SOCIETY FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Restoring Fish Passage in the Peace Region - 2022 - PEA-F23-F-3761-DCA

Prepared for
Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program
and
Fish Passage Technical Working Group

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on behalf of
Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC

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Acknowledgement

Modern civilization has a long journey ahead to acknowledge and address the historic and ongoing impacts of colonialism that have resulted in harm to the cultures and livelihoods living interconnected with our ecosystems for many thousands of years.

Executive Summary

The health and viability of freshwater fish populations can depend on access to tributary and off channel areas which provide refuge during high flows, opportunities for foraging, overwintering habitat, spawning habitat and summer rearing habitat. As road crossing structures are commonly upgraded or removed there are numerous opportunities to restore connectivity by ensuring that fish passage considerations are incorporated into repair, replacement, relocation and deactivation designs.

The Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC (SERNbc) is working together with the McLeod Lake Indian Band, the Peace Region Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP), the Provincial Fish Passage Technical Working Group (FPTWG), Ministry of Forests, road/rail tenure holders and other FWCP stakeholders/partners to prioritize, plan and fund the restoration of fish passage at Parsnip River watershed road crossing structure barriers.

The project engages FWCP partners and stakeholders to clearly communicate fish passage issues in FWCP Peace Region wtersheds watershed while collaboratively planning and executing the steps necessary to realize fish passage restorations. Work completed and ongoing aligns with the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Rivers, Lakes and Reservoirs Action Plan (Fish and ildlife Compensation Program 2020) sub objective 6 of addressing fish passage issues in streams to enhance productivity of priority species. Project activities undertaken address the following actions:

- PEA.RLR.S06.RI.20 - Conducting engagement to prioritize options for fish passage improvement-P1
- PEA.RLR.S06.RI.19 - Conducting research to prioritize fish passage actions-P1
- PEA.RLR.S06.HB.21 - Restoring fish access to streams-P1

This project builds on Society for Ecosystem Restoration Northern BC (SERNbc) work in 2018 - 2019 and 2021 - 2022 which can be referenced here (A. Irvine 2020) and here (A. Irvine 2022).

Through 2022/2023 project activities numerous project partners were engaged and we were able to identify and conduct fish passage planning/restoration activities at multiple high priority sites.

- At PSCIS crossing 125179 - a tributary to Missinka River within the Parsnip River watershed group, twin culverts that were negatively impacting fish passage were replaced with a clear-span bridge.
- Two crossings on the Chuchinka-Table FSR within the Parsnip River watershed group were prepared for replacement with engineering designs commissioned and construction materials purchased by Canadian Forest Products.
- Numerous sites were assessed in the field including those identified through 2021/2022 planning activities and sites where data collected can be utilized in future years to

understand the severity of connectivity issues and help evaluate the effectiveness of restoration investments.
- We have been actively engaging with numerous groups to build awareness for the initiative, solicit input, prioritize sites, raise partnership funding and plan/implement fish passage remediations.
- Field maps incorporating the newly developed sa'ba (bull trout) spawning and rearing habitat model have been developed for the Parsnip River, Carp Lake and Crooked River watershed groups to facilitate communication among project collaborators and on the ground assessments. The georeferenced *pdf* maps are served online and were were generated using reproducible open source workflows.
- We built an interactive dashboard to allow users to conduct background research and planning to facilitate communication and enable future field surveys in the Peace Region. The interactive interface allows screening of previously inventoried as well as modelled stream crossing locations based on watershed group as well as the likely quantity and quality of bull trout rearing and spawning habitat modelled upstream.. Historic assessment data including photos of sites can be viewed when present and users can download csv results and associated georeferenced field maps to facilitate field surveys.

Although an engineering design was commissioned by Sinclar Group to facilitate replacement of high priority PSCIS crossing 125000 on the Chuchinka-Arctic FSR in 2022, installation of the clearspan structure has been delayed because of changes in plans for logging beyond the stream due to old growth referrals. The British Columbia government has asked licensees to defer harvest of these areas until "partners develop a new approach for old growth forest management".

British Columbia Timber Sales is planning to deactivate the Chuchinka-Colbourne FSR between the location of high priority PSCIS crossing 125345 on a tributary to the Parsnip River and the Chuchinka-Anzac FSR. Included in the deactivation is removal of crossing 125345. The work was scheduled for July and August of 2022 but has been rescheduled for this year due to a road washout in 2022.

In addition to structure replacements and removals to restore connectivity - communications, research and monitoring are essential parts of any restoration initiative as they ensure that we identify the best and most efficient opportunities for fish passage restoration while incorporating adaptive management informed by traditional knowledge and real-time planning/monitoring data. Recommendations going forward include:

- Continue to engage partners to raise funds for remediations, identify sites for restoration, conduct remedial works and assess effectiveness of works.
- Continue to conduct detailed assessments where blockages are present and large amounts of habitat are potentially available within the Parsnip River and neighboring watershed groups. As timelines for remediations can be extensive, planning onerous and costs of remedial works significant, continuing assessments throughout the greater area will provide more options for remediation and engage additional funding partners (ex. Ministry of

Transportation and Infrastructure, alternative forest licensees). Identifying areas of concern near the community of McLeod Lake is expected to further engage community members and most effectively promote restoration activities.

- Conduct effectiveness monitoring where sites have been remediated, where sites have been prioritized and where remediations are planned. Electrofishing surveys including tagging of target species with PIT tags are recommended to understand the extent of connectivity impairments, track fish movement/health over time and inform adaptive management. Detailed habitat assessments and acquisition of temperature data can be considered along with photo documentation of stream morphology near crossings.

Introduction

The health and viability of freshwater fish populations can depend on access to tributary and off channel areas which provide refuge during high flows, opportunities for foraging, overwintering habitat, spawning habitat and summer rearing habitat (Bramblett et al. 2002; Swales and Levings 1989; Diebel et al. 2015). Culverts can present barriers to fish migration due to low water depth, increased water velocity, turbulence, a vertical drop at the culvert outlet and/or maintenance issues (Slaney, Zaldokas, and Watershed Restoration Program (B.C.) 1997; Cote et al. 2005). As road crossing structures are commonly upgraded or removed there are numerous opportunities to restore connectivity by ensuring that fish passage considerations are incorporated into repair, replacement, relocation and deactivation designs.

The Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC (SERNbc) is working together with the McLeod Lake Indian Band, the Peace Region Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP), the Provincial Fish Passage Technical Working Group (FPTWG), road/rail tenure holders and other FWCP stakeholders/partners to prioritize, plan and fund the restoration of fish passage at Parsnip River watershed road crossing structure barriers.

This project builds on Society for Ecosystem Restoration Northern BC (SERNbc) work in 2019 - 2020 and 2021 - 2022 which can be referenced here (A. Irvine 2020) and here (A. Irvine 2022). Through this year's project activities (2022/2023) we engaged numerous project partners and were able to identify and catalyze fish passage restoration activities at multiple high priority sites. At PSCIS crossing 125179 - a tributary to Missinka River, culverts were replaced with a clear-span bridge. Additionally, numerous sites were assessed in the field and two crossings on the Chuchinka-Table FSR were prioritized for replacement in 2024 - 2025 with engineering designs commissioned and construction materials purchased.

Through the ongoing development of open source analysis and data presentation tools (including pdf and web-hosted dashboard tools) we are identifying new restoration opportunities, clarifying restoration benefits, communicating with the broader community and implementing on the ground works.

This report is available as pdf and as an online interactive report at https://newgraphenvironment.github.io/fish_passage_peace_2022_reporting/. We recommend viewing online as the web-hosted version contains more features and is more easily navigable. Please reference the website for the latest version number and download the most up to date pdf from https://github.com/NewGraphEnvironment/fish_passage_peace_2022_reporting/raw/master/docs/Peace2022.pdf

This document can be considered a living document. Version numbers are logged for each release with modifications, enhancements and other changes tracked here with issues and proposed/planned enhancements tracked here.

1 Background

The study area includes the Parsnip River watershed group and neighbouring areas and is within the traditional territories of the Tse'khene First Nations and the FWCP Peace Region (Figure 1.1).

