td>10,847</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>209,508</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>87,825</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>154,800</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>138,850</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okanagan</td>
<td>28,400</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay-Boundary</td>
<td>47,105</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15,750</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>69,500</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>756,398</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeena</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omineca</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15,400</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35,195</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>62,022</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>358,450</td>
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COASTAL RIVERS RECREATIONAL STOCKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Region</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Steelhead</th>
<th>Anadromous Cutthroat</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FISH STOCKED</td>
<td>RIVERS STOCKED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast – Vancouver Island</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>21,616</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FFSBC</td>
<td>20,139</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Coast – Lower Mainland</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>197,756</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>46,966</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FFSBC</td>
<td>39,256</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeena</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>47,562</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>391,156</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservation Stocking

In addition to the recreational stocking program, we are a partner with the Province in special recovery programs for endangered species such as white sturgeon in the Nechako and Columbia rivers.

- 606 juvenile Nechako white sturgeon into the Nechako River
- 921 juvenile Columbia white sturgeon into the Upper Columbia system
- 2,422,199 eggs and 139,124 kokanee fry for the Kootenay Lake recovery initiative
Fisheries Committee Projects

The Freshwater Fisheries Society has supported joint provincial-Freshwater Fisheries Society fisheries committees for the past five years. Each year, fisheries biologists from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development, the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy, and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC identify and prioritize projects that benefit large lake, small lake, and river recreational fisheries.

Projects approved for funding must meet one or more of the following objectives:

1. Enhance the fishing experience.
2. Attract and maintain public participation in recreational fishing.
3. Maintain and improve the variety of fishing options available to the public.
4. Maintain and restore healthy wild and enhanced fish stocks to support freshwater fisheries.
5. Seek opportunities to support shared stewardship initiatives.
6. Improve delivery of the freshwater fisheries program.

In 2019-2020, the fisheries committees recommended 57 projects: 22 small lakes projects (with a $395,000 budget), 19 large lakes projects (with a $420,000 budget), and 16 rivers projects (with a $363,000 budget).

Enhanced Compliance and Enforcement

2019 was the final year of a five-year agreement between the Freshwater Fisheries Society and the Conservation Officer Service, in which enhanced compliance and enforcement took place on key waterbodies in the Kootenay-Boundary, Thompson-Cariboo, Okanagan, South Coast, and Skeena regions. The objective of the program was to achieve a higher level of public education, awareness, and compliance with sport fishing regulations.

Between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, Conservation Officers spent an additional 2,800 hours on fisheries compliance and enforcement activities. Of the 6,429 anglers checked, 898 were in non-compliance, resulting in 569 warning tickets, 236 federal Fisheries Act violations tickets, and 182 BC Wildlife Act/license violation tickets.

Overall, non-compliance rates have decreased over the program’s five years. The proportion of anglers receiving tickets for licence violations has dropped from 5.1% (2015) to 2.8% in recent years. The provincial non-compliance rate for all violations was 14% in 2019, an improvement over the 14.3% in 2018-19, 16.1% in 2017-18, and 20.9% in 2016-17.
Research

Our scientists and technicians lead program evaluation and applied research projects. They also provide planning and professional support. We have established partnerships with other research institutions and university academics to further expand our knowledge, and to improve the management of sustainable freshwater fisheries in British Columbia.

One of the biggest challenges facing the sustainability of recreational fisheries in the future is global heating and the resulting environmental change. With funding from Genome Canada, and in partnership with the University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, University of Ottawa, and Carleton University, we’re developing genomic tools and policy recommendations to help manage and preserve the genetic diversity of rainbow trout, and to sustain the recreational fishery. In the past year, we sequenced genomes of rainbow trout and steelhead populations across B.C. and identified tolerances to low oxygen and high temperatures amongst the rainbow trout strains we stock.

Native Trout Stewardship Initiative

In 2019, the first year of the Native Trout Stewardship Initiative, six organizations/groups were awarded funding for trout conservation activities. Under this pilot program, stewardship groups can apply for grants to support projects that protect, conserve, and recover native trout species in B.C. watersheds. The current focus is on coastal cutthroat trout in urban and developed areas, but other native trout projects will be considered where funds are available. In 2019, we awarded $38,875 in grants.

Eligible activities include:

• Native trout population assessments and monitoring

• Riparian and instream habitat protection and restoration, including barrier removal and flow recovery (on-the-ground or planning activities are eligible)

Scholarships

Since 2008, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC has awarded over $66,000 in scholarships to 39 students. The scholarships recognize outstanding commitment to academic pursuits in the field of freshwater fisheries. For the 2019-20 academic year, we awarded four scholarships, with a value of $1,500 each, to four deserving recipients.
PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Our primary and contractual partner is the Province of B.C. through the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development. 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 multiple partners and sponsors.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
Carleton University
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Genome BC
Genome Canada
MITACS Accelerate Program
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council
Piscine Energetics
Simon Fraser University
Thompson Rivers University
University of British Columbia
University of British Columbia Okanagan
University of Calgary
University of Ottawa
University of Victoria

ANGLER ACCESS
BC Parks
Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development, Recreation Sites and Trails BC
Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
LEARN TO FISH AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS
Columbia Basin Trust
Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
BC Ram Dealers
Luhr Jensen
Teck Highland Valley Copper
Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd.
Canada Summer Jobs
Wells Gray Community Forest Association
Pacific Salmon Foundation
Backroad Mapbooks
BC Wildlife Federation
Province of BC
BC Parks
City of Victoria

STURGEON AND KOKANEE RECOVERY PROGRAMS
BC Hydro
Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council
District of Vanderhoof
Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
Nechako Environmental Enhancement Fund
Rio Tinto
**Revenue Sources (’000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount ($1,000)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater Fishing Licence Fees</td>
<td>10,460</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners and Sponsors</td>
<td>1,544</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province of B.C. Conservation Grant</td>
<td>1,416</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,420</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Program Costs (’000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount ($1,000)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Stocking Program</td>
<td>5,485</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation and Restoration</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>1,828</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach, Marketing and Development</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Committee Projects</td>
<td>1,537</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Upgrades and Innovation</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,243</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a complete set of audited financial statements and the audit report, please contact the Chief Finance and Information Officer at (250) 414-4212.
PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: M. McPhee
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A. Wolff, K. Krahn, M. Boucher, T. Godin,
G. Gontice, N. Franceva
Your licence dollars at work.
100% of freshwater fishing licence fees go toward making fishing in B.C. even better.