

2023

2023-2028

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025



Freshwater Fisheries
Society of BC

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Vision

The best freshwater fisheries in North America.

Mandate

To enhance and conserve B.C.'s freshwater fisheries for the benefit of the public.





President's message

This document represents the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC's fourth Strategic Plan. Since our inception in 2003, we have experienced remarkable changes as an organization. Over the last five years alone, we have seen record-breaking droughts, temperatures, wildfires, and floods around the province that have affected not only fish and their habitats, but also the ability of anglers to access fisheries. Furthermore, we have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a profound impact on our organization, partners, and society as a whole. Our experiences over the past five years have significantly affected our business and the lives of our key clients, the anglers of British Columbia.

Regardless, I continue to be impressed with the resiliency of anglers in this province! Despite the restrictions and challenges of the past five years, residents still got out to enjoy freshwater fishing. It is clear that fishing remains a very desirable activity, providing many occasions to enjoy the outdoors with friends and family, as well as to harvest a healthy, sustainable source of food.

Our organization is considering ways that we can build on established programs and services to incorporate resiliency in delivery. We want to ensure that all British Columbians can take advantage of the fantastic outdoor adventures that freshwater fisheries can provide. This means finding ways to improve accessibility, whether via infrastructure (such as improved roads, docks, and launch sites) or through education and enhanced tools (like Learn to Fish and rod loan programs). It also means reaching out to groups and communities that traditionally may not have been able to access fisheries as readily as others.

We recognize that conservation has become increasingly important for many British Columbians as they head outdoors. We will continue to work with our



government partner, the Province of B.C., to support efforts to recover and protect native fish species and their habitats where we can provide expertise and services. Furthermore, we will seek to build and maintain partnerships to deliver on-the-ground conservation initiatives for freshwater fish. We will also examine and implement ways to reduce our environmental footprint and improve efficiencies while supporting our mandate.

In terms of our delivery model for fisheries management, the Freshwater Fisheries Society is unique in North America. We enjoy a singular relationship with the Province of B.C. where we deliver key aspects of the fisheries program, including recreational fish stocking and conservation services. We will continue to invest in research and development to achieve conservation objectives, while also ensuring that the fish we are producing meet the needs of anglers and are robust in the face of climate change.

Freshwater angling provides major social and economic benefits across the entire province. The recreational and conservation investments that we make seek to expand these benefits in a sustainable way. To that end, we will continue to invest in leading-edge technology that will allow us to continue to improve the quality of the fish we produce.

I am very proud of our organization. As we move forward into our 20th year as an independent, not-for-profit Society, we will continue to benefit from the passion and skills that our employees bring to their jobs every day. Over the next five years, this strategic plan will chart where we intend to focus our efforts and resources to deliver our vision for the best freshwater recreational fisheries in North America.

Who we are

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC was registered under the B.C. Societies Act in March 2003, transforming British Columbia's provincial hatchery program into a private non-profit organization. Under a 30-year contract, the provincial government retained management authority of B.C.'s freshwater fisheries while fish culture, fish health, and other biological and technical services were transferred to the Society.

While the basic structure of our Society hasn't changed since our formation, we have matured as an organization. Under an amended agreement signed between the Province and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC in 2015, 100% of the revenue generated from fishing licences is transferred to the Society, helping to fund a broader scope of programs and services that benefit recreational fisheries. While our core business remains focussed on the delivery of the provincial stocking program, the amended agreement allows us to work with provincial fisheries biologists on projects that improve both wild and stocked fisheries.

Our organization

Our Society is overseen by a seven-member Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of four independent members, two members appointed by the provincial government, and the Society's president, an ex-officio director. The Board sets policy, provides strategic direction, and monitors the financial and operational health of the organization. New independent members are selected by the Board of Directors.

The Society consists of three business divisions, with oversight by the President and Senior Management Team.

The Corporate Services division is based out of Victoria, and provides financial, marketing, and communication services. It is also responsible for human resource and administrative coordination, as well as information technology, to support the Society's business.

The Science and Recreational Fishing Development division provides professional support and leadership for program evaluation, applied research, planning, and development. As well, it oversees projects to improve access to fisheries and delivers our outreach programs, like Learn to Fish.

The Operations division oversees the delivery of our hatchery program from six major facilities, located in Clearwater, Duncan, Abbotsford, Summerland, Fort Steele, and Vanderhoof. Our hatcheries raise and release trout, char, and kokanee into more than 800 lakes around the province for the recreational stocking program. They also provide recovery and conservation programs for endangered species like white sturgeon.

Values

PASSION

Our dedication to the fish, wildlife, and outdoors of British Columbia motivates and unites us as an organization.

QUALITY

We will pursue ongoing improvements in the fish we rear, and in all aspects of our business, to maintain high standards in service delivery.