In 2019/2020, following a literature review, analysis of fish habitat modelling data, the Provincial Stream Crossing Inventory System (PSCIS) and a community scoping exercise within the McLeod Lake Indian Band habitat confirmation assessments were conducted at 17 sites throughout the Parsnip River watershed with 10 crossings rated as high priorities for rehabilitation and three crossings rated as moderate priorities for restoration. An engineering design for site 125179 on a tributary to the Missinka River was also completed through the 2019/2020 project. In 2021/2022, project activities reconvened through FWCP directed project PEA-F22-F-3577-DCA. Partners were engaged, funding was raised, planning was conducted and reporting was completed to initiate restoration activities of high priority crossings. Materials were purchased and permitting was put in place to prep for replacement of the twin culverts on the Missinka River tributary with a clear-span bridge.

In 2022/2023, this collaborative project leveraged ongoing connectivity restoration initiatives in the province and engaged multiple partners to catalyze fish passage restoration activities at high-priority sites identified in 2019/2020 and 2021/2022. Key accomplishments include the replacement of PSCIS crossing 125179, prioritization of two crossings on the Chuchinka-Table FSR for replacement in 2024-2025 (with engineering designs commissioned and materials purchased), and field assessments including fish sampling at high priority crossing 125000 on a tributary to the Parsnip River near Arctic Lake.

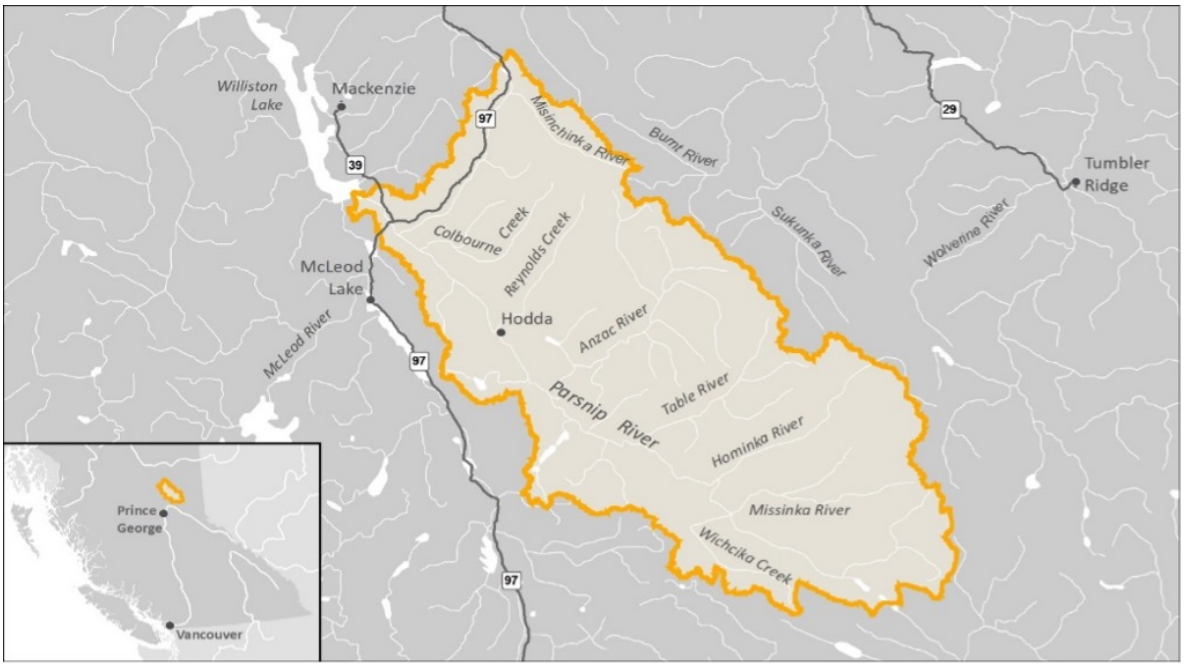

Figure 1.1: Overview map of Study Area

Tse'khene

The Parsnip River watershed is located within the south-eastern portion of the 108,000 km^2 traditional territory of the Tse'khene from the McLeod Lake Indian Band. The Tse'khene *"People of the Rocks"* are a south westerly extension of the Athabascan speaking people of northern Canada. They were nomadic hunters whose language belongs to the Beaver-Sarcee-Tse'khene branch of Athapaskan ("History Who We Are" 2023). Extensive work is underway to preserve the language with resources such as First Voices available online and in app form for iphone and ipad devices.

The continental divide separates watersheds flowing north into the Arctic Ocean via the Mackenzie River and south and west into the Pacific Ocean via the Fraser River (Figure 1.1). The Parsnip River is a 6th order stream with a watershed that drains an area of 5597km^2. The mainstem of the river flows within the Rocky Mountain Trench in a north direction into Williston Reservoir starting from the continental divide adjacent to Arctic Lakes. Major tributaries include the Misinchinka, Colbourne, Reynolds, Anzac, Table, Hominka and Missinka sub-basins which drain the western slopes of the Hart Ranges of the Rocky Mountains. The Parsnip River has a mean annual discharge of 150.4 m^3/s with flow patterns typical of high elevation watersheds on the west side of the northern Rocky Mountains which receive large amounts of precipitation as snow leading to peak levels of discharge during snowmelt, typically from May to July (Figures 1.2 - 1.3).

Construction of the 183 m high and 2134 m long W.A.C. Bennett Dam was completed in 1967 at Hudson's Hope, BC, creating the Williston Reservoir (Hirst 1991). Filling of the 375km^2 reservoir was complete in 1972 and flooded a substantial portion of the Parsnip River and major tributary valleys forming what is now known as the Peace and Parsnip reaches. The replacement of riverine habitat with an inundated reservoir environment resulted in profound changes to the ecology, resource use and human settlement patterns in these systems (Hagen et al. 2015a; Pearce 2019; Stamford, Hagen, and Williamson 2017). Prior to the filling of the reservoir, the Pack River, into which McLeod Lake flows, was a major tributary to the Parsnip River. The Pack River currently enters the Williston Reservoir directly as the historic location of the confluence of the two rivers lies within the reservoir's footprint.

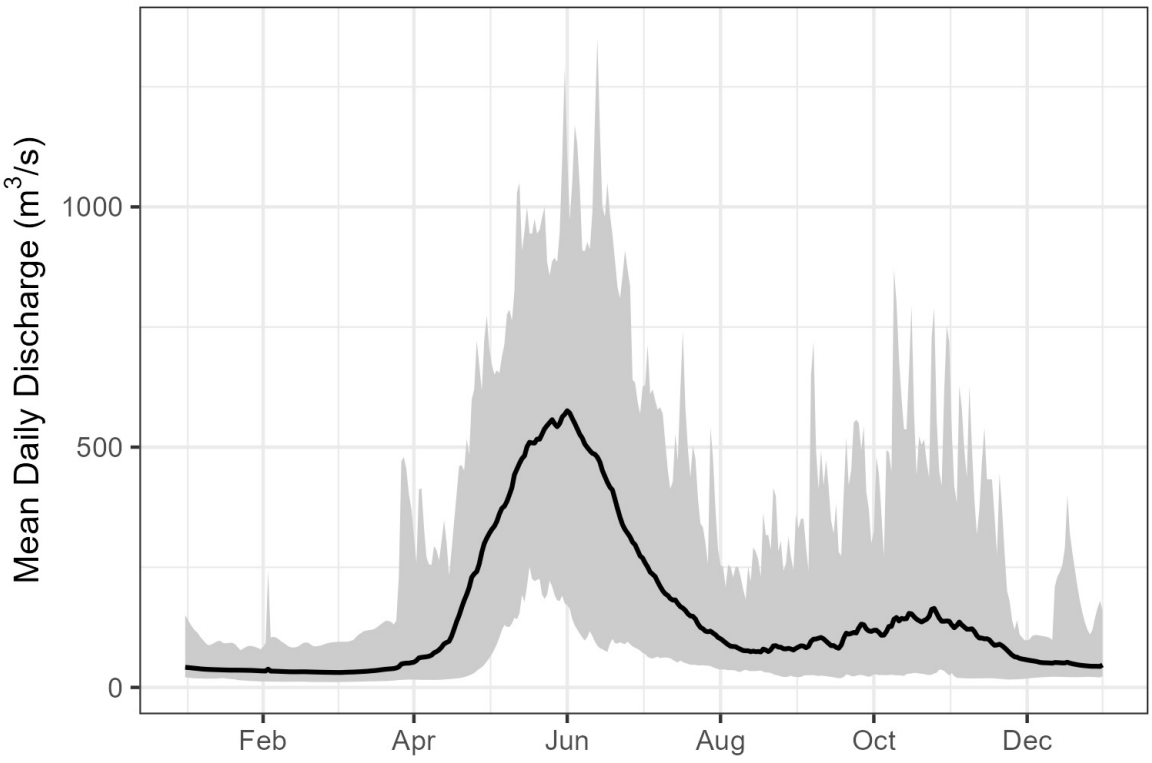

Figure 1.2: Parsnip River Above Misinchinka River (Station #07EE007 - Lat 55.08194 Lon -122.913063). Available daily discharge data from 1967 to 2019.

