Lower Nicola Watershed Connectivity Remediation Plan: 2021 - 2040

Canadian Wildlife Federation

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# Acknowledgements



This plan represents the culmination of a collaborative planning process undertaken in the Lower Nicola River watershed over many months of work with a multi-partner planning team of individuals and groups passionate about the conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems and the species they support. Plan development was funded by the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk, and the RBC Bluewater Project. We were fortunate to benefit from the feedback, guidance, and wisdom of many groups and individuals who volunteered their time throughout this process — this publication would not have been possible without the engagement of our partners and the planning team (see Table 1).

The Canadian Wildlife Federation recognizes that the lands and waters that form the basis of this plan are the traditional unceded territory of the Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn from the stewards of this land and work together to benefit Pacific salmon and Steelhead. A special thank you to the Lower Nicola Indian Band for sharing the traditional Nłeʔkepmxcín (Nlaka’pamuxcin) names used in this plan.

We recognize the incredibly rich history of fish and fish habitat conservation and restoration work that has occurred in the Lower Nicola River watershed to date. A special thank you to Richard Bailey for providing background and contextual information on the myriad threats facing anadromous salmonid populations in the Lower Nicola. Thank you to Richard, Paul Mozin, Sarah Ostorforoff, and Tom Willms for identifying lateral barrier sites to assess during the 2021 field season. We are excited to continue partnering with local groups and organizations to build upon existing initiatives and provide a road map to push connectivity remediation forward over the next 10 years and beyond

# Project Overview

## Plan Purpose, Approach, and Scope

The following Watershed Connectivity Remediation Plan (WCRP) represents the culmination of a one-year collaborative planning effort, including action implementation, for the Lower Nicola River watershed, the overall aim of which is to build collaborative partnerships within the watershed to reduce the threat of aquatic barriers to migratory fish and the livelihoods that they support. This 10-year plan was developed to identify priority strategies that the Lower Nicola River WCRP planning team (see ‘Planning Team’ for a list of team members) proposes to undertake between 2021-2031 to conserve and restore fish passage in the watershed, through lateral and thermal barrier remediation, crossing remediation, and barrier prevention strategies.

WCRPs are long-term, actionable plans that blend local stakeholder and rightsholder knowledge with innovative GIS analyses to gain a shared understanding of where remediation efforts will have the greatest benefit for migratory fish. The planning process is inspired by the Conservation Standards (v.4.0), which is a conservation planning framework that allows planning teams to systematically identify, implement, and monitor strategies to apply the most effective solutions to high priority conservation problems. There is a rich history of fish and fish habitat conservation and restoration work in the Lower Nicola watershed that this WCRP builds upon and aims to compliment over the length of the plan. This includes work undertaken by the Scw’exmx Tribal Council and the five member or affiliate nations (see Project Scope), the Nicola Watershed Governance Project, the Nicola Basin Collaborative, and the Risk Assessment Methodology for Salmon (RAMS). The planning team will aim to work with the Nicola Watershed Governance Project and the Nicola Basin Collaborative to promote coordination, decision-making, and implementation related to this plan.

The planning team compiled existing location and assessment data for potential barriers, habitat data, and previously identified priorities in the watershed, and combined this with local and Indigenous knowledge to create a strategic watershed-scale plan to improve connectivity. To expand on this work, the Lower Nicola River WCRP planning team applied the WCRP planning framework to define the “thematic” scope of freshwater connectivity and refine the “geographic” scope to identify the portions of the watershed where connectivity remediation efforts will take place. Additionally, the team selected target fish species, assessed their current connectivity status in the watershed, defined concrete goals for gains in connectivity, and developed a priority list of barriers for further field investigation to achieve those goals. Field assessments were completed for 28 longitudinal barriers on the preliminary barrier list and 12 lateral barriers that were Identified by the Scw’exmc Tribal Council and Richard Bailey during the summer of 2021, followed by a series of WCRP Update Workshops in spring 2021. The aim of these workshops was for the team to receive updates on progress made during the field season, review assessment results and identify priority barriers, revise the connectivity status assessment and goals, and update the Operational Plan for 2022. While the current version of this plan is based on the best-available information at the time of publishing, WCRPs are intended to be “living plans” that are updated regularly as new information becomes available, or if local priorities and contexts change. As such, this document should be interpreted as a current “snap-shot” in time, and future iterations of this WCRP will build upon the results presented in this plan to continuously improve the practice of aquatic barrier remediation for migratory fish in the Lower Nicola River Watershed. For more information on how WCRPs are developed, see Mazany-Wright et al. (2021).

## Vision Statement

Healthy, well-connected streams and rivers within the Lower Nicola River watershed support thriving populations of migratory fish. In turn, these fish provide the continued sustenance, cultural, and ceremonial needs of the Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples, as they have since time immemorial. Both residents and visitors to the watershed work together to mitigate the negative effects of aquatic barriers, improving the resiliency of streams and rivers for the benefit and appreciation of all.

## Project Scope

The primary geographic scope of this WCRP is the Lower Nicola River watershed, located in the Thompson drainage basin of the Fraser River system in south-central British Columbia with a drainage area of 376,064 ha (Figure 1). The scope constitutes the Lower Nicola “watershed group” as defined by the British Columbia Freshwater Atlas (FWA), which excludes the Guichon Creek drainage and the Nicola River and Quilchena Creek drainages upstream of Nicola Lake. A consistent spatial framework was necessary to undertake a watershed-selection process at the provincial scale to identify target watershed to improve connectivity for salmonids. The Lower Nicola River watershed was identified by the BC Fish Passage Restoration Initiative as one of four target watersheds for WCRP development (Mazany-Wright et al. 2021b). Culturally and economically important populations of Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawtyscha), Coho Salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch), and Steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss) are all found in the watershed, which historically supported Indigenous sustenance and trading economies (Table 3; Lower Nicola Indian Band 2015, ESSA 2019, Coldwater Band 2021).

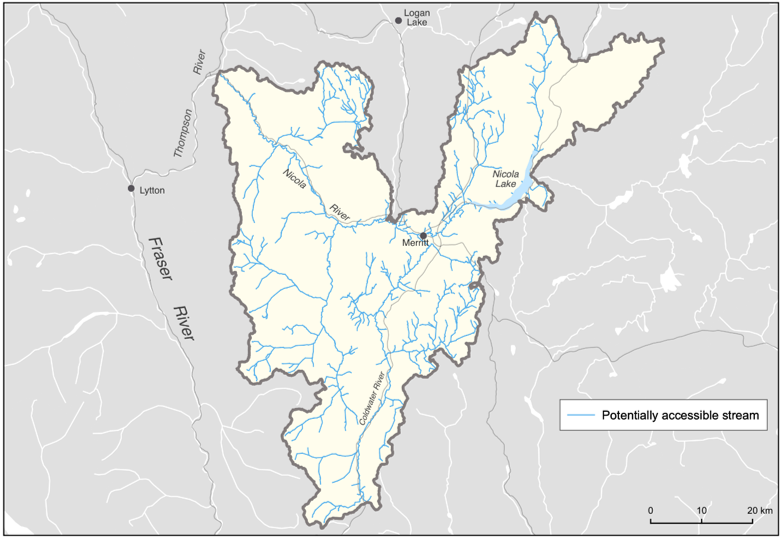
|  |
| --- |
| Figure 1: The primary geographic scope - the Lower Nicola River watershed, excluding the Guichon Creek drainage and the Nicola River and Quilchena Creek drainages upstream of Nicola Lake |

The primary geographic scope of this WCRP is the Horsefly River watershed, located in the upper Fraser River drainage basin in central British Columbia ([Figure 1](#fig-geoscope)). The scope constitutes the Horsefly River “watershed group” as defined by the [British Columbia Freshwater Atlas](https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/freshwater-atlas-watershed-groups) (FWA). A consistent spatial framework was necessary to undertake a watershed selection process at the provincial scale to identify target watersheds to improve connectivity for salmon. The Horsefly River watershed was identified by the BC Fish Passage Restoration Initiative as one of four target watersheds for WCRP development Mazany-Wright et al. (2021b). The Horsefly River watershed has a drainage area of 276,603 ha, spanning from the Quesnel Highlands in the southeast to the confluence with Quesnel Lake in the northwest. Culturally and economically important populations of Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, and Sockeye Salmon are all found in the watershed, which historically supported Indigenous sustenance and trading economies (W. L. F. Nation. (2021), X. F. Nation. (2021)).

**?(caption)**

The Lower Nicola River watershed comprises parts of the traditional territory of the Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples, represented by the Scw’exmx Tribal Council, the four member nations (Coldwater Band, Nooaitch Band, Shackan Indian Band, and Upper Nicola Band), and the individual nations of the Lower Nicola Indian Band and the Cook’s Ferry Band. The Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples steward the land and the waters of the Lower Nicola River watershed. The planning team will pursue early, meaningful, and continued engagement with First Nations communities involved in work and projects related to this plan. It will be necessary to receive permission from the communities for any work to occur on their territory.

The geographic scope of this WCRP was further refined by identifying “potentially accessible” stream segments, which are defined as streams that target species should be able to access in the absence of anthropogenic barriers (Figure 2). Potentially accessible stream segments were spatially delineated using fish species observation and distribution data, as well as data on “exclusionary points”, which are waterfalls greater than 5 m in height, gradient barriers based on species-specific swimming abilities, and “watershed exclusion areas”, which are portions of the watershed where barrier remediation efforts should not occur. These maps were explored by the planning team to incorporate additional local knowledge, ensure accuracy, and finalize the constraints on potentially accessible stream segments. The planning team identified a few tributaries to the mainstem Nicola River as watershed exclusion areas due to intermittent or insufficient flows to support restoring connectivity for the target species, including Hamilton Creek and agricultural irrigation ditches just downstream of Nicola Lake Dam. Additionally, Stumplake Creek and Peter Hope Creek were identified as watershed exclusion areas due to the presence of invasive Yellow Perch (Perca flavescens). It is unclear whether existing barriers located in these systems will be effective in preventing the downstream spread of Yellow Perch, but the planning team advised maintaining the barriers for the time being. All stream segments not identified as potentially accessible were removed from the scope for further consideration. The resulting constrained geographic scope formed the foundation for all subsequent analyses and planning steps, including mapping and modelling useable habitat types, quantifying the current connectivity status, goal setting, and action planning (Mazany-Wright et al. 2021a).

The thematic scope of this WCRP is freshwater connectivity. Connectivity is a critical component of freshwater ecosystems that encompasses a variety of factors related to ecosystem structure and function, such as the ability of aquatic organisms to disperse and/or migrate, the transportation of energy and matter (e.g., nutrient cycling and sediment flows), and temperature regulation (Seliger & Zeiringer 2018). Though each of these factors are important when considering the health of a watershed, for the purposes of this WCRP the term “connectivity” is defined as the degree to which aquatic organisms can disperse and/or migrate freely through freshwater systems. Connectivity can be disrupted by physical barriers to connectivity in the longitudinal (i.e., upstream-downstream) and lateral (i.e., connectivity between the mainstem and adjacent wetlands, floodplains, side channels, and off-channel habitat) planes, including dams, weirs, stream crossings, dykes, linear infrastructure, waterfalls, and debris flows. Freshwater systems can also be disconnected by “physiological” barriers that prevent the free dispersal of species, including thermal (i.e., reaches where stream temperatures are too high) or flow (i.e., reaches where stream flow is insufficient to support the requirements of any life stage) barriers.

The broader Nicola basin has been designated as a temperature- and flow-sensitive watershed in British Columbia, and both factors significantly affect connectivity for fish species in the Lower Nicola (ESSA 2019, MFLNRORD 2018). The changing thermal regime of the Lower Nicola River watershed is a growing concern, with two scales of thermal disconnectivity occurring within the watershed — watershed-scale changes in thermal regimes and localized barriers preventing access to thermal refugia.

The watershed-scale changes to the thermal regime are linked to several landscape-scale drivers including increases in water withdrawals, changes in land use, deforestation (due to resource extraction and mountain pine beetle infestations), and climate change, which are exacerbated by subsequent changes to channel-forming processes (ESSA 2019). These changes have created annual thermal barriers that prevent access to headwater reaches from the mainstem channels along the valley floor. This has resulted in the adaptation of an early-migrant Chinook Salmon population, which uses the upper portions of Spius Creek and tributaries and the upper reaches of the Coldwater River, where access to the spawning grounds requires passing through the lower sections before the stream temperatures create physiological thermal barriers. These returning adults pass through the lower reaches in May and June as the freshet starts to abate, then hold in deeper pools for two months until they spawn in mid-to-late August (R. Bailey, Nooaitch Band, pers. comm.).

Localized thermal disconnectivity in the lateral dimension occurs when rearing and out-migrating juveniles are unable to access side-channel and off-channel thermal refugia and holding pools due to changing channel processes exacerbated by upland management and the development of linear infrastructure including dykes, roads, railways, and trails. These groundwater-serviced reaches located in side channels or off-channel habitats provide thermal refuge for juvenile fish in the watershed, and can also provide critical refuge for returning spawners. When these lateral refugia become disconnected from mainstem channels, lethal stream temperatures can cause juvenile die-offs. Activities that restore and protect connectivity to these lateral refugia, particularly those cooled by groundwater sources, can help mitigate thermal disconnectivity in the watershed.

Mitigation of the landscape-scale drivers of changes to the thermal regimes are outside of the scope of this plan. While vital for the long-term resilience of the watershed, the broad land-use patterns, over-subscription of water withdrawals, and climate change that are causing chronic thermal issues in the watershed require more complex, coordinated, and resource-intensive solutions than this planning process can provide. This plan is intended to focus on the direct remediation and prevention of localized, physical barriers to lateral thermal refugia and longitudinal connectivity to maintain fish passage to spawning, rearing, and refuge habitat. Lateral, and associated thermal, connectivity was identified by the planning team as the primary connectivity concern in the watershed within the defined scope of this plan.

## Target species

Target species represent the ecologically and culturally important species for which habitat connectivity is being conserved and/or restored in the watershed. In the Lower Nicola River watershed, the planning team selected Anadromous Salmonids as the target species group, which comprises Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, and Steelhead. The selection of these target species was driven primarily by the target species of the primary funds supporting this planning work. The planning team also identified other culturally and ecologically important species within the watershed to consider for inclusion in future iterations of the WCRP, including Kokanee (Oncorhynchus nerka), Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus), resident Rainbow Trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss), Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis), Burbot (Lota lota), and Pink Salmon (Oncorhynchus gorbuscha).

### Anadromous Salmonids

Anadromous salmonids are cultural and ecological keystone species that contribute to productive ecosystems by contributing marine-derived nutrients to the watershed and forming an important food source for bears and other species (Schindler et al. 2003). Salmon and Steelhead have enduring food, social, and ceremonial value for First Nations in Lower Nicola watershed – having sustained life, trading economies, and culture for the Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples since time immemorial (Lower Nicola Indian Band 2015, ESSA 2019, Coldwater Band 2021). The harvest and processing of these species have helped pass knowledge and ceremony to future generations (Fraser Basin Council n.d., Lower Nicola Indian Band 2015).

Anadromous salmonid populations in the Lower Nicola River watershed have declined significantly since the mid-1980s, leading First Nations communities to voluntarily reduce their harvest (ESSA 2019). The Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx and Syilx peoples have always been stewards of the lands, resources, and fisheries in their traditional territories through an interconnected relationship based on respect and reverence, captured by the Syilx concept of Tmixw – the people only take the salmon that is needed (Lower Nicola Indian Band 2015, ESSA 2019, Upper Nicola Band 2021). The stewardship of their waters continues through the work of the Scw’exmx Tribal Council, the four member communities, the Lower Nicola Indian Band, and initiatives like the Nicola Watershed Governance Project. The Chinook Salmon (Endangered), Coho Salmon (Threatened), and Steelhead (Endangered) populations have all been assessed and proposed for Species at Risk Act (SARA) listing by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). The development and implementation of this WCRP aims to support and supplement on-going work by the Nlaka’pamux/Scw’exmx, Syilx, and other local groups by providing an action plan to address the specific, tractable conservation threat posed by fragmentation through the restoration and preservation of habitat connectivity for these important species. See Appendix A for maps of modelled anadromous salmonid spawning and rearing habitat in the Lower Nicola River watershed.

### Chinook Salmon | k’ʷy’íʔe/pəqéłus | Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

**?(caption)**

Chinook Salmon are one of the first species to return to the watershed each year, arriving as early as May, and the population has been in decline since the mid-1990s (LGL Ltd. 2007, Ecoscape 2017). Known and historic spawning locations include the mainstem Nicola River (mostly between the Coldwater River and Spius Creek confluences), Coldwater River, Spius Creek, lower portions of Clapperton Creek, and upstream of Nicola Lake in Moore Creek and the Upper Nicola River (LGL Ltd. 2007, Ecoscape 2017, PSF 2020). In addition to these spawning systems, important juvenile rearing areas have been observed in Juliet Creek and Voght Creek (LGL Ltd. 2007). Chinook Salmon stocks have been supplemented by the Spius Creek hatchery since the 1980s. Fry and smolt releases have occurred and the Nicola stock is current enhanced by ~200,000 coded-wire tagged yearling smolts annually as a component of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) indicator stock study program (R. Bailey, pers. comm.).

### Coho Salmon | sx̣a̓yqs | Oncorhynchus kisutch

**?(caption)**

Coho Salmon begin to return to the watershed in September, with spawning beginning in late October and continuing through December. The population has been in decline since the mid1980s (DFO 1999, Ecoscape 2017). Coho Salmon stocks have been supplemented in recent decades by outplants from the Spius Creek Hatchery (Ecoscape 2017). The majority of Coho Salmon spawning and rearing occurs in the Coldwater River, Spius Creek, and Maka Creek, but has also been observed in Clapperton Creek, Prospect Creek, and the Upper Nicola River and Moore Creek (LGL Ltd. 2007, PSF 2020). The lower reaches of many smaller tributaries are also important Coho Salmon rearing habitat.

### Steelhead | cóʕʷłeʔ | Oncorhynchus mykiss

**?(caption)**

Steelhead join Chinook Salmon as the first to appear in the watershed, arriving in the spring (LGL Ltd. 2007). The population is critically endangered and is seen as an extreme conservation concern (Bos 2006). Steelhead spawning and rearing is known to occur in the lower portion of the mainstem Nicola River, Skuhun Creek, Shakan Creek, Nuaitch Creek, Maka Creek, the Coldwater River, Juliet Creek, Voght Creek, Prospect Creek, and Clapperton Creek (LGL Ltd. 2007). Historically, almost all third-order and greater streams would have supported Steelhead, and groundwater-fed thermal refugia continue to provide important rearing and holding habitats (Ecoscape 2017).

## Barrier Types

The following table highlights barrier types threatening anadromous salmonids in the watershed. The results of this assessment were used to inform the subsequent planning steps, as well as to identify knowledge gaps where there are limited spatial data to inform the assessment for a specific barrier type.

Table 1: Connectivity status assessment for (a) linear habitat (spawning and rearing) and (b) overwintering habitat in the Horsefly River watershed. The Available Habitat KEA is evaluated by dividing the length of linear habitat that is currently accessible to target species by the total length of all linear habitat in the watershed. The Available Overwintering Habitat KEA is evaluated as the sum of all areal overwintering habitat that is accessible to target species.

| Barrier Types | Extent | Severity | Irreversibility | Overall Threat Rating: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Road-Stream Crossings | Very High | Very High | Medium | Very High |
| Lateral Barriers | High | Very High | High | High |
| Small Dams(<3m height) | Medium | Very High | High | Medium |
| Trail-stream Crossings | Low | Low | Medium | Low |
| Natural Barriers | Medium | High | Low | Low |

### Small Dams (<3 m height)

There are 35 mapped small dams on “potentially accessible” stream segments in the watershed, blocking a total of 357.4 km (~67.24% of the total habitat) of modelled spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous salmon, resulting in a medium extent. The extent rating of these structures was confirmed by the planning team. There are two known fish-passage structures in the watershed, including on the dam at the outlet of McKinley Lake. The remaining dams likely block passage for anadromous salmon and would require significant resources to remediate. However, due to the limited extent of dams in the watershed, a final pressure rating of Medium was assigned. Four small dams were identified on the priority barrier list (see Appendix B). Three of the dams require further assessment and confirmation of upstream habitat quality, and the dam observed at the outlet of Kwun Lake does not exist.

### Road-stream Crossings

Road-stream crossings are an abundant barrier type in the watershed, with 80assessed and modelled crossings located on modelled Anadromous Salmonid habitat. Demographic road crossings (highways, municipal, and paved roads) block 55.39 km of habitat (57.4%), with 88% of assessed crossings having been identified as barriers to fish passage. Resource roads block 34.04 km of habitat (35.3%), with 73% of assessed crossings identified as barriers. Significant land use and linear development throughout the valley bottom has disconnected the Nicola River from important habitat in some tributaries, including Highway 5 and Highway 8 (see Appendix C - Barrier Prioritization results). The collective experience and input from the planning team resulted in a Low irreversibility rating due to the existing body of knowledge and resources to support the remediation of road-stream crossings, though it was noted that there is significant variability between resource roads and highway crossings.

### Trail-stream crossings

There is very little spatial data available on trail-stream crossings in the watershed, so the planning team was unable to quantify the true Extent and Severity of this barrier type. However, the planning team felt that trail-stream crossings are not prevalent within the watershed and that, where they do exist, they do not significantly impact passage for anadromous salmon. As most crossings will be fords or similar structures, remediation may not be required, or remediation costs associated with these barriers would be quite low. Overall, the planning team felt that the pressure rating for trail-stream crossings was likely Low; however, the lack of ground-truthed evidence to support this rating was identified as a knowledge gap within this plan.

### Lateral Barriers (Including to thermal connectivity)

There are numerous types of lateral barriers that potentially occur in the watershed, including dykes, berms, and linear development (i.e., road and abandoned rail lines), all of which can restrict the ability of anadromous salmonids to move into floodplains, riparian wetlands, offchannel habitats, and other groundwater-fed thermal refugia. No comprehensive lateral barrier dataset exists within the watershed, so pressure ratings were based on qualitative local knowledge. Lateral barriers were identified as the primary connectivity concern in the watershed due to a High extent for all target species’ habitats and a Very high severity of barriers (i.e., almost all structures are blocking the movement of fish). Highway 5, Highway 8, and the two abandoned rail lines run along significant stretches of the Coldwater River and mainstem Nicola River and likely disconnect these mainstems from segments of their historic floodplains, off-channel habitats, and thermal refugia in certain locations. Other lateral barriers include irrigation infrastructure that occurs in the valley bottom on agricultural land. Overall, the planning team decided that a High pressure rating captured the effect that lateral barriers are likely having on connectivity in the watershed, particularly thermal connectivity, while recognizing that the lack of data on lateral barriers in the watershed is an important knowledge gap to fill.

### Natural Barriers

Natural barriers to fish passage can include debris flows, log jams, sediment deposits, etc., but natural features that have always restricted fish passage (e.g., waterfalls) are not considered under this barrier type. Natural barriers are difficult to include in a spatial prioritization framework due to their transient nature. The planning team felt that the major drivers of natural barriers were massive sediment aggradation that has occurred in the watershed in recent years and changes in the natural flow regime of the watershed. The associated channel destabilization creates impassable stream segments due to a lack of flow and increased lateral migration of streams. The extent, severity, and passability of these obstacles will vary over time depending on the season and year; however, current and historic land-use practices, including forest harvesting, agriculture, and water withdrawals have exacerbated the effect of natural barriers in the watershed. Due to the nature of these land-use practices, the severity of natural barriers was rated as Very high and the irreversibility as Medium, the latter due to the effort required to rectify poor land-use practices at a watershed scale. Overall, the planning team felt that a pressure rating of ‘High’ adequately captured the effects of natural barriers.

### Small Dams (<5m height)

There are five mapped dams on modelled anadromous salmonid habitat in the watershed, blocking a combined 5.08 km (5.3%) of spawning and rearing habitat, resulting in a Low extent (see Appendix C for dams included in the intermediate barrier list). The extent rating of these structures was confirmed by the planning team. There are three known fish passage structures in the watershed, including on Nicola Lake Dam, and the remaining dams likely block passage for anadromous salmonids. Many dams in the watershed are irrigation impoundments that are of little consequence to target species. Remediating dams requires significant resources; however, due to the minimal extent of dams in the watershed, a final pressure rating of Low was assigned to this barrier type

### Abandoned Rail-Stream Crossings (Logitudinal)

There are no active rail lines in the Lower Nicola watershed; however, infrastructure remains in place from the historic Nicola Valley Railway and the Kettle Valley Railway in the form of abandoned railbeds and associated stream crossings. There are 4 modelled abandoned railstream crossings located on modelled anadromous salmonid habitat, blocking a combined 1.94 km of habitat (2.01% of the total habitat blocked; see Appendix C for abandoned rail-stream crossings included in the intermediate barrier list). There are no data to support the assessment of the severity of these crossings, but the collective knowledge of the planning team resulted in a Low severity rating because most are believed to be serviced by bridges or open-bottom structures. Despite the moderate technical knowledge and resources required to remediate these barriers, the low extent and low severity resulted in the overall pressure rating of Low. The abandoned rail lines, however, were identified by the planning team as a contributor to lateral and thermal disconnectivity in the watershed (see Lateral Barriers to Thermal Connectivity).

### Trail-stream Crossings

There are very little spatial data available on trail-stream crossings in the watershed, so the planning team was unable to quantify the true Extent and Severity of this barrier type. However, the planning team felt that trail-stream crossings are not prevalent within the watershed and that where they do exist, they do not significantly restrict passage for anadromous salmonids. Because most crossings will likely be fords or similar structures, the remediation costs associated with these barriers would be quite low. Overall, the planning team felt that the pressure rating for trail-stream crossings was likely Low

# Key Ecological Attributes and Current Connectivity Status

The planning team devised three Key Ecological Attributes (KEAs) and associated indicators to assess the current connectivity status of the watershed – Accessible Off-channel Thermal Refuge, Accessible Spawning Habitat, and Accessible Rearing Habitat. KEAs are the key aspects of anadromous salmonid ecology that are being targeted by this WCRP. The connectivity status for the Anadromous Salmonids KEAs were used to establish goals to improve habitat connectivity in the watershed and will be the baseline against which progress is tracked over time.

The current connectivity status assessments for Accessible Spawning Habitat and Accessible Rearing habitat rely on GIS analyses to map known and modelled barriers to fish passage, identify stream reaches that have potential spawning and rearing habitat, estimate the proportion of habitat that is currently accessible to target species, and prioritize barriers for field assessment that would provide the greatest gains in connectivity. To support a flexible prioritization framework to identify priority barriers in the watershed, two assumptions are made: 1) any modelled (i.e., passability status is unknown) or partial barriers are treated as complete barriers to passage and 2) the habitat modelling is binary, it does not assign any habitat quality values. As such, the current connectivity status will be refined over time as more data on habitat and barriers are collected. For more detail on how the connectivity status assessments were conducted, see Appendix B.

Table 2: Connectivity status assessment for (a) linear habitat (spawning and rearing) and (b) overwintering habitat in the Horsefly River watershed. The Available Habitat KEA is evaluated by dividing the length of linear habitat that is currently accessible to target species by the total length of all linear habitat in the watershed. The Available Overwintering Habitat KEA is evaluated as the sum of all areal overwintering habitat that is accessible to target species.

| Target Species | KEA | Indicator | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Andromous Salmon | Available Habitat | % of total linear habitat | <80% |  | 81-90% | >90% |
|  |  | Current Status: |  |  |  | 74 |

**Comments:** Indicator rating definitions are based on the consensus decisions of the planning team, including the decision not to define Fair. The current status is based on the CWF Barrier Prioritization Model output, which is current as of March 2022.

| Target Species | KEA | Indicator | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Andromous Salmon | Available Overwintering Habitat | Total Area (m2) of overwintering habitat accessible | ? | ? | ? | ? |
|  |  | Current Status: |  |  |  |  |

**Comments:** No baseline data exists on the extent of overwintering habitat in the watershed. A priority action is included in the Operational Plan (strategy 2.3) to develop a habitat layer, and this will be used to inform this connectivity status assessment in the future.

## Goals

Table 3: Goals to improve (1) spawning and rearing and (2) overwintering habitat connectivity for target species in the Horsefly River watershed over the lifespan of the WCRP (2021-2040). The goals were established through discussions with the planning team and represent the resulting desired state of connectivity in the watershed. The goals are subject to change as more information and data are collected over the course of the plan timeline (e.g., the current connectivity status is updated based on barrier field assessments).

| Goal # | Goal |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | By 2040, the percent (%) of total linear habitat accessible to anadromous salmon will increase from 94% to 96% within the Horsefly River watershed (i.e., reconnect at least 11.7 km of habitat). |
| 2 | By 2024, the total area of overwintering habitat accessible to Anadromous Salmon will increase by 1,500 m2 within the Horsefly River watershed. |

# Barrier Prioritization

## Horsefly River Watershed Barrier Prioritization Summary

The primary conservation outcome of the WCRP will be the remediation of barriers to connectivity in the Horsefly River watershed. To achieve Goal 1 in this plan, it is necessary to prioritize and identify a suite of barriers that, if remediated, will provide access to a minimum of 115.78 km of spawning or rearing habitat ([Table 4](#tbl-table16)):

Table 4: Spawning and rearing habitat connectivity gain requirements to meet WCRP goals in the Horsefly River watershed. The measures of currently accessible and total habitat values are derived from the Intrinsic Potential habitat model described in Appendix B.

| Habitat Type | Currently accessible (km) | Total | Current Connectivity Status | Goal | Gain required (km) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Spawning and Rearing | 394.46999999999997 | 531.51 | 74% | 96% | 115.78 |

The barrier prioritization analysis ranked barriers by the amount of habitat blocked to produce an “intermediate barrier list” comprising more barriers than are needed to achieve the goals. A longer list of barriers is needed due to the inherent assumptions in the connectivity model, habitat model, and gaps in available data. Barriers that have been modelled (i.e., points where streams and road/rail networks intersect) are assumed to be barriers until field verification is undertaken and structures that have been assessed as “potential” barriers (e.g., may be passable at certain flow levels or for certain life history stages) require further investigation before a definitive remediation decision is made. Additionally, the habitat model identifies stream segments that have the potential to support spawning or rearing habitat for target species but does not attempt to quantify habitat quality or suitability (see Appendix B), which will require additional field verification once barrier assessments have completed. As such, the intermediate list of barriers below (**?@tbl-deficient**) should be considered as a starting point in the prioritization process and represents structures that are a priority to evaluate further through barrier assessment and habitat confirmations because some structures will likely be passable, others will not be associated with usable habitat, and others may not be feasible to remediate because of logistic considerations. The intermediate barrier list was updated following the barrier assessments and habitat confirmations that were undertaken during the 2021 field season - some barriers were moved forward to the “priority barrier list” (see **?@tbl-priority**) and others were eliminated from consideration due to one or more of the considerations discussed above (see **?@tbl-remove**). The priority barrier list represents structures that were confirmed to be partial or full barriers to fish passage and that block access to confirmed habitat. Barriers on the priority list were reviewed by planning team members and selected for inclusion for proactive pursual of remediation. For more details on the barrier prioritization model, please see Mazany-Wright et al. (2021a).

| ID | Watercourse name | Road name | Location/coordinates | Barrier type | Barrier owner | Barrier set identifier | # barriers in set | Number of downstream barriers | Upstream habitat quality | Total habitat gain (km) | Habitat gain - spawning (km) | Habitat gain - rearing (km) | Next steps | Reason |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

**?(caption)**

| ID | Watercourse name | Road name | Location/coordinates | Assessment step completed | Passability Status | Total habitat gain (km) | Habitat gain - spawning (km) | Habitat gain - rearing (km) | Structure type | Barrier set identifier | # of barrier in set | Number of downstream barriers | Next steps | Comments (external) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

**?(caption)**

| ID | Watercourse | Road name | Location/coordinates | Reason for exclusion | Method of exclusion | Comments(external) | Supporting links |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

**?(caption)**

| ID | Watercourse | Road name | Location/coordinates | Reason for exclusion | Method of exclusion | Comments(external) | Supporting links |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

Out of the 15 on the intermediate list, 16 require further field assessment before selection as a final barrier to pursue for remediation:

There are currently 15 barriers on the priority barrier list, which will be pursued for proactive remediation to achieve the connectivity goals in this plan:

| ID | Watercourse name | Road name | Location/coordinates | Type of rehabilitation - cover new | Structure type as categories here | Rehabilitated by | Rehabilitated date | Habitat gain | Actual project cost | Comments (external) | Supporting links |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

**?(caption)**

# Work Planning

## Annual Progress Report

## Operational Plan

The operational plan represents a preliminary exercise undertaken by the planning team to identify the potential leads, potential participants, and estimated cost for the implementation of each action in the Horsefly River watershed. The table below summarizes individuals, groups, or organizations that the planning team felt could lead or participate in the implementation of the plan and should be interpreted as the first step in on-going planning and engagement to develop more detailed and sophisticated action plans for each entry in the table. The individuals, groups, and organizations listed under the “Lead(s)” or “Potential Participants” columns are those that provisionally expressed interest in participating in one of those roles or were suggested by the planning team for further engagement (denoted in bold), for those that are not members of the planning team. The leads, participants, and estimated costs in the operational plan are not binding nor an official commitment of resources, but rather provide a roadmap for future coordination and engagement to work towards implementation of the WCRP.

**?(caption)**

Table 5: Operational plan to support the implementation of strategies and actions to improve connectivity for target species in the Horsefly River watershed.

| Strategy / Actions | Lead(s) [1] | Participants3 | Total Budget |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strategy 1: Crossing Remediation |  |  | $3,666,300.00 |
| 1.1 – Remediate crossings that are acting as barriers | CWF | Horsefly River Roundtable, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) | $3,500,000.00 |
| 1.2 – Lobby that the government enforce their regulations | TBD | CWF, Horsefly River Roundtable, Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) | $10,000.00 |
| 1.3 – Initiate a barrier owner outreach program for locations on the barrier remediation shortlist | HRR, CWF, DFO |  | TBD |
| 1.4 – Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | CWF | TBD | $100,000.00 |
| 1.5 – Knowledge Gap: conduct field assessments on updated preliminary barrier list using the provincial fish passage framework and update connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist | CWF | Horsefly River Roundtable, DFO | $50,300.00 |
| 1.6 - Update longitudinal connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist |  |  |  |
| 1.7 – Knowledge Gap: Identify and map crossing ownership for barriers on the barrier remediation shortlist | TBD | CWF, DFO (Anthonie) | $1,500.00 |
| 1.8 – Knowledge Gap: Compile road maintenance schedules | DFO | CWF, WLFN, DFO, FLNRORD | $2,000.00 |
| 1.9 – Knowledge Gap: Survey trail-stream crossings to confirm low pressure rating values | WLFN | CWF, DFO | $2,500.00 |
| Strategy 2: Lateral Barrier Remediation |  |  | $80,000.00 |
| 2.1 – Remediate dikes / berms / other structures that are acting as barriers | CWF | DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable | TBD |
| 2.2 – Initiate a barrier owner outreach program | TBD | CWF, DFO | TBD |
| 2.3 – Knowledge Gap: Identify and map year-round lateral habitat, as well as overwintering habitat | Horsefly River Roundtable, DFO | CWF, Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC), WLFN | $65,000.00 |
| 2.4 – Knowledge Gap: Map lateral barriers and barrier ownership | CWF | DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable | $5,000.00 |
| 2.5 – Knowledge Gap: Develop a framework to assess and prioritize between different lateral barrier remediation projects | CWF | DFO | $10,000.00 |
| Strategy 3: Dam Remediation |  |  | $1,305,000.00 |
| 3.1 - Remediate Dams | TBD | TBD | $1,305,000.00 |
| 3.2 - Install Fish Passage | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 3.3 - Connect with Cattleman's Association to explore a partnership to remediate dams | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 3.4 - Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | CWF | TBD | $0.00 |
| 3.5 - Knowledge Gap: Assess dams to determine whether they exist and are truly blocking salmon habitat | HRR(?) DFO(?) CWF(?) | TBD | TBD |
| 3.6 - Knowledge Gap: Identify and map dam ownership | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| Strategy 4: Barrier Prevention |  |  | $110,000.00 |
| 4.1 – Explore potential partnerships with industrial companies | TBD | CWF, DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable, WLFN | $10,000.00 |
| 4.2 – Stabilize sediment sources that are explicitly linked to sediment wedges or erosion that are acting as barriers | TBD | DFO | $100,000.00 |
| Strategy 5: Progress Tracking Plan |  |  | TBD |
| 5.1 - Implement the WCRP Progress Tracking Plan | CWF |  | TBD |
| 5.2 - Develop a communication action to raise awareness and support for this WCRP | CWF, HRR | TBD | TBD |
| Total: |  |  | $5,161,300.00 |
| Fundraising total: |  |  | $2,508,800 |
| Proponent/government contribution total: |  |  | $2,652,500 |

**?(caption)**

## Annual Work Plan

# References

Mazany-Wright, N, S M Norris, N W R Lapointe, and B Rebellato. 2021a. “A Freshwater Connectivity Modelling Framework to Support Barrier Prioritization and Remediation in British Columbia.” *Canadian Wildlife Federation*.

———. 2021b. “Fish Passage Restoration Initiative Target Watershed Selection Process: Technical Documentation.” *Canadian Wildlife Federation*.

Nation., Williams Lake First. 2021. *Secwepemc Land Use Patterns.* https://www.wlfn.ca/about-wlfn/history/.

Nation., Xatśūll First. 2021. “Traditional History.” *XFN*.

# Version History

[v.1.0 – March 2024](https://v1-0--horsefly-wcrp-test.netlify.app/)

# Project Partners

## Planning Team

| Name | Organization |
| --- | --- |
| Betty Rebellato | Canadian Wildlife Federation |
| Nick Mazany-Wright | Canadian Wildlife Federation |
| Nicolas Lapointe | Canadian Wildlife Federation |
| Sarah Sra | Canadian Wildlife Federation |
| Colin McGregor | Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada |
| Sarah Ostoforoff | Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada |
| Josh Noseworthy | Global Conservation Solutions |
| Simon Norris | Hillcrest Geographics |
| Roderick Malcom | Lower Nicola Indian band |
| Mark Philpotts | Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations |
| Patrick Farmer | Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations |
| Tom Willms | Nicola Valley Institute of Technology |
| Al Mackay-Smith | Nicola Watershed Community Roundtable |
| Lou Cook | Nicola Watershed Community Roundtable |
| Richard Bailey | Nooaitch Indian Band |
| Brian Holmes | Upper Nicola Band |
| Paul Mozin | Scw'exmx Tribal Council |

**?(caption)**

## Key Actors

| Individual or Organization Name | Role and Primary Interest |
| --- | --- |
| City Councillors of Merritt | Local government that would like to be apprised of this initiative’s progress. |
| Coldwater Band | A First Nation band with territory in the watershed and a member of the Scw'exmx Tribal Council (STC). Through the STC and NWGP, the Coldwater Band will be a key actor for engagement and implementation. |
| Fraser Basin Council (FBC) | The FBC website could be used to host the plan, and FBC is open to helping CWF pursue future funding opportunities and supporting collaboration for the initiative where possible. |
| Nicola Basin Collaborative | Coordinated by the FBC, the Nicola Basin Collaborative comprises a number of groups, agencies, organizations, and private landowners to collaboratively plan, identify, prioritize, and address issues in the Nicola watershed. The collaborative includes a Research and Technical Committee, which can be a forum to promote coordination and collaboration for the implementation of this plan. |
| Nicola Stock Breeders Association | Local agricultural landowners in the watershed. They can help facilitate construction as well as consent to or facilitate complimentary works on private property to improve connectivity. |
| Nicola Watershed Governance Project (NWGP) | This project fosters a collaborative working relationship between five First Nations bands and the provincial government to resolve shared water-management issues in the watershed. The WCRP process can compliment existing work being undertaken by the Nicola Watershed Governance Project, and the planning team recommended that the NWGP should be a main decision-making body on any project implementation related to this plan. |
| Shackan Band | A First Nation band with territory in the watershed and a member of the Scw'exmx Tribal Council (STC). Through the STC and NWGP, the Shackan Band will be a key actor for engagement and implementation. |
| Stuwix Resources Joint Venture (SRJV) | A First Nations forestry company that balances successful First Nations business with sustainable forest resources management practices to create and promote healthy ecosystems and healthy independent communities. Shareholder/joint venture First Nations include: Lower Nicola Indian Band, Coldwater Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Shackan Band, Upper Nicola Band, Cook's Ferry Band, Siska Indian Band, and Upper Similkameen Indian Band. |

**?(caption)**

# Supplementary Information

## Situation Analysis

The following situation model was developed by the WCRP planning team to “map” the project context and brainstorm potential actions for implementation. Green text is used to identify actions that were selected for implementation (see Strategies & Actions), and red text is used to identify actions that the project team has decided to exclude from the current iteration of the plan, as they were either outside of the project scope, or were deemed to be ineffective by the planning team.

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 2: Situation analysis developed by the planning team to identify factors that contribute to fragmentation (orange boxes), biophysical results (brown boxes), and potential strategies/actions to improve connectivity (yellow hexagons) for target species in the Horsefly River watershed. |

## Strategies & Actions

Effectiveness evaluation of identified conservation strategies and associated actions to improve connectivity for target species in the Horsefly River watershed. The planning team identified five broad strategies to implement through this WCRP, 1) crossing remediation, 2) lateral barrier remediation, 3) dam remediation, 4) barrier prevention, and 5) communication and education. Individual actions were qualitatively evaluated based on the anticipated effect each action will have on realizing on-the-ground gains in connectivity. Effectiveness ratings are based on a combination of “Feasibility and”Impact”, Feasibility is defined as the degree to which the project team can implement the action within realistic constraints (financial, time, ethical, etc.) and Impact is the degree to which the action is likely to contribute to achieving one or more of the goals established in this plan.

## Strategy 1: Crossing Remediation

Table 6: Strategy 1

| ID | Actions | Details | Feasibility | Impact | Effectiveness |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 | Remediate crossings that are acting as barriers | This action represents some projects that would be led by the planning team with conservation funds (e.g., orphaned barriers or those owned by individuals), while other remediation projects would be the responsibility of the barrier owner. Industry will have to be engaged to successfully implement this intervention. PSC Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund proposal: - Complete remediation of one priority barrier, including engineering designs HCTF proposal: - Complete remediation of one priority barrier CNFASAR proposal (2022-26): - Complete remediation of one priority barrier per year for four years HRR Can help with finding local people to implement remediation projects. | High | Very high | Effective |
| 1.2 | Lobby that the government enforce their regulations | This can apply to both provincial and federal governments. For example, advocating for increased discretionary decisions to remove barriers to fish. One action could be to submit barrier assessment data to show proof that regulations are not being followed. | Very high | High | Effective |
| 1.3 | Initiate a barrier owner outreach program for locations on the barrier remediation shortlist | Work with landowners / users (e.g., ATV groups) to identify and remediate their aquatic barriers. Education component can help prevent barriers in the first place. HRR to reach out to owners of confirmed barriers to discuss remediation options; CWF to reach out to provincial representatives. | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 1.4 | Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | The model has been updated to reflect 2021 field assessments and intermediate barrier review. | Very high | High | Effective |
| 1.5 | Knowledge Gap: conduct field assessments on updated preliminary barrier list using the provincial fish passage framework and update connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist | Twenty-six field assessments performed in 2021. | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 1.6 | Update longitudinal connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist |  |  |  |  |
| 1.7 | Knowledge Gap: Identify and map crossing ownership | For barriers on the barrier remediation shortlist. | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 1.8 | Knowledge Gap: Compile road maintenance schedules | Ground-truthing is important, as the schedules do not always reflect what happens in the field. | High | High | Effective |
| 1.9 | Knowledge Gap: Survey trail-stream crossings to confirm low pressure rating values | Need to access detailed trail maps in the watershed to prioritize our time and resources. This should be accomplished as people are out surveying for other reasons rather than spending time and resources specifically to fill this knowledge gap. CNFASAR proposal: Collaborate with WLFN to: - Develop field assessment protocols for whether ATV trail stream crossings pass fish, and for assessing other effects on fish habitat - Map potential trail-stream crossings on salmon habitat that could be assessed - Assess 30-50 trail stream crossings, record measurements, and take pictures | Very high | Medium | Need more information |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Strategy 2: Lateral Barrier Remediation

Table 7: Strategy 2

| ID | Actions | Details | Feasibility | Impact | Effectiveness |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.1 | Remediate dikes / berms / other lateral barriers |  | High | Very high | Effective |
| 2.2 | Initiate a barrier owner outreach program |  | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 2.3 | Knowledge Gap: Identify and map year-round lateral habitat, as well as overwintering habitat | Explore the use of a drone to identify lateral habitat. - Volunteers from the HRR will conduct field habitat assessments following modules in the Pacific Streamkeepers Handbook to assess disconnected lateral and overwintering salmon habitats in the Horsefly watershed CNFASAR proposal: -Funding for equipment in 2022-2023, and for field transportation in 2022-2023, 2023-2024 | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 2.4 | Knowledge Gap: Map lateral barriers and barrier ownership | Focus on identifying ownership of priority lateral barriers that we want to remediate in the short-term. | Very high | Very high | Very effective |
| 2.5 | Knowledge Gap: Develop a framework to assess and prioritize between different lateral barrier remediation projects | CWF is leading a provincial-scale analysis of the effect of rail lines on connectivity for Anadromous Salmonids, as part of this project lateral habitat and barrier assessments and prioritization methods will be developed. | Very high | Very high | Very effective |

## Strategy 3: Dam Remediation

Table 8: Strategy 3

| ID | Actions | Details | Feasibility | Impact | Effectiveness |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 | Remediate Dams |  | Medium | Very high | Need more information |
| 3.2 | Install Fish Passage |  | Medium | High | Need more information |
| 3.3 | Connect with Cattleman's Association to explore a partnership to remediate dams | This may involve exploring alternative water management actions that would allow for the remediation of irrigation dams. | High | Medium | Need more information |
| 3.4 | Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | The model has been updated to reflect 2021 field assessments and intermediate barrier review. | Very high | High | Effective |
| 3.5 | Knowledge Gap: Assess dams to determine whether they exist and are truly blocking fish habitat | Four dams were assessed during 2021 field season; additional field assessment needed. | Very high | High | Effective |
| 3.6 | Knowledge Gap: Identify and map dam ownership |  | Very high | Very high | Very effective |

## Strategy 4: Barrier Prevention

Table 9: Strategy 4

| ID | Actions | Details | Feasibility | Impact | Effectiveness |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.1 | Explore potential partnerships with industrial companies | Invite industrial players to a workshop on how to apply crossing / lateral barrier BMPs. BMPs could include those that minimize the need for road-stream crossings. | Very high | High | Effective |
| 4.2 | Stabilize sediment sources that are explicitly linked to sediment wedges or erosion that are acting as barriers | This could include numerous bank stabilization techniques, including restoring riparian vegetation. This applies to some tributaries that have altered confluence areas - the link needs to be made between confluence alterations and timing of movement for juvenile fish. Local ranchers and Cattleman's association could be engaged, as well as forestry licensees. | Very high | Medium | Need more information |

## Strategy 5: Communication and Education

Table 10: Strategy 5

| ID | Actions | Details |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5.1 | Implement the WCRP Progress Tracking Plan | The WCRP Progress Tracking Plan will help the team determine if we are achieving our goals and objectives. |
| 5.2 | Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness and support for this WCRP | This intervention includes communicating both the WCRP and the collaborative process in developing it, as well as communicating outcomes (e.g., barrier remediations). CNFASAR proposal: - HRR will work with CWF to develop outreach and communications materials, including press releases, social media content, a video, and content for their website - With HRR, CWF will present on fish passage issues and solutions at the annual Horsefly River Salmon Festival |

## Theories of Change & Objectives

Theories of Change are explicit assumptions around how the identified actions will achieve gains in connectivity and contribute towards reaching the goals of the plan. To develop Theories of Change, the planning team developed explicit assumptions for each strategy which helped to clarify the rationale used for undertaking actions and provided an opportunity for feedback on invalid assumptions or missing opportunities. The Theories of Change are results oriented and clearly define the expected outcome. The following theory of change models were developed by the WCRP planning team to “map” the causal (“if-then”) progression of assumptions of how the actions within a strategy work together to achieve project goals.

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| --- |
| Figure 3: Theory of change developed by the planning team for the actions identified under Strategy 1: Crossing Remediation in the Horsefly River watershed. |

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 4: Theory of change developed by the planning team for the actions identified under Strategy 2: Lateral Barrier Remediation in the Horsefly River watershed. |

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 5: Theory of change developed by the planning team for the actions identified under Strategy 3: Dam Remediation in the Horsefly River watershed. |

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 6: Theory of change developed by the planning team for the actions identified under Strategy 4: Barrier Prevention in the Horsefly River watershed. |

## Operational Plan

The operational plan represents a preliminary exercise undertaken by the planning team to identify the potential leads, potential participants, and estimated cost for the implementation of each action in the Horsefly River watershed. The table below summarizes individuals, groups, or organizations that the planning team felt could lead or participate in the implementation of the plan and should be interpreted as the first step in on-going planning and engagement to develop more detailed and sophisticated action plans for each entry in the table. The individuals, groups, and organizations listed under the “Lead(s)” or “Potential Participants” columns are those that provisionally expressed interest in participating in one of those roles or were suggested by the planning team for further engagement (denoted in bold), for those that are not members of the planning team. The leads, participants, and estimated costs in the operational plan are not binding nor an official commitment of resources, but rather provide a roadmap for future coordination and engagement to work towards implementation of the WCRP.

Table 11: Operational plan to support the implementation of strategies and actions to improve connectivity for target species in the Horsefly River watershed.

| Strategy / Actions | Lead(s) [1] | Participants3 | Total Budget |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strategy 1: Crossing Remediation |  |  | $3,666,300.00 |
| 1.1 – Remediate crossings that are acting as barriers | CWF | Horsefly River Roundtable, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) | $3,500,000.00 |
| 1.2 – Lobby that the government enforce their regulations | TBD | CWF, Horsefly River Roundtable, Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) | $10,000.00 |
| 1.3 – Initiate a barrier owner outreach program for locations on the barrier remediation shortlist | HRR, CWF, DFO |  | TBD |
| 1.4 – Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | CWF | TBD | $100,000.00 |
| 1.5 – Knowledge Gap: conduct field assessments on updated preliminary barrier list using the provincial fish passage framework and update connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist | CWF | Horsefly River Roundtable, DFO | $50,300.00 |
| 1.6 - Update longitudinal connectivity goal if additional barriers are added to the barrier remediation shortlist |  |  |  |
| 1.7 – Knowledge Gap: Identify and map crossing ownership for barriers on the barrier remediation shortlist | TBD | CWF, DFO (Anthonie) | $1,500.00 |
| 1.8 – Knowledge Gap: Compile road maintenance schedules | DFO | CWF, WLFN, DFO, FLNRORD | $2,000.00 |
| 1.9 – Knowledge Gap: Survey trail-stream crossings to confirm low pressure rating values | WLFN | CWF, DFO | $2,500.00 |
| Strategy 2: Lateral Barrier Remediation |  |  | $80,000.00 |
| 2.1 – Remediate dikes / berms / other structures that are acting as barriers | CWF | DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable | TBD |
| 2.2 – Initiate a barrier owner outreach program | TBD | CWF, DFO | TBD |
| 2.3 – Knowledge Gap: Identify and map year-round lateral habitat, as well as overwintering habitat | Horsefly River Roundtable, DFO | CWF, Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC), WLFN | $65,000.00 |
| 2.4 – Knowledge Gap: Map lateral barriers and barrier ownership | CWF | DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable | $5,000.00 |
| 2.5 – Knowledge Gap: Develop a framework to assess and prioritize between different lateral barrier remediation projects | CWF | DFO | $10,000.00 |
| Strategy 3: Dam Remediation |  |  | $1,305,000.00 |
| 3.1 - Remediate Dams | TBD | TBD | $1,305,000.00 |
| 3.2 - Install Fish Passage | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 3.3 - Connect with Cattleman's Association to explore a partnership to remediate dams | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 3.4 - Knowledge Gap: Continue updating the barrier prioritization model | CWF | TBD | $0.00 |
| 3.5 - Knowledge Gap: Assess dams to determine whether they exist and are truly blocking salmon habitat | HRR(?) DFO(?) CWF(?) | TBD | TBD |
| 3.6 - Knowledge Gap: Identify and map dam ownership | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| Strategy 4: Barrier Prevention |  |  | $110,000.00 |
| 4.1 – Explore potential partnerships with industrial companies | TBD | CWF, DFO, Horsefly River Roundtable, WLFN | $10,000.00 |
| 4.2 – Stabilize sediment sources that are explicitly linked to sediment wedges or erosion that are acting as barriers | TBD | DFO | $100,000.00 |
| Strategy 5: Progress Tracking Plan |  |  | TBD |
| 5.1 - Implement the WCRP Progress Tracking Plan | CWF |  | TBD |
| 5.2 - Develop a communication action to raise awareness and support for this WCRP | CWF, HRR | TBD | TBD |
| Total: |  |  | $5,161,300.00 |
| Fundraising total: |  |  | $2,508,800 |
| Proponent/government contribution total: |  |  | $2,652,500 |

## Funding Sources

| Funding Source | Spending Restrictions and Other Consideration |
| --- | --- |
| Land Based Investment Strategy | Assessment and remediation of fish passage using provincial strategic approach. Primarily for remediation of Ministry-owned/orphaned barriers on forest service roads. |
| Environmental Enhancement Fund | Fish and wildlife passage improvements and restoration at stream and animal crossings at MOTI roads including culvert retrofits and replacement to restore Pacific salmon and trout access, and wildlife tunnels. Primarily for crossings linked to highway infrastructure. |
| Community Salmon Program | For projects supporting the protection, conservation and enhancement or rehabilitation of Pacific salmonids and their habitat. Funding for volunteer and not-for-profit community-based groups. Applicant must have a significant volunteer component to their group and to the project. Requires 50% match for funding (volunteer, in-kind, donation or other grants). |
| Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund | Supports 3 activities: (1) develop improved information for resource management; (2) Rehabilitate and restore marine and freshwater habitat; and (3) enhance wild stock production through low technology techniques. Emphasis for funding is on stocks of conservation concern, particularly those contributing to a fishery and stocks of bilateral fishery relevance. |
| Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation Enhancement and Restoration Grants | Projects that focus on freshwater wild fish, native wildlife species and their habitats, have the potential to achieve a significant conservation outcome, while maintaining or enhancing opportunities for fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and associated outdoor recreational activities. Primary focus is on provincially managed fisheries such as Steelhead and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. Requires 50% funding match. |
| Environmental Damages Fund | Direct funds received from fines, court orders and voluntary payments to priority projects that will benefit Canada’s natural environment, under 4 categories of improvement (in order of preference): (1) restoration, (2) environmental quality improvement, (3) research and development, and (4) education and awareness. |
| Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk | Program for non-profits, Indigenous governments, academic institutions for activities that align with recovery actions identified in SARA recovery documents and/or COSEWIC assessment documents. Project must address one or more of 3 broad categories: (1) Important habitat for aquatic species at risk is improved and/or managed to meet their recovery needs; (2) Threats to aquatic species at risk and/or their habitat are stopped, removed, and/or mitigated; (3) Collaboration and partnerships support the conservation and recovery of aquatic species at risk. Limited to at-risk species listed under COSEWIC and/or SARA as threatened, endangered or special concern. |
| Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk | Funding program aimed at addressing priority threats for aquatic species at risk listed as endangered, threatened or Special Concern by COSEWIC, as they align with existing federal, provincial or other local recovery plans. Limited to species in the Columbia and Fraser basins in BC, among other priority areas across Canada. Focus on multi-year, multi-partner initiatives that apply an ecosystem or multi-species approach and create a legacy by enabling recovery actions that carry beyond the life of the funding program. Amounts from $100K-$1M available per year. |
| BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund | Funding for Indigenous enterprises, academia, industry associations, stewardship groups and commercial groups to support initiatives that support the protection and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and other BC fish stocks or ensure fish and seafood sector in BC is environmentally and economically sustainable. Five main priorities including species of concern rebuilding through habitat restoration with priority for projects that are part of a watershed-scale restoration plan/prioritization effort; build on successful previous restoration efforts; focus on critical habitat and/or the rehabilitation of natural ecosystem processes. |
| Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk | Program for Indigenous groups for activities that align with recovery actions identified in SARA recovery documents and/or COSEWIC assessment documents for species listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern by SARA or COSEWIC. Project must address one or more of 4 broad categories: (1) Habitat for species at risk is improved and/or managed to meet their recovery needs; (2) Threats to species at risk and/or their habitat are stopped, removed and/or mitigated; (3) Collaboration, information sharing and partnership between Indigenous communities, governments and organizations and other interested parties (e.g. federal/provincial/territorial governments, academia, industry, private sector) is enhanced; and (4) Capacity within Indigenous communities, to lead in the stewardship of species at risk and contribute to broader SARA implementation, is strengthened. |
| Federal Gas Tax Fund - Community Works Fund | Funding available to local governments from federal gas tax, with funds to be allocated for a variety of municipal projects/initiatives, including local roads/bridges and disaster mitigation. |
| Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund | For those projects where flood risk is high: Funding available to local, regional and provincial governments, private sector, non-profit organizations, and Indigenous groups for projects aimed at reducing the socio-economic, environmental and cultural impacts triggered by natural hazards and extreme weather events and taking into consideration current and future impacts of climate change in communities and infrastructure at high risk. Includes both new construction of public infrastructure and modification/reinforcement of existing infrastructure. Projects must have a minimum of $20 M in eligible expenditures and can be bundled together. |
| Community Gaming Grants | Funding for non-profit organizations (check funding program guidelines for specific eligibility requirements) for programs that help to protect and improve the environment by: (1) Conserving or revitalizing local ecosystems, (2) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, (3) Providing community education or engagement opportunities related to the environment and agriculture or (4) Supporting the welfare of domestic animals and/or wildlife. Grants range from $100K-250K per year. |
| Sitka Foundation | Funding for registered charities, universities, and government agencies (qualified Canadian organizations) for projects related to coastline and watershed conservation and climate change in 4 key areas: (1) land, water, and ocean conservation, (2) scientific research for nature and the environment, (3) public engagement around the importance of a healthy environment, (4) innovative conservation efforts in Canadian communities, at the local, provincial, and federal levels |
| TULA Foundation | Supports various environmental programs of interest to the Foundation on a case-by-case basis. |
| Vancouver Foundation | Granting agency for community, social and environmental initiatives for qualified Canadian organizations (charitable organizations, universities, government agencies). Granting programs change on an annual basis. |
| BC Conservation Foundation Small Project Fund | Funding available to Non-profits, fish and wildlife clubs (sportsmen’s associations), businesses, local/regional governments, public organizations and First Nations for projects with demonstrated positive impact for fish, wildlife and habitat, including outreach programs. Preference given to projects where BCCF is not the sole funder. |
| Real Estate Foundation of BC General Grants | Funding for First Nations, charities and societies, non-governmental organizations, universities and colleges, trade associations, local and regional governments, and social enterprises registered as C3s for sustainable land use and real estate practices in BC. Funds up to 50% of cash portion of a project. |

**?(caption)**

# Data Download and Methods

## Modelled Anadromous Salmon Habitat Maps

High-resolution PDF maps of the Horsefly River watershed and model results can be accessed [here](https://github.com/smnorris/bcfishpass/tree/main/wcrp/pdfs). The watershed is divided into multiple maps sheets to allow for detailed examination of modelled spawning and rearing habitat, multiple barrier types, and priority barriers identified through this planning process. The locations of WCRP priority barriers and associated map sheet numbers are shown below. In each individual map sheet, priority barriers are symbolized using the following notation:

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 7: Horsefly River watershed overview map identifying the portions of the watershed covered by each map sheet (grey squares) and the prioritized barriers on the intermediate barrier list (orange points; see Appendix B). |

## Connectivity Status Assessment Methods

The connectivity status assessment for anadromous salmonids in the Horsefly River watershed builds on existing connectivity modelling work undertaken by the BC Fish Passage Technical Working Group, resulting in a flexible, customizable open-source spatial model called “bcfishpass”. The model spatially locates known and modelled barriers to fish passage, identifies potential spawning and rearing habitat for target species, and estimates the amount of habitat that is currently accessible to target species. The model uses an adapted version of the Intrinsic Potential (IP) fish habitat modelling framework (see Sheer et al. 2009 for an overview of the IP framework). The habitat model uses two geomorphic characteristics of the stream network — channel gradient and mean annual discharge — to identify potential spawning habitat and rearing habitat for each target species. The habitat model does not attempt to definitively map each habitat type nor estimate habitat quality, but rather identifies stream segments that have high potential to support spawning or rearing habitat for each species based on the geomorphic characteristics of the segment. For more details on the connectivity and habitat model structure and parameters, please see Mazany-Wright et al. (2021a). The variables and thresholds used to model potential spawning and rearing habitat for each target species are summarized in Table 15. The quantity of modelled habitat for each species was aggregated for each habitat type and represents a linear measure of potential habitat. To recognize the rearing value provided by features represented by polygons for certain species (e.g., wetlands for Coho Salmon and lakes for Sockeye Salmon) a multiplier of 1.5x the length of the stream segments flowing through the polygons was applied.

| Species | Channel Gradient (%) | Mean annual discharge (m3/s) | Channel gradient (%) | Mean Annual discharge (m3/s) | Minimum Lake area (ha) | Multiplier (1.5x) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Chinook Salmon | 0-3 | 0.46-322.5 | 0-5 | 0.28-100 |  |  |
|  | (Busch et al. 2011, Cooney and Holzer 2006) | (Bjornn and Reiser 1991, Neuman and Newcombe 1977, Woll et al. 2017, Roberge et al. 2002, Raleigh and Miller 1986) | (Woll et al. 2017, Porter et al. 2008) | (Agrawal et al. 2005) |  |  |
| Coho Salmon | 0-5 | 0.164-59.15 | 0-5 | 0.03-40 |  | Wetland |
|  | (Roberge et al. 2002, Sloat et al. 2017) | (Bjornn and Reiser 1991, Sloat et al. 2017, Neuman and Newcombe 1977, Woll et al. 2017, McMahon 1983) | (Porter et al. 2008, Rosenfeld et al. 2000) | (Agrawal et al. 2005, Burnett et al. 2007) |  |  |
| Sockeye Salmon | 0-2 | 0.175-65 |  |  | 200 | Lake |
|  | (Lake 1999, Hoopes 1972) | (Bjornn and Reiser 1991, Woll et al. 2017, Neuman and Newcombe 1977, Roberge et al. 2002) |  |  | (Woll et al. 2017) |  |

**?(caption)**