AGILITY

We will maintain flexibility and an innovative mindset to rapidly adjust to new and unforeseen opportunities and challenges. Our agility will safeguard our success as a non-profit organization.



Guiding principles

1. **Commitment to our angler community**

Our success relies on the angling community. Their continued support, engagement, and satisfaction are the core drivers of our organization.

2. **Strong conservation ethic**

Wild fish populations are the foundation of the freshwater fisheries resource in British Columbia. We strive to incorporate conservation of this resource in all aspects of our business as we pursue ways to develop and enhance recreational fisheries.

3. **Resilience to climate change, and reducing our environmental footprint**

Through research and innovation, we will continue to seek process efficiencies, reduce our overall environmental impacts, and adapt to the realities of a changing climate.

4. **Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity**

We value full and meaningful engagement of all individuals and groups. We strive to remove barriers and provide equitable access to fishing and employment to the diverse assemblage of people with different backgrounds, abilities, and identities who live in British Columbia.

5. **Rights of Indigenous peoples**

We will explore measures to build and sustain respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples. We will also support the Province with implementation of their reconciliation mandate.

6. **Collaborative relationships**

We endeavour to build and maintain meaningful partnerships with the Province and with like-minded groups, to develop capacity and to secure our viability as a not-for-profit organization.

Goals

Our anglers

Our clients are the anglers. Our top priorities are to recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers. We will seek opportunities to remove social and physical barriers to participation.

Our employees

Our success depends on the safety, retention, and well-being of our employees. We will strive to be an employer of choice, and to provide opportunities for individual growth.

Our finances

Our long-term viability as a non-profit organization demands that we manage our financial resources in a responsible and prudent manner. We will mitigate future uncertainties by maintaining low overhead, sufficient cashflow, liquidity, and sufficient contingencies.



Objectives



Objective 1

Recruit, retain, and reactivate freshwater anglers in British Columbia.

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC has received 100% of British Columbia’s freshwater fishing licence revenue since 2015. We will continue putting these dollars to work ensuring that experienced anglers remain satisfied and finding ways to engage new anglers. We want British Columbians to view fishing as a healthy, enjoyable pursuit that can provide many benefits without affecting environmental values. We will invest in enhancing the fishing experience and creating equitable access to fishing. We will develop outreach, educational tools and programs, and infrastructure to maximize the likelihood of new and prospective anglers taking up fishing and having successful experiences. Our goal is to promote and maintain a diverse angling community that is representative of British Columbia.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop and deliver media, programs, and tools that support the diversity of anglers who fish in our province.

- a. Analyze licence purchasing and participation trends, and determine strategies to increase retention rates among different angler groups.
- b. Undertake creel surveys and other studies to obtain feedback and input from anglers.
- c. Create angling content that supports the diversity of people who fish in our province.
- d. Identify and support fisheries that anglers describe as most valuable to them.

2. Recruit prospective anglers by determining and responding to needs, preferences, barriers, and suitable circumstances for participation.

- a. Undertake demographic research to address physical, social, and cultural barriers to fishing.
- b. Support initiatives and infrastructure improvements to make more fishing destinations accessible to all.
- c. Collaborate with BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails B.C., communities, Indigenous peoples, stakeholder groups, volunteers, and others to improve physical and social access to fishing.
- d. Support tools that link prospective anglers to opportunities.

3. Inspire youth and adults to take up fishing.

- a. Deliver Learn to Fish and other educational programs for youth and adult novices at our on-site community fishing ponds, local fishing destinations, and schools.
- b. Educate new and prospective anglers on licensing and regulations, ethics, methods and strategies, conservation, and stocked lake fisheries through in-person and online outreach.
- c. Promote recreational fishing to all socioeconomic groups as an enjoyable, affordable, healthy, and sustainable outdoor activity.



Objective 2

Support diverse and thriving freshwater recreational fisheries.

B.C. offers an outstanding diversity of wild and stocked fisheries in scenic natural and urban settings, ranging from large lakes and major rivers to small lakes and streams. Wild fish populations are the foundation of our freshwater fisheries resource and the recreational stocking program. We will invest in activities and provide technical expertise that support the creation, enhancement, maintenance, and recovery of these freshwater fisheries. We will support provincial fisheries managers to develop fisheries that can sustain increased angler effort and can divert pressure from overused fisheries and vulnerable wild fish stocks. These actions will help ensure that the highly valued freshwater fisheries resource provides social and economic benefits for the people of B.C. now and into the future. Protection, maintenance, and recovery of recreational fisheries require significant resources. We will seek to build and maintain partnerships with other agencies, stewardship groups, Indigenous peoples, and stakeholders to assist the Province in pursuing these endeavours.