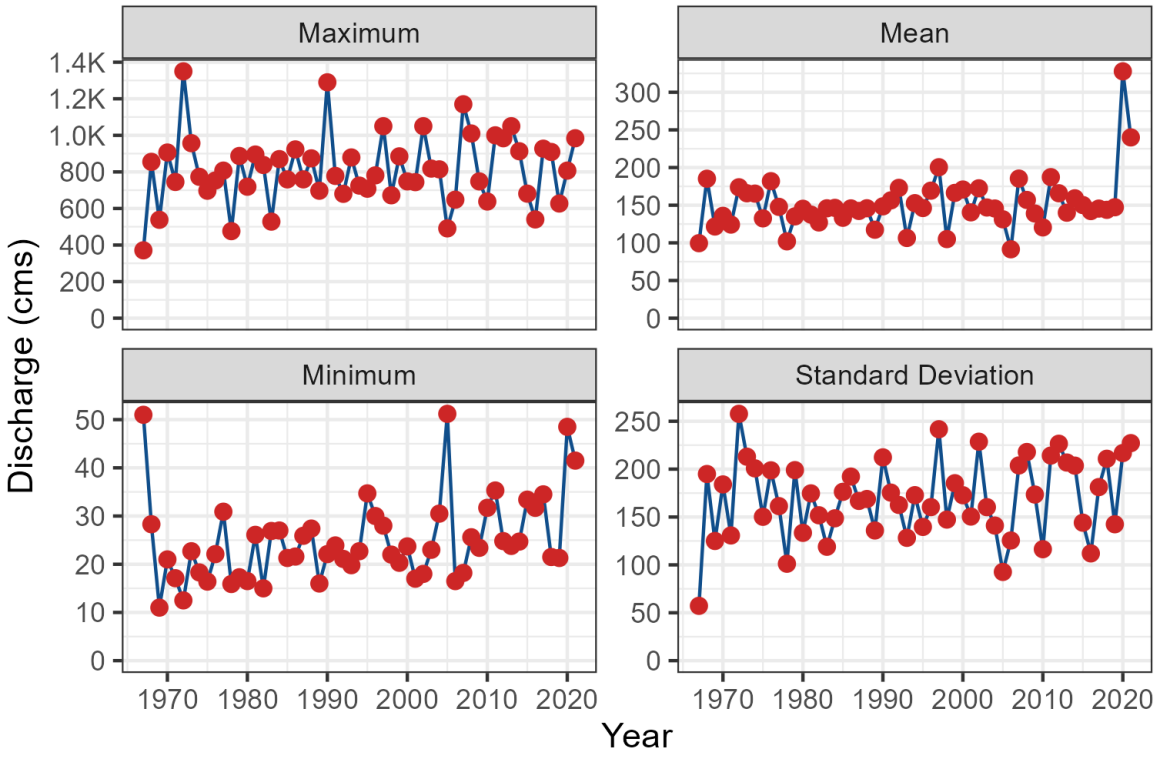

Figure 1.3: Summary discharge statistics (annual maximum, minimum, mean and standard deviation) for Parsnip River at hydrometric station #07EE007.

Fisheries

Fish species recorded in the Parsnip River watershed are detailed in Table 1.1 (MoE 2019a). In addition to flooding related to the formation of the Williston Reservoir, transmission lines, gas pipelines, rail, road networks, forestry, elevated water temperatures, interrupted connectivity, invasion from non-native species and insect infestations affecting forested areas pose threats to fisheries values in the Parsnip River watershed (Hagen et al. 2015b; Stamford, Hagen, and Williamson 2017; Hagen and Weber 2019a; Comittee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada 2012). A brief summary of trends and knowledge status related to Arctic grayling, bull trout, kokanee, mountain whitefish and rainbow trout in Williston Watershed streams is provided in Fish and ildlife Compensation Program (2020) with a more detailed review of the state of knowledge for Parsnip River watershed populations of Arctic grayling and bull trout provided below.

Table 1.1: Fish species recorded in the Parsnip River, Carp Lake, and Crooked River watershed groups.

Scientific Name	Species Name	Species Code	BC List	Provincial FRPA	COSEWIC	SARA	Parsnip	Carp	Crooked
Catostomus catostomus	Longnose Sucker	LSU	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Catostomus columbianus	Bridgelip Sucker	BSU	Yellow	–	–	–	–	–	Yes
Catostomus									

Scientific Name	Species Name	Species Code	BC List	Provincial FRPA	COSEWIC	SARA	Parsnip	Carp	Crooked
commersonii	White Sucker	WSU	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Catostomus macrocheilus	Largescale Sucker	CSU	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coregonus clupeaformis	Lake Whitefish	LW	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cottus aleuticus	Coastrange Sculpin (formerly Aleutian Sculpin)	CAL	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
Cottus asper	Prickly Sculpin	CAS	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cottus cognatus	Slimy Sculpin	CCG	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	–
Cottus hubbsi	Mottled Sculpin	CBA	Blue	–	SC (Nov 2010)	1-SC (Jun 2003)	Yes	–	–
Couesius plumbeus	Lake Chub	LKC	Yellow	–	DD	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Esox lucius	Northern Pike	NP	Yellow	–	–	–	–	–	Yes
Hybognathus hankinsoni	Brassy Minnow	BMC	No Status	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes
Lota lota	Burbot	BB	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mylocheilus caurinus	Peamouth Chub	PCC	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oncorhynchus mykiss	Rainbow Trout	RB	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oncorhynchus nerka	Kokanee	KO	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
Osmerus dentex	Rainbow Smelt	RSM	Unknown	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
Prosopium coulterii	Pygmy Whitefish	PW	Yellow	–	NAR (Nov 2016)	–	Yes	–	–
Prosopium cylindraceum	Round Whitefish	RW	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
Prosopium williamsoni	Mountain Whitefish	MW	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ptychocheilus oregonensis	Northern Pikeminnow	NSC	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rhinichthys cataractae	Longnose Dace	LNC	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	–	Yes
Richardsonius balteatus	Redside Shiner	RSC	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salvelinus confluentus	Bull Trout	BT	Blue	Y (Jun 2006)	SC (Nov 2012)	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salvelinus fontinalis	Brook Trout	EB	Exotic	–	–	–	Yes	–	Yes
Salvelinus malma	Dolly Varden	DV	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salvelinus namaycush	Lake Trout	LT	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thymallus arcticus	Arctic Grayling	GR	Yellow	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
–	Chub (General)	CBC	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
–	Dace (General)	DC	–	–	–	–	Yes	–	–
–	Minnow (General)	C	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
–	Sculpin (General)	CC	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
–	Squanga	SQ	–	–	–	–	–	–	Yes
–	Sucker (General)	SU	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
–	Whitefish (General)	WF	–	–	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes

* COSEWIC abbreviations :
SC - Special concern
DD - Data deficient
NAR - Not at risk

BC List definitions :
Yellow - Species that is apparently secure
Blue - Species that is of special concern
Exotic - Species that have been moved beyond their natural range as a result of human activity

Bull Trout - sa'ba

Tse'khene Elders from the McLeod Lake Indian Band report that sa'ba (bull trout) size and abundance has decreased in all rivers and tributaries from the reservoir with more injured and diseased fish captured in recent history than was common in the past (Pearce 2019).

Bull Trout populations of the Williston Reservoir watershed are included within the Western Arctic population 'Designatable Unit 10', which, in 2012, received a ranking of 'Special Concern' by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC 2012). They were added to Schedule 1 under the Species of Risk Act in 2019 (Species Registry Canada 2020) and are also considered of special concern (blue-listed) provincially (BC Species & Ecosystem Explorer 2020). Some or all of the long-term foot survey index sections of four Williston Reservoir spawning tributaries (Davis Creek, Misinchinka River, Point Creek, and Scott Creek), have been surveyed within 16 of the 19 years between 2001 and 2019 (16 of 19 in Davis River, 10 years over a 13-year period in the Misinchinka River, 11 years over a 14-year period for Point Creek, and 9 years over an 11-year period for Scott Creek (Hagen, Spendlow, and Pillipow 2020).

A study of sa'ba critical habitats in the Parsnip River was conducted in 2014 with the Misinchinka and Anzac systems identified as the most important systems for large bodied bull trout spawners accounting for a combined total of 65% of spawners counted. The Table River was also highlighted as an important spawning destination accounting for an estimated 15% of the spawners. Other watersheds identified as containing runs of large bodied bull troutspawners included the Colbourne, Reynolds, Hominka and Missinka River with potentially less than 50 spawners utilizing each sub-basin (Hagen et al. 2015a). Hagen and Weber (2019b) have synthesized a large body of information regarding limiting factors, enhancement potential, critical habitats and conservation status for bull trout of the Williston Reservoir and the reader is encouraged to review this work for context. They have recommended experimental enhancements within a monitoring framework for Williston Reservoir bull trout (some spawning and rearing in Parsnip River mainstem and tributaries) which include stream fertilization, side channel development, riparian restoration and fish access improvement.

In 2018, sub-basins of the Anzac River watershed, Homininka River, Missinka River and Table River watersheds were designated as fisheries sensitive watersheds under the authority of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* due to significant downstream fisheries values and significant watershed sensitivity (Beaudry 2013a, 2014a, 2014b, 2013b). Special management is required in these watersheds to protect habitat for fish species including bull trout and Arctic grayling including measures (among others) to limit equivalent clearcut area, reduce impacts to natural stream channel morphology, retain old growth attributes and maintain fish habitat/movement (Forest and Range Practices Act 2018).

Arctic Grayling - dusk'ihje

Tse'khene Elders from the McLeod Lake Indian Band report that Arctic grayling numbers have declined dramatically since the flooding of the reservoir and that few dusk'ihje (Arctic Grayling) have been caught in the territory in the past 30 years (Pearce 2019).

Since impoundment of the Williston Reservoir, it appears that physical habitat and ecological changes have been the most significant factors limiting Arctic grayling productivity. Although these changes are not well understood they have likely resulted in the inundation of key low gradient juvenile rearing and overwintering habitats, isolation of previously connected populations and increases in abundance of predators such as bull trout (Shrimpton, Roberts, and Clarke 2012; Hagen, Pillipow, and Gantner 2018). Rapid increases in industrial activity and angler access in the Parsnip River watershed pose significant risks to Arctic Grayling productivity with these threats primarily linked to forestry and pipeline initiatives (Hagen and Stamford 2021).

A detailed review of dusk'ihje life history can be referenced in Stamford, Hagen, and Williamson (2017). Migration of mature adult dusk'ihje (Arctic grayling) occurs in the spring with arrival at known spawning locations coinciding with water temperatures of 4°C. Spawning in the Parsnip watershed appears to occur between late-May and late-June within sites located primarily within the lower reaches of the Anzac and Table rivers as well as within the Parsnip River mainstem. Side-channel and multiple-channel locations containing small gravels appear to be selected for spawning. Currently, the primary distribution of Williston Arctic grayling appears to be among fourth order and larger streams (Williamson and Zimmerman 2005; Stamford, Hagen, and Williamson 2017). Stewart et al. (2007) report that Arctic grayling spawn in large and small tributaries to rivers and lakes, intermittent streams, within mainstem rivers as well as lakes, most commonly at tributary mouths. Although past study results indicate that 0+ grayling appeared to overwinter in lower reaches of larger tributaries (i.e. Table, Anzac rivers) as well as the Parsnip River and that few age-1+ grayling have been sampled in tributaries, habitat use in small tributaries and the extent they are connected with the mainstem habitats of all core areas is not well understood. Between 1995 and 2019, Arctic grayling population monitoring has been conducted in the Table River in nine out of 25 years (8 years for the Anzac) using snorkel surveys. Results from 2018 are 2019 are intended to contribute to the assessment of the conservation status of the species in the Parsnip Core area (Hagen, Pillipow, and Gantner 2018). In 2019, preliminary telemetry results indicate that both Arctic grayling and bull trout rely on the Parsnip River mainstem for overwinter residencies. Arctic grayling move into the tributaries beginning in April, and become widespread across the watershed by June.

Year 3 of a 5 year study on Parsnip River watershed abundance and trend are discussed in Hagen and Stamford (2021) where they report that the most productive habitats for Arctic grayling summer rearing are within the Missinka, Hominka, Anzac and Table Rivers. Although estimated abundance is lower than in the Anzac and Table Rivers, productive summer rearing habitats for adult Arctic grayling in the upper Parsnip River watershed are distributed between 36-29 km of the Missinka River and from 48-32 km of the Hominka River. In the Anzac River, a 30-km stretch from a chute

obstruction at 47 km to 16 km is assumed to provide productive summer rearing habitats for adult as it is characterized by a high abundance of Arctic grayling. Although the spatial distribution of high Arctic grayling abundance in the Table River has not been determined through reconnaissance surveys it has been observed to span at least a 20-km zone from the waterfall migration barrier at 37 km to 18 km.

Spatial ecology studies in the Parsnip between 2018 and 2021 has been reported on by Martins et al. (2022) with results related to:

- temperature modeling and spatio-temporal patterns in thermal habitat,
- telemetry data modeling and arctic grayling spatial ecology, and
- trophic relationships between Arctic grayling and bull trout

A review of available fisheries data for the Parsnip River watershed stratified by different habitat characteristics can provide insight into which habitats may provide the highest intrinsic value for fish species based on the number of fish captured in those habitats in past assessment work (Figures 1.4 - 1.6). It should be noted however that it should not be assumed that all habitat types have been sampled in a non-biased fashion or that particular sites selected do not have a disproportionate influence on the overall dataset composition (ie. fish salvage sites are often located adjacent to construction sites which are more commonly located near lower gradient stream reaches).

Table 1.2: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. stream gradient category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

species_code	Gradient	Count	total_spp	Percent
BT	0 - 3 %	160	236	68
BT	03 - 5 %	29	236	12
BT	05 - 8 %	21	236	9
BT	08 - 15 %	20	236	8
BT	15 - 22 %	6	236	3
GR	0 - 3 %	224	230	97
GR	03 - 5 %	2	230	1
GR	05 - 8 %	2	230	1
GR	08 - 15 %	2	230	1
KO	0 - 3 %	17	17	100
RB	0 - 3 %	327	415	79
RB	03 - 5 %	32	415	8
RB	05 - 8 %	22	415	5
RB	08 - 15 %	27	415	7
RB	15 - 22 %	7	415	2

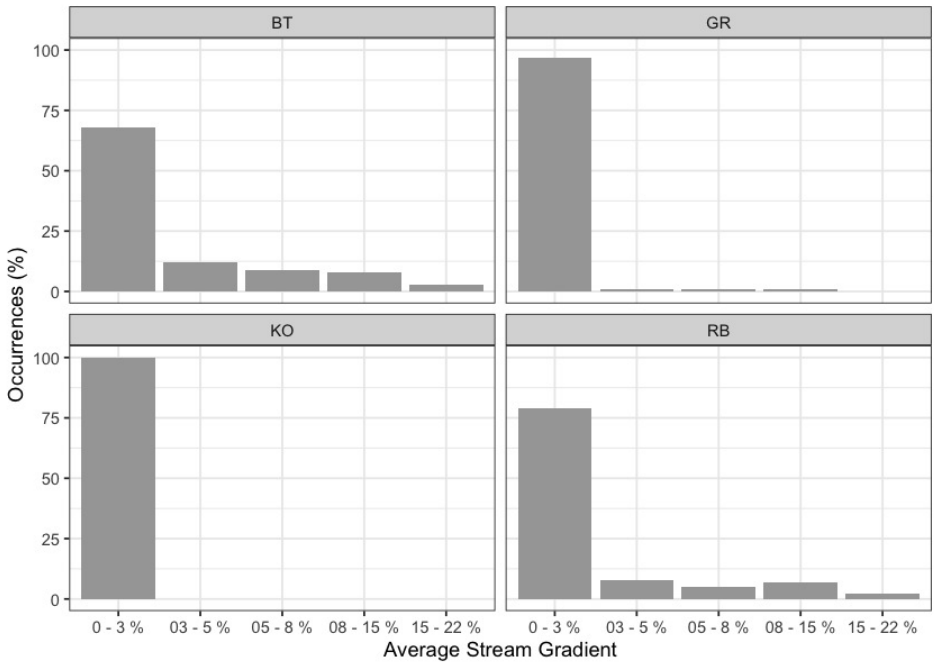

Figure 1.4: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. stream gradient category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

Table 1.3: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. channel width category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

species_code	Width	Count	total_spp	Percent
BT	0 - 2m	11	236	5
BT	02 - 04m	25	236	11
BT	04 - 06m	29	236	12
BT	06 - 10m	35	236	15
BT	10 - 15m	30	236	13
BT	15m+	103	236	44
BT	–	3	236	1
GR	04 - 06m	5	230	2
GR	06 - 10m	7	230	3
GR	10 - 15m	14	230	6
GR	15m+	200	230	87
GR	–	4	230	2
KO	0 - 2m	1	17	6
KO	06 - 10m	3	17	18

species_code	Width	Count	total_spp	Percent
KO	–	12	17	71
RB	0 - 2m	23	415	6
RB	02 - 04m	51	415	12
RB	04 - 06m	37	415	9
RB	06 - 10m	36	415	9
RB	10 - 15m	34	415	8
RB	15m+	141	415	34
RB	–	93	415	22

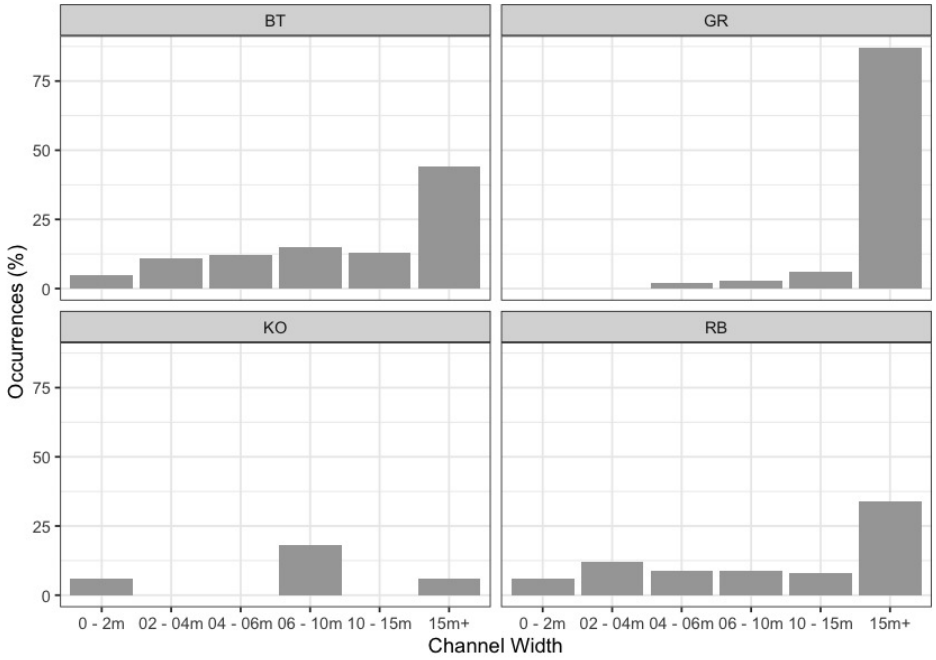

Figure 1.5: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. channel width category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

Table 1.4: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. watershed size category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

species_code	Watershed	count_wshd	total_spp	Percent
BT	0 - 25km2	89	236	38
BT	25 - 50km2	27	236	11
BT	50 - 75km2	12	236	5
BT	75 - 100km2	9	236	4
BT	100km2+	99	236	42
GR	0 - 25km2	7	230	3

species_code	Watershed	count_wshd	total_spp	Percent
GR	50 - 75km2	9	230	4
GR	75 - 100km2	6	230	3
GR	100km2+	203	230	88
KO	0 - 25km2	11	17	65
KO	25 - 50km2	1	17	6
KO	50 - 75km2	2	17	12
KO	75 - 100km2	2	17	12
KO	100km2+	1	17	6
RB	0 - 25km2	210	415	51
RB	25 - 50km2	22	415	5
RB	50 - 75km2	26	415	6
RB	75 - 100km2	17	415	4
RB	100km2+	140	415	34

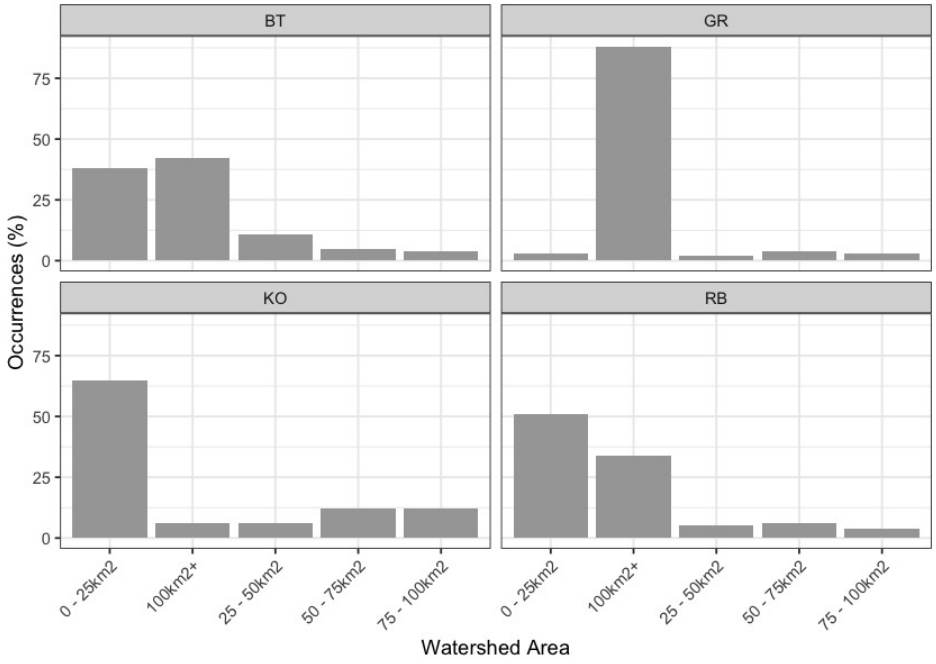

Figure 1.6: Summary of historic salmonid observations vs. watershed size category for the Parsnip River watershed group.

2 Methods

Identify and Communicate Connectivity Issues

Engage Partners

Engaging partners for ecosystem restoration initiatives is critical as it allows us to utilize available resources, tap into different areas of expertise, and benefit from diverse perspectives through collaboration that leads to successful outcomes. Engagement actions have included video conference calls, meetings, emails, presentations and phone calls.

Mapping

Maps incorporating the newly developed sa'ba (bull trout) spawning and rearing habitat model for the Parsnip River, Carp Lake and Crooked River watershed groups are served online and were were generated using reproducible open source workflows developed by Hillcrest Geographics. The workflows to produce the georeferenced *pdf* maps include using a QGIS layer file defining and symbolizing all layers required and are continuously evolving. At the time of reporting - mapping scripts and associated layer file were kept under version control within *bcfishpass* (https://github.com/smnorris/bcfishpass/tree/main/qgis). Use of the QGIS layer file allows load and representation all map component layers provided the user points to the postgresql database loaded and built with *bcfishpass*.

Interactive Dashboard

We built an interactive dashboard to allow users to conduct background research and planning to facilitate communication and enable future field surveys in the Peace Region. The interactive interface allows screening of previously inventoried as well as modelled stream crossing locations based on watershed group as well as the likely quantity and quality of bull trout rearing and spawning habitat modelled upstream. Historic assessment data including photos of sites can be viewed when present and through the dashboard users can download csv results and associated georeferenced field maps to facilitate field surveys. The dashboard was built using *R* packages *crosstalk* (Cheng and Sievert [2015] 2022), *DT* (Xie, Cheng, and Tan [2014] 2022) and *Leaflet* (Cheng, Karambelkar, and Xie [2014] 2022).

Habitat Modelling

Through this initiative, other SERNbc led initiatives (Irvine 2021, [2021] 2022), multi-decade direction from the Provincial Fish Passage Remediation Program and connectivity restoration planning conducted by Canadian Wildlife Federation and others (Mazany-Wright et al. 2021; Irvine 2022), *bcfishpass* has been designed to prioritize potential fish passage barriers for assessment or remediation. The software is under continual development and has been designed and constructed by Norris ([2020] 2021) using sql and python based shell script libraries to generate a simple model of aquatic habitat connectivity. The model identifies natural barriers (ex. steep gradients for extended distances) and hydroelectric dams to classifying the accessibility upstream by fish (Norris [2020] 2021). On potentially accessible streams, scripts identify known barriers (ex. waterfalls >5m high) and additional anthropogenic features which are primarily road/railway stream crossings

(i.e. culverts) that are potentially barriers. To prioritize these features for assessment or remediation, scripts report on how much modelled potentially accessible aquatic habitat the barriers may obstruct. The model can be refined with numerous parameters including known fish observations upstream of identified barriers and for each crossing location, the area of lake and wetland habitat upstream, species documented upstream/downstream, and an estimate of watershed area (on 2nd order and higher streams). Furthermore, mean annual precipitation weighted to upstream watershed area, stream discharge and channel width can be collated using *bcfishpass*, *fwapg* and *bcfishobs*. This, information, can be used to provide an indication of the potential quantity and quality of habitat potentially gained should fish passage be restored by comparing to user defined thresholds for the aforementioned parameters.

Regarding gradients, *bcfishpass* calculates the average gradient of BC Freshwater Atlas stream network lines at minimum 100m long intervals starting from the downstream end of the streamline segment and working upstream. The network lines are broken into max gradient categories with new segments created if and when the average slope of the stream line segment exceeds user provided thresholds. For this phase of the project, the user provided gradient thresholds used to delineate “potentially accessible habitat” were based on estimated max gradients that rainbow trout (20%) and bull trout (25%) are likely to be capable of ascending.

Gradient, channel size and stream discharge are key determinants of channel morphology and subsequently fish distribution. High value rearing, overwintering and spawning habitat preferred by numerous species/life stages of fish are often located within channel types that have relatively low gradients and large channel widths (also quantified by the amount of flow in the stream).

Following delineation of “potentially accessible habitat”, the average gradient of each stream segment within habitat classified as below the 20% and 25% thresholds was calculated and summed within species and life stage specific gradient categories. Average gradient of stream line segments can be calculated from elevations contained in the provincial freshwater atlas streamline dataset.

To obtain estimates of channel width upstream of crossing locations, where available, *bcfishpass* was utilized to pull average channel gradients from Fisheries Information Summary System (FISS) site assessment data (MoE 2019b) or PSCIS assessment data (MoE 2021) and associate with stream segment lines. When both FISS and PSCIS values were associated with a particular stream segment, or multiple FISS channel widths are available a mean of the average channel widths was used. To model channel width for 2nd order and above stream segments without associated FISS or PSCIS sites, first *fwapg* was used to estimate the drainage area upstream of the segment. Then, rasters from ClimateBC (Wang et al. 2012) were downloaded to a *postgresql* database, sampled for upstream watershed areas associated with each stream segment and a mean annual precipitation weighted by upstream watershed area was calculated. In early 2021, Bayesian statistical methods were developed to predict channel width in all provincial freshwater atlas stream segments where

width measurements had not previously been measured in the field. The model was based on the relationship between watershed area and mean annual precipitation weighted by upstream watershed area (Thorley and Irvine 2021). In December of 2021, Thorley and Irvine (2021) methods were updated using on a power model derived by Finnegan et al. (2005) which relates stream discharge to watershed area and mean annual precipitation. Data (n = 24849) on watershed size, mean annual precipitation and measured channel width was extracted from the provincial freshwater atlas (FLNRORD 2021; GeoBC 2022), the BC Data Catalouge fisheries datasets (MoE 2020b, 2021) and Wang et al. (2012) utilizing *bcfishpass*(Norris [2020] 2021) and *fwapg*(Norris [2019] 2021). Details of this analysis and subsequent outputs can be reviewed here(Thorley, Norris, and Irvine 2021).

bcfishpass and associated tools have been designed to be flexible in analysis, accepting user defined gradient, channel width and stream discharge categories (MoE 2019b). Although currently in draft form, and subject to development revisions, gradient and channel width thresholds for habitat with the highest intrinsic value for a number of fish species in the Parsnip River watershed group have been specified and applied to model habitat upstream of stream crossing locations with the highest potential intrinsic value (Table 2.1). Definitions of modelling outputs for bull trout are presented in Table 2.2. Modelling of habitat for Arctic grayling, kokannee and rainbow trout in the Peace region are planned for 2023/2024 with the work leveraging multiple other initiatives underway by SERNbc and others throughout British Columbia.

Table 2.1: Stream gradient and channel width thresholds used to model potentially highest value fish habitat.

Variable	Bull Trout	Rainbow Trout	Arctic Grayling	Kokanee
Spawning Gradient Max (%)	5	5	2	2
Spawning Width Min (m)	2	2	4	2
Rearing Width Min (m)	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Rearing Gradient Max (%)	7.4	7.4	3.4	–

* Models for RB, GR and KO are under a process of development and have not yet been released. All models parameters are preliminary and subject to collaborative development.

Table 2.2: bcfishpass outputs and associated definitions

Attribute	Definition
BT Rearing (km)	Length of stream upstream of point modelled as potential Bull Trout rearing habitat
BT Spawning (km)	Length of stream upstream of point modelled as potential Bull Trout spawning habitat
BT Network (km)	Bull Trout model, total length of stream network potentially accessible upstream of point
BT Stream (km)	Bull Trout model, total length of streams and rivers potentially accessible upstream of point (does not include network connectors in lakes etc)
BT Lake Reservoir (ha)	Bull Trout model, total area lakes and reservoirs potentially accessible upstream of point
BT Wetland (ha)	Bull Trout model, total area wetlands potentially accessible upstream of point
BT Slopeclass03 (km)	Bull Trout model, length of stream potentially accessible upstream of point with slope 0-3%
BT Slopeclass05 (km)	Bull Trout model, length of stream potentially accessible upstream of point with slope 3-5%
BT Slopeclass08 (km)	Bull Trout model, length of stream potentially accessible upstream of point with slope 5-8%
BT Slopeclass15 (km)	Bull Trout model, length of stream potentially accessible upstream of point with slope 8-15%
* Bull trout model uses a gradient threshold of maximum 25% to determine if access if likely possible	

Remediations

Structure replacement was conducted by contractors hired by Sinclar (forest licensee). As-built drawings were completed and loaded to the PSCIS data portal.

Designs

Engineering designs were conducted by consultants hired by forest licensees with tenure over the roads and/or timber harvest planned on the roads where work was conducted. Completed designs are loaded to the PSCIS data portal.

Habitat Confirmation Assessments

Following fish passage assessments, habitat confirmations were completed in accordance with procedures outlined in the document “A Checklist for Fish Habitat Confirmation Prior to the Rehabilitation of a Stream Crossing” (Fish Passage Technical Working Group 2011). The main objective of the field surveys was to document upstream habitat quantity and quality and to determine if any other obstructions exist above or below the crossing. Habitat value was assessed based on channel morphology, flow characteristics (perennial, intermittent, ephemeral), the presence/absence of deep pools, un-embedded boulders, substrate, woody debris, undercut banks, aquatic vegetation and overhanging riparian vegetation. Criteria used to rank habitat value was based on guidelines in Fish Passage Technical Working Group (2011) (Table 2.3).

During habitat confirmations, to standardize data collected and facilitate submission of the data to provincial databases, information was collected on "Site Cards". Habitat characteristics recorded included channel widths, wetted widths, residual pool depths, gradients, bankfull depths, stage, temperature, conductivity, pH, cover by type, substrate and channel morphology (among others). When possible, the crew surveyed downstream of the crossing to the point where fish presence had been previously confirmed and upstream to a minimum distance of 500 - 600m. Any potential obstacles to fish passage were inventoried with photos, physical descriptions and locations recorded on site cards. Surveyed routes were recorded with time-signatures on handheld GPS units.

Fish sampling was conducted on a subset of sites when biological data was considered to add significant value to the physical habitat assessment information. When possible, electrofishing was utilized within discrete site units both upstream and downstream of the subject crossing with electrofisher settings, water quality parameters (i.e. conductivity, temperature and ph), start location, length of site and wetted widths (average of a minimum of three) recorded. For each fish captured, fork length and species was recorded, with results included within the fish data submission spreadsheet. Fish information and habitat data have been submitted to the province under scientific fish collection permit PG22-749559.

Fish Passage Assessments

In the field, crossings prioritized for follow-up were first assessed for fish passage following the procedures outlined in "Field Assessment for Determining Fish Passage Status of Closed Bottomed Structures" (BC Ministry of Environment 2011). Crossings surveyed included closed bottom structures (CBS), open bottom structures (OBS) and crossings considered "other" (i.e. fords). Photos were taken at surveyed crossings and when possible included images of the road, crossing inlet, crossing outlet, crossing barrel, channel downstream and channel upstream of the crossing and any other relevant features. The following information was recorded for all surveyed crossings: date of inspection, crossing reference, crew member initials, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates, stream name, road name and kilometer, road tenure information, crossing type, crossing subtype, culvert diameter or span for OBS, culvert length or width for OBS. A more detailed "full assessment" was completed for all closed bottom structures and included the following parameters: presence/absence of continuous culvert embedment (yes/no), average depth of embedment, whether or not the culvert bed resembled the native stream bed, presence of and percentage backwatering, fill depth, outlet drop, outlet pool depth, inlet drop, culvert slope, average downstream channel width, stream slope, presence/absence of beaver activity, presence/absence of fish at time of survey, type of valley fill, and a habitat value rating. Habitat value ratings were based on channel morphology, flow characteristics (perennial, intermittent, ephemeral), fish migration patterns, the presence/absence of deep pools, un-embedded boulders, substrate, woody debris, undercut banks, aquatic vegetation and overhanging riparian vegetation (Table 2.3). For crossings determined to be potential barriers or barriers based on the data (see [Barrier Scoring]), a culvert fix and recommended diameter/span was proposed.

Table 2.3: Habitat value criteria (Fish Passage Technical Working Group, 2011).

Habitat Value	Fish Habitat Criteria
High	The presence of high value spawning or rearing habitat (e.g., locations with abundance of suitably sized gravels, deep pools, undercut banks, or stable debris) which are critical to the fish population.
Medium	Important migration corridor. Presence of suitable spawning habitat. Habitat with moderate rearing potential for the fish species present.
Low	No suitable spawning habitat, and habitat with low rearing potential (e.g., locations without deep pools, undercut banks, or stable debris, and with little or no suitably sized spawning gravels for the fish species present).

Fish passage potential was determined for each stream crossing identified as a closed bottom structure as per BC Ministry of Environment (2011). The combined scores from five criteria: depth and degree to which the structure is embedded, outlet drop, stream width ratio, culvert slope, and culvert length were used to screen whether each culvert was a likely barrier to some fish species and life stages (Table 2.4, Table 2.5. These criteria were developed based on data obtained from various studies and reflect an estimation for the passage of a juvenile salmon or small resident rainbow trout (Clarkin et al. 2005 ; Bell 1991; Thompson 2013).

Table 2.4: Fish Barrier Risk Assessment (MoE 2011).

Risk	LOW	MOD	HIGH
Embedded	>30cm or >20% of diameter and continuous	<30cm or 20% of diameter but continuous	No embedment or discontinuous
Value	0	5	10
Outlet Drop (cm)	<15	15-30	>30
Value	0	5	10
SWR	<1.0	1.0-1.3	>1.3
Value	0	3	6
Slope (%)	<1	1-3	>3
Value	0	5	10
Length (m)	<15	15-30	>30
Value	0	3	6

Table 2.5: Fish Barrier Scoring Results (MoE 2011).

Cumlative Score	Result
0-14	passable
15-19	potential barrier
>20	barrier

Habitat gain indexes are the quantity of modelled habitat upstream of the subject crossing and represents an estimate of habitat gained with remediation of fish passage at the crossing. For this project, a gradient threshold between accessible and non-accessible habitat was set at 25% (for a minimimum length of 100m) intended to represent the maximum gradient of which the strongest swimmers of anadromous species (bull trout) are likely to be able to migrate upstream. This is the amount of habitat upstream of each crossing less than 25% gradient before a falls of height >5m - as recorded in MoE (2020a) or documented in other *bcfishpass* online documentation. For Phase 2 - habitat confirmation sites, conservative estimates of the linear quantity of habitat to be potentially gained by fish passage restoration, bull trout rearing maximum gradient threshold (7.4%) was used. To generate estimates for area of habitat upstream (m^2), the estimated linear length was multiplied by half the downstream channel width measured (overall triangular channel shape) as part of the fish passage assessment protocol. Although these estimates are not generally conservative, have

low accuracy and do not account for upstream stream crossing structures they allow a rough idea of the best candidates for follow up.

Potential options to remediate fish passage were selected from BC Ministry of Environment (2011) and included:

- Removal (RM) - Complete removal of the structure and deactivation of the road.
- Open Bottom Structure (OBS) - Replacement of the culvert with a bridge or other open bottom structure. Based on consultation with FLNR road crossing engineering experts, for this project we considered bridges as the only viable option for OBS type .
- Streambed Simulation (SS) - Replacement of the structure with a streambed simulation design culvert. Often achieved by embedding the culvert by 40% or more. Based on consultation with FLNR engineering experts, we considered crossings on streams with a channel width of <2m and a stream gradient of <8% as candidates for replacement with streambed simulations.
- Additional Substrate Material (EM) - Add additional substrate to the culvert and/or downstream weir to embed culvert and reduce overall velocity/turbulence. This option was considered only when outlet drop = 0, culvert slope <1.0% and stream width ratio < 1.0.
- Backwater (BW) - Backwatering of the structure to reduce velocity and turbulence. This option was considered only when outlet drop < 0.3m, culvert slope <2.0%, stream width ratio < 1.2 and stream profiling indicates it would be effective..

Cost Estimates

Cost estimates for structure replacement with bridges and embedded culverts were generated based on the channel width, slope of the culvert, depth of fill, road class and road surface type. Road details were sourced from FLNRORD (2020b) and FLNRORD (2020a) through *bcfishpass*. Interviews with Phil MacDonald, Engineering Specialist FLNR - Kootenay, Steve Page, Area Engineer - FLNR - Northern Engineering Group and Matt Hawkins - MoTi - Design Supervisor for Highway Design and Survey - Nelson were utilized to helped refine estimates which have since been adjusted for inflation and based on past experience.

Base costs for installation of bridges on forest service roads and permit roads with surfaces specified in provincial GIS road layers as rough and loose was estimated at $25000/linear m and assumed that the road could be closed during construction and a minimum bridge span of 10m. For streams with channel widths <2m, embedded culverts were reported as an effective solution with total installation costs estimated at $50k/crossing (pers. comm. Phil MacDonald, Steve Page then adjusted for inflation). For larger streams (>6m), estimated span width increased proportionally to the size of the stream. For crossings with large amounts of fill (>3m), the replacement bridge span was increased by an additional 3m for each 1m of fill >3m to account for cutslopes to the stream at a 1.5:1 ratio. To account for road type, a multiplier table was generated to estimate incremental cost increases with costs estimated for structure replacement on paved surfaces, railways and arterial/highways costing up to 20 times more than forest service roads due to expenses associate

with design/engineering requirements, traffic control and paving. The cost multiplier table (Table 2.6) should be considered very approximate with refinement recommended for future projects.

Table 2.6: Cost multiplier table based on road class and surface type.

Class	Surface	Class Multiplier	Surface Multiplier	Bridge $/15m	Streambed Simulation $
Resource	Loose	1	1	375,000	50,000
Permit	Loose	1	1	375,000	50,000
Unclassified	Loose	1	1	375,000	50,000
Unclassified	Rough	1	1	375,000	50,000
Unclassified	Unknown	1	2	750,000	100,000
Local	Loose	4	1	1,500,000	200,000
Rail	Rail	15	2	11,250,000	1,500,000

3 Results and Discussion

Identify and Communicate Connectivity Issues

Engage Partners

SERNbc and McLeod Lake have been actively engaging with the following groups to build awareness for the initiative, solicit input, prioritize sites, raise partnership funding and plan/implement fish passage remediations:

- McLeod Lake Indian Band members of council
- BCTS Engineering
- CN Rail
- Canadian Forest Products (Canfor)
- Sinclar Forest Projects Ltd. (Sinclar)
- Northern Engineering - Ministry of Forests
- BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Fish Passage Technical Working Group
- Coastal Gasliink
- British Columbia Wildlife Federation
- Planning foresters and biologists Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (restructured into Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship)
- Fisheries experts

The Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) is a collaborative partnership between the Province and First Nations with projects designed to focus on ecosystem assessment, restoration, enhancement, research and education. To date, four regional environmental stewardship projects have been developed throughout northern British Columbia. A governance working group with representatives from all four stewardship forums provides governance oversight and guidance for the ESI. The Parsnip River watershed group is within the Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment Forum (RSEA) area. Indigenous partners for RSEA include McLeod lake, Blueberry River, Halfway River, Doig River, West Moberly, Prophet River and Sauteau. Forum values of focus to date include old forest/forest biodiversity, water, moose, peaceful enjoyment and environmental livelihoods. Working together with McLeod Lake Indian Band we are leveraging RSEA initiatives by overlaying Parsnip River watershed group fish passage planning data with the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum Inventory data to facilitate discussions with partners and stakeholders about how long term landscape stewardship goals of McLeod Lake Indian Band relate to stream crossing infrastructure upgrades/removals within their traditional territory. The inventory data summarizes recreation opportunities as combinations of settings and probable human experience opportunities organized along a spectrum of classes. The spectrum is set out in terms of seven classes as follows: Primitive (P), Semi-primitive Non-motorized (SPNM), Semi-primitive Motorized (SPM), Roaded Natural (RN), Roaded Modified (RM), Rural (R), Urban (U). Areas classified towards the primitive end of the spectrum provide more opportunities for First Nations groups such as the McLeod Lake Indian Band to exercise their rights as indigenous people in areas less disturbed by industrial activity within their traditional territory (United Nations General Assembly 2007).

Mapping

Georeferenced field maps containing updated modelling outputs are presented in Attachment 1.

Interactive Dashboard

A csv containing fish passage modelling data used for input into the interactive dashboard to facilitate planning for 2023 field survey sites is included as Attachment 2. Please note that the interactive dashboard is located within the online interactive version of the report located at https://newgraphenvironment.github.io/fish_passage_peace_2022_reporting/.

Remediations

Tributary to Missinka River - PSCIS crossing 125179

PSCIS crossing 125179 is located on a tributary to Missinka River, 1km upstream of the confluence, on the Chuchinka-Missinka FSR. This crossing is located approximately 660m east of PSCIS crossing 125180 and joins this adjacent stream just before emptying into the Missinka River. A map of the watershed is provided in map attachment 93I.116. The twin culverts were replaced with a clear-span bridge in the summer of 2022.

In 2018, the Missinka River watershed was designated as a fisheries sensitive watershed under the authority of the Forest and Range Practices Act due to significant downstream fisheries values and watershed sensitivity (Beaudry 2013). Special management is required in the crossing's watershed to protect habitat for Bull Trout and Arctic Grayling and includes measures (among others) to limit equivalent clearcut area, reduce impacts to natural stream channel morphology, retain old growth attributes and maintain fish habitat/movement.

The site was first assessed by A. Irvine (2020) in 2019 with reporting available here. At that time, there were two 1.2m diameter culverts side by side. The crossing was ranked as a high priority for follow up due to the 2km of suitable upstream high value habitat, where the presence of bull trout and rainbow trout had been previously confirmed. In 2020, with support from FWCP funding, an engineering design was commissioned for the site with funding acquired from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Development in 2020 for project materials (riprap and girders). In the summer of 2022, a 15m steel girder permanent bridge with modular timber decks was installed. Crews visited the site in August of 2022. Photos showing a comparison of the culvert assessment conducted in 2019 versus the completed bridge construction in 2022 are presented in Figure 3.10. During the site visit aerial imagery was collected with a remotely piloted aircraft with resulting images stitched into an orthomosaic and 3-dimensional model presented here and here.

Bridge construction details including as-built drawings have been loaded to the PSCIS data portal for upload to the province.

Figure 3.1: Left: Photos of crossing 125179 in 2019. Right: Photos of crossing 125179 in 2022.

Recommendations

It is recommended that future monitoring be conducted at this location to track the stream morphological changes and provide insight into fish migration within the system. Electrofishing with tagging of target species is recommended along with photo documentation of stream morphology near the bridge. Fish sampling in the adjacent similar sized stream (PSCIS crossing 125180) containing culverts ranked as barriers would provide reference site data for comparison.

Designs

Three engineering designs for structure replacements with bridges were commissioned in 2022/23. Additionally, British Columbia Timber Sales is planning to deactivate the Chuchinka-Colbourne FSR between the location of 125345 (Tributary to Parsnip River) and the Chuckhinka-Anzac FSR (pers comm. Stephanie Sundquist, BCTS Planning Forester). The work was scheduled for July and

August of 2022 but was delayed until 2023 due to a road washout in 2022. BCTS was able to obtain funding for the work through the Forest Carbon Initiative and the work will include a full road rehabilitation as well as decompaction and replanting.

Sinclar Forest Group commissioned a design for PSCIS crossing 125000 on a tributary to the Parsnip River 2km upstream of the confluence with the Parsnip River, on the Chuchinka-Arctic FSR approximately 9km north-west of the outlet of Arctic Lake. Plans were in place for remediation of the site in 2023/24 with funding support from FWCP however in the spring of 2023 Sinclar indicated that updates to that road no longer made sense as most plans for logging beyond the stream were on hold due to old growth referrals. The British Columbia government has asked licensees to defer harvest of these areas until “partners develop a new approach for old growth forest management”. The design was paid for by Sinclar and was not reimbursed through FWCP. The site was assessed in the summer of 2022 with aerial imagery acquired by drone and fish sampling conducted. Results from those assessments are presented below in the section title Tributary to Parsnip River - PSCIS crossing 125000 (page 42).

Canfor Forest Products Ltd. (Canfor) has commissioned designs for two sites on the Chuchinka-Table FSR that are planned for remediation:

1. PSCIS crossing 125231 is located on a tributary to the Table River near the 21km mark of the Chuchinka-Table FSR. The culvert is located 0.7km from the confluence of the Table River on the upstream side of the CN Railway where a crossing considered passable is located. The subject stream flows into the Table River at a point 7.9 km upstream from the confluence with the Parsnip River. Detailed information regarding the site is located in the report by A. Irvine (2020) which can be found here.
2. The second site is Fern Creek (PSCIS 125261) located at km 2.1 of the Chuchinka-Table FSR. This site was prioritized through the interactive dashboard included in the 2021 reporting from this project (A. Irvine 2022) and 2022 field surveys. Details are presented in Fern Creek - PSCIS crossing 125261 (page 55). FWCP funds from 2022/2023 ficsal were used by Canfor to purchase materials for future construction at both sites. In addition to designs, Canfor has contracted DWB Engineering to complete environmental management plans and permit the projects.

Habitat Confirmation Assessments

Tributary to Anzac River - PSCIS crossing 6745

PSCIS crossing 6745 is located on a tributary to Anzac River, on Chuchinka-Crocker FSR. This site is located approximately 0.9km upstream from the confluence with the Anzac River. The confluence is located at km 10.7 of the Anzac River. At crossing 6745, tributary to Anzac River is a third order stream with a watershed area upstream of the crossing of approximately 2.1km^2. The elevation of the watershed ranges from a maximum of 869m to 745m near the crossing (Table 3.1). At the time

of reporting, there was no fisheries information available within provincial databases for the area upstream of crossing 6745.

The Anzac River is one of the main tributaries to the Parsnip River. It is a 78km long tributary and drains a 939km^2 watershed. The average gradient ranges from 1-2% in the upