

The Pacific Salmon Commission Secretariat NEWSLETTER



A Message from the Executive Secretary

As summer unfolds across the region, the Secretariat sends its best to all of the PSC Community. From those who are preparing for harvest, to those working as dedicated civil servants and those welcoming the return and rebirth of the salmon runs, we know all of you are busy this time of year.

Since our last newsletter in December, the Commission has held its post-season and annual meetings which marked 40 years of treaty implementation. Key decisions were made to advance a genetic stock identification workshop, share preliminary priorities and timetables for amending Annex IV, and address issues in certain ISBM Chinook fisheries. Commissioners also adopted a budget for the 2025/26 fiscal year.

The Commission continued its annual presentation of the Larry Rutter Award in Pacific Salmon Commission, and this year's recipient was Mr. Steve Gotch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Steve's rich history with the Commission and dedication to salmon management are described on the PSC's website [here](#). The February ceremony allowed the Commission community to take a pause in its busy schedule to remember the collaborative spirit, rich personalities, and collective work ethic that bind all of us together. Steve certainly embodies that spirit and was a gracious awardee.

The Committee on Scientific Cooperation (CSC) has also been active this spring, holding two workshops (January and May) as part of its multi-year "Managing through Uncertainty" project. The first addressed changes in salmon dynamics when providing management advice with speakers, a panel discussion, and more than 100 participants. The second introduced scenario planning as a tool to evaluate implications of future climate scenarios on fisheries and affected communities. In 2020, the Commission authorized the CSC to work on environmental change and its ramifications for management and assessment of salmon stocks under the PST (including these workshops). Members of panels, committees, and the commission can view all workshop materials and reports produced to date via the Summit SharePoint site [here](#).

Please read on for more detailed updates from across the PSC Community. And as you dive into another season of salmon returns, I send the Secretariat's best wishes for ongoing success, deliberation, and cooperation that have marked Canada/U.S. relations on salmon for the last 40 years...and will certainly for another 40!

- John Field, *Executive Secretary*



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Passing of John Roos

This spring saw the passing of John Roos, who served as the last executive director of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission (the PSC's predecessor). He also authored the definitive book about the origins of the IPSFC and PSC, "[Restoring Fraser Salmon](#)."

John passed away on March 19, 2025 - one day after the PSC's 40th anniversary. He will be missed, and I know you join me in wishing his family peace.

You may read more about John's rich life in his obituary posted [here](#).



Commissioner changes

Both Parties have appointed new Commissioners since the winter meetings, and the Secretariat welcomes them into our community (or welcomes them back in one case!):

Canada:

Anna Classen (replacing Susan Chambers)

Dr. Brian Riddell (replacing Martin Paish)

United States

Jennifer Quan (replacing Dr. Scott Rumsey)



Call for Seminar Steering Committee volunteers

The PSC Seminar Steering Committee is seeking your help! In October 2021, the PSC approved a series of seminars on the impacts of environmental change on management of Pacific salmon. These seminars are organized by a steering committee that selects volunteer speakers and facilitates discussion, and recordings of each event are posted to the PSC [YouTube Channel](#). Surveys routinely identify this series as a big value of the Commission's process and collaboration, and it has advanced scientific dialog considerably across the border.

The Steering Committee meets online briefly a few times per year to identify topics, confirm speakers, and set seminar dates. If you are interested in joining this team of thought leaders in the PSC, please send an email to info@psc.org with subject line "Seminar Steering Committee volunteer"!



Upgrades completed at Mission Hydroacoustics Field Site

In February of this year, the PSC completed key infrastructure upgrades at its Mission hydroacoustics field site in Abbotsford. This site is central to the Secretariat's assessment program for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon, and has been in use throughout the PSC's existence.

Enhancements include a new removable floating dock, a crane pad to support seasonal dock installation and removal, and significant bank remediation efforts. Engineering and design were led by the consulting firm McElhanney, with construction completed by Bluewater Systems Ltd.

These improvements were made with a strong focus on staff safety, operational efficiency, and long-term site resilience. They are especially important in light of recent high-water events such as extended freshets (2020-2022) and the November 2021 floods.

In June, the newly upgraded dock was successfully deployed for the 2025 operating season and will remain in place through October. Additional work is underway, including the installation of a telescopic fish weir and final remediation on the right bank of the site.

This project is a collaborative effort funded by the PSC Secretariat, the PSC Southern Fund, and Parties' supplemental contributions. Full completion is anticipated by late fall 2025.



Aerial view of the floating dock, bank remediation and crane pad during commissioning February 2025



Side view of the floating dock during seasonal deployment, June 2025



Photos of PSC runabout and transecting vessels docked at the floating dock, June 2025

Joint DFO-PSC, SEF-funded species composition project at Cultus Lake

In April, team members from the joint DFO-PSC, SEF-funded species composition project ([see report](#)) collaboratively designed a small, field-based study in which two pre-measured pink salmon were towed past imaging sonars deployed at Cultus Lake, Chilliwack. The team sought to better understand conditions under which test fishing- and hydroacoustic-based length measurements may diverge.



Image 1. DFO consultant Paul van Dam-Bates preparing his creation for canoe deployment at Cultus Lake in April. Two pink salmon (not pictured) are suspended from the float via hooks and fishing line.

Initial data exploration is under way, with considerations for how range (distance from sonar), speed (stationary, slow, fast), and fish position within the field of view impact measurement error (pre-measured fish length – hydroacoustic-derived fish length). Any significant trends will be reported at a future Fraser River Panel meeting and considered by the new species composition methodology currently in development.

Overall, the team lucked out with beautiful weather, friendly greetings from curious community members (including some life-vested canines), and a fun, efficient method of data collection necessary to inform the improvements being made to Mission and Qualark species composition.

DFO post-doctorate Paul van Dam-Bates “macgyvered” a makeshift float from which two salmon were suspended (Image 1), which team members towed via some rope, a canoe, and a bit of problem-solving. Two sonars were deployed to mimic Mission and Qualark setups, and a lake-side computer station enabled staff onshore to direct the canoers / towers as needed through the sonar field of view (Image 2).



Image 2. PSC Hydroacoustic team members, Rachael Hornsby and Jacqueline Nelitz, monitoring the sonar live feeds from the shore-based station at Cultus Lake in April. The two deployed sonars can be seen deployed above, and other team members preparing to transect in the upper left.

Grant Program Updates

2025 Northern and Southern Fund Project Selections

In March, the Northern and Southern Fund Committees awarded \$9.5M USD to 83 projects for 2025.

Northern Fund: \$5M USD to 37 projects

Southern Fund: \$4.5M USD to 46 projects

All projects selected support the respective Fund objectives and the Treaty. Highlights include:

- Removing fish barriers on Ennis Creek (WA) to reconnect approximately 5.4 river miles and access to an estimated 80 acres of habitat.
- Developing AI-powered drone imaging for salmon counting on Vancouver Island (BC)
- Studying the causes and effects of thiamine deficiency in Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon
- Continuing salmon population assessments on the Yakoun River in Haida Gwaii (BC)

The full list of projects selected of funding in 2025 can be found [here](#).

Since 2004, the Funds have granted over \$145M USD to 1,800+ projects.



2025/26 Grant Program Call for Proposals

This spring, PSC grant programs opened their call for proposals for projects beginning later in 2025 or in 2026.

Programs include:

- Mark Selective Fishery Fund (late 2025/early 2026 starts)
- Northern and Southern Funds (2026 projects)
- Yukon River Panel Restoration and Enhancement Fund (2026 projects)

Across all programs in 2024, over \$11M USD was awarded, with similar levels of funding expected for 2025.

Details on application processes and deadlines can be found [here](#).

New Pacific Salmon Run Size App published

The PSC Committee on Scientific Cooperation (CSC) is proud to announce the publication of the [Pacific Salmon Run Size App](#), available on the PSC website.

This App aims to provide a general overview of Pacific Salmon across the PST Chapters through Chapter-specific data on total annual run size, escapement, harvest and harvest rate estimates and allows users to visualize, explore and download these data.

The App currently covers all Pacific Salmon Treaty Chapters. This Shiny App is the latest in a series of different Apps aiming to make published PSC data more available and accessible to the PSC Community and the general public. The App has been made public with sign off from the relevant Committees and Panels, similar to current processes for publishing annual and technical reports. These Apps adhere to

the [PSC guidelines](#) regarding the data sharing, established by the Technical Committee on Data Sharing (TCDS) to ensure best practices are followed.

Making published PSC

data more accessible has been underway since 2020 and has resulted in several Shiny Apps being developed, initially to support the [Fraser River Panel](#) and later expanded with a Shiny App for the [Chinook Technical Committee \(CTC\)](#). Technical Committees and Panels who would like support to make more of their data available and accessible to others can contact the PSC Secretariat.



2025 Lorraine Loomis Scholarship Recipient Announced

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2025 Lorraine Loomis Memorial Scholarship. Ms. Arielle Koenig of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in British Columbia will receive the \$5,000 award for the 2025/26 academic year at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in pursuit of her Master's degree.

From an early age, Arielle knew that she wanted to play a role in the protection and conservation of ecosystem health so future generations had the opportunity to learn from and appreciate the natural world. She wishes to continue centering Indigenous voices in management and conservation with the additional goal of strengthening Indigenous culture and existence. She would like to see her Nation be able to support its youth by providing them with employment opportunities on reserve where they are trained as Junior Guardians, integrating both western science and traditional Wet'suwet'en knowledge to take care of the land the way their ancestors did. This would also bring generations together, having the elders of the community teach the youth about Wet'suwet'en values, language, and practices.

Prior to her graduate studies, Ms. Koenig worked as a field biologist for a small consulting company that prioritizes working alongside First Nations in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia. She participated in projects led by different Nations on fish conservation and management and collecting local water quality measurements. She acted as the field lead for the company, training volunteers and employees of the various Nations within the Fraser Valley on proper fish handling

and sampling practices, data collection, and fish and amphibian species identification. Arielle also trained and mentored Junior Leq'a:mel First Nation Guardians in the field.

Ms. Koenig is now pursuing her Master of Science degree in Forestry at UBC, studying the effects of various types of floodgates on upstream overwintering salmon in floodplain habitats, expecting to graduate in 2026. She is the first person from the Wet'suwet'en who has gone to university for conservation biology in twenty years, and only the second person to do so from the Nation. She has partnered with Kwikwetlem First Nation, who join monthly meetings where they plan, discuss research findings, and plan for future directions of the project. They have a Kwikwetlem Guardian join them in the field where Arielle teaches them about the PIT technology and floodgate infrastructure used in the study. This sharing of knowledge is done in the hope the Nation will take over the project to continue using the infrastructure in place to conduct their own research, answering their own questions in the future and strengthening their sovereignty.

The Selection Committee was impressed by the number, quality, and diversity of applications received. While difficult, their choice of Ms. Koenig as the 2025 recipient is made with enthusiasm and excitement for her future. The Secretariat will maintain contact with her in the future to ensure she stays informed of the Commission's activities and opportunities to observe our work.

About the Lorraine Loomis Scholarship

Lorraine Loomis, an elder in the Swinomish Tribe, passed away in August 2021 and thus ended a decades-long career advocating for indigenous fishing rights at their intersection with salmon conservation. She was one of the first women to play an active role in fisheries policy and management, rising to prominence at the tribal, state, national, and international level. Her achievements and consensus building led to her replacing the esteemed Billy Frank Jr. as chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission upon his passing and receiving many other accolades.

The scholarship seeks to honor Lorraine's legacy and her many contributions to the fisheries community, with a view to inspiring and enabling future leaders like her.