STRATEGIES

1. **Deliver a provincial freshwater fish-stocking program that is responsive to changing environmental conditions, and appeals to a broad spectrum of anglers without compromising provincial conservation objectives.**
 - a. Evaluate stocking prescriptions to determine if they are meeting fishery objectives.
 - b. Adapt, develop, and maintain specialized fish strains that are suited to meet the needs of different fisheries and environments.
 - c. Support the Province in maintaining, developing, and diversifying recreational fishing through the implementation of new management prescriptions and strategies.
 - d. Strive for excellence in the health and quality of stocked fish to ensure that we meet recreational and conservation objectives.
2. **Support community economic diversification through investment in local fisheries.**
 - a. Promote easily accessible urban or near-urban fisheries.
 - b. Identify productive yet undervalued and underutilized lakes for access and infrastructure improvements, in both rural and urban communities, to help disperse fishing effort.
 - c. Engage with fishing retailers, e-licence vendors, and tourism operators who cater to anglers to identify ways to create and enhance recreational fisheries.
3. **Assist the Province in the conservation and restoration of B.C.'s wild freshwater fisheries.**
 - a. Collaborate with the Province and other partners to communicate the value of conservation activities and sustainable fishing practices.
 - b. Participate in conservation-centred technical committees to support and implement recovery plans where we hold technical expertise and/or where conservation fish culture is required.
 - c. Engage and support Indigenous groups and stakeholder organizations in conservation-focussed activities that target native recreational fish species (e.g., our Native Trout Stewardship Initiative).
 - d. Support conservation activities and compliance through partnerships, outreach, education, and promotion of best fishing practices.



Objective 3

Pursue excellence in the implementation of innovative and responsible freshwater fish culture.

We produce fish to support both the recreational stocking program and provincial conservation objectives. We will adapt our technologies and fish production strategies to respond to the evolving needs of these objectives. We emphasize environmental responsibility, cost efficiency, and high fish quality (where fish maintain excellent health, growth, and survival in a wide range of environments). We embrace a philosophy of innovation and continuous improvement and, where appropriate, will implement newly available technologies in fish culture, research, and the fish health and fish ageing labs. To ensure high performance in our fish hatcheries, we will continue to establish and maintain rigorous standards and operating procedures.

STRATEGIES

1. Produce high-quality fish to fulfill provincial recreational fishery and conservation goals.

- a. Collaborate with government fisheries managers to distribute fish and resources according to varying needs across the province.
- b. Evaluate fish and fish production metrics and processes to ensure we are producing high-quality fish in a responsible manner.
- c. Utilize an adaptive-management approach with our egg, rearing, and broodstock programs, and fish health and ageing lab services, to incorporate new information and operational changes.

2. Deliver current, efficient, innovative, and effective fish culture, health, and ageing services.

- a. Maintain and regularly update environmental and efficiency standards.
- b. Continue to develop and improve energy and water conservation, and carbon-emission reductions.
- c. Implement new technologies, methodologies, and infrastructure as appropriate to achieve process efficiencies, increase capabilities, and meet updated standards.

3. Optimize fish and egg production, broodstock performance, and fish release technology at hatchery facilities and egg stations.

- a. Maintain updated fish culture methods informed by scientific tools such as experimental research, literature review, and computer modelling.
- b. Collaborate across hatchery facilities to support information sharing and consistency in the delivery of culture practices including the development, implementation, and updating of standard operating procedures.



Objective 4

Foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive work environment that recruits and retains exceptional employees.

Our organizational success depends upon the recruitment and retention of motivated individuals with a diversity of skills and perspectives. Given our values, guiding principles, and culture, combined with the uniqueness of our organization, we strive to be an employer of choice. We will continue to foster a work environment that is safe, inclusive, and rewarding which embodies a culture of innovation and continuous learning. Our succession planning will seek to cultivate skills and abilities in our employees to support their career aspirations while collectively achieving our organizational vision.

STRATEGIES

1. Maintain workplace safety as our top priority throughout every level of the organization.

- a. Commit to continual updating and communication of our Safety Program.
- b. Provide required training and certifications.
- c. Ensure there are adequate resources to support this strategy.

2. Support equity, diversity, inclusion, and access throughout the organization.

- a. Improve awareness among staff through training.
- b. Continue to implement infrastructure changes that improve access for all.
- c. Foster a workplace culture of open-mindedness that respects and values the experiences and perspectives of others.
- d. Preserve inclusive and equitable recruitment practices.

3. Encourage and support professional development among all employees.

- a. Support and encourage ongoing leadership training and other professional development.
- b. Maintain excellence and innovation by ensuring that staff can stay current with new information through attendance at conferences, symposia, workshops, and continuing education.
- c. Create situations for structured mentorship and job shadowing.

- d. Invest in the skill and career development of auxiliary and new staff.
- e. Identify and plan for succession challenges by employing job-specific strategies to fill key positions.

4. Foster a positive and collaborative workplace culture.

- a. Promote teamwork by encouraging cross-divisional participation, experiences, and information-sharing.
- b. Ensure staff have the resources and support to innovate and increase efficiencies.
- c. Recognize individual needs to help staff achieve a work-life balance that promotes good mental health and sustainable productivity.
- d. Compensate employees fairly and acknowledge exceptional contributions.



Objective 5

Safeguard the long-term success of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC.

We are committed to delivering our mandate and maintaining the strong working relationship we have established with our contractual partner, the Province of B.C. Our direction and activities will align with provincial needs and contribute meaningfully to the provincial recreational fisheries program. The recreational fisheries sector is dynamic; we must be prepared to adapt and diversify in response to changes in revenue flows, societal preferences, and climate conditions. This can be achieved through diligent governance and management practices combined with partnerships with anglers, industry, academia, and Indigenous peoples. We will also seek ways to reduce our environmental footprint in all aspects of our business. In this way, we can ensure that our organization will continue to make a positive impact on society, our stakeholders, and our employees while maintaining environmental values and a strong economic position.

STRATEGIES

1. **Continue to build and foster collaborative partnerships that further our goals and those of the recreational fisheries program.**
 - a. Pursue options to strengthen our unique partnership with the Province of B.C.
 - b. Work closely with tourism partners to effectively market recreational fishing provincially, nationally, and internationally.
 - c. Continue to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with Indigenous groups, fisheries professionals, and other organizations.
 - d. Bring together fisheries professionals across the federal, provincial, academic, Indigenous, and private sectors to foster and enhance knowledge-sharing relationships.
 - e. Explore avenues for engagement through online platforms, trade shows, community events, and other public venues throughout the province.
2. **Ensure our organization continues to have a positive impact in the communities where we operate.**
 - a. Incorporate new ideas and technology to minimize our environmental and carbon footprints.
 - b. Offer volunteering placements for people interested in a career in fisheries and uphold volunteer opportunities for staff.
 - c. Support community-level stakeholder and Indigenous conservation stewardship initiatives.
 - d. Provide scholarships for post-secondary students pursuing fish culture and biology studies.
 - e. Engage our staff and partners to create a strong communication system that helps build awareness about who we are and what we do.





3. Improve business process efficiencies throughout the organization.

- a. Maintain an adaptive long-term IT strategy to deliver secure, reliable, and agile technology.
- b. Streamline processes and automate manual work by investing in technology.
- c. Review options and migrate databases to cloud-hosted services to improve data management and increase accessibility.

4. Leverage our organizational competencies and financial position to diversify our revenue sources.

- a. Work with the Province to reinvigorate the freshwater licensing system to include dynamic products and flexible licensing options.
- b. Work with partner organizations to develop programs or activities that meet shared objectives and enhance programs through investment.
- c. Explore possibilities to engage new clients by expanding and diversifying our services and areas of expertise.

5. Plan for a sustainable future by proactively maintaining a comprehensive risk register and business continuity plans.

- a. Develop and regularly update business continuity plans for each location and/or service that incorporate current information on risks and responses.
- b. Continually update our annual and long-term capital asset repair-and-replacement plans for facilities and equipment that reduce our environmental footprint and address the economic needs of the organization.
- c. Continue to undertake internal audits of facilities to seek improvements to safety, production, and process efficiencies.



Contact

Corporate Office

80 Regatta Landing, Suite 101
Victoria, B.C. V9A 7S2
250-414-4200
Toll Free: 888-601-4200
fish@gofishbc.com

Clearwater Trout Hatchery and Visitor Centre

40 Old North Thompson Highway East
Clearwater, B.C. V0E 1N2
250-674-2580
clearwater@gofishbc.com

Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery and Visitor Centre

34345 Vye Road
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 7P6
Hatchery: 604-504-4709
Visitor Centre: 604-504-4716
visit.fraservalley@gofishbc.com

Kootenay Trout Hatchery and Visitor Centre

4522 Fenwick Road
Fort Steele, B.C. V0B 1N0
Hatchery: 250-429-3214
Visitor Centre: 250-429-3214
kootenay@gofishbc.com

Nechako White Sturgeon Conservation Centre

3030 Burrard Avenue, PO Box 710
Vanderhoof, B.C. V0J 3A0
250-567-6673
info@nechakowhitesturgeon.org

Summerland Trout Hatchery and Visitor Centre

13405 Lakeshore Drive South
Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z1
250-494-0491
visit.summerland@gofishbc.com

Vancouver Island Trout Hatchery

1080 Wharnccliffe Road
Duncan, B.C. V9L 2K7
250-746-5180
vancouverisland@gofishbc.com





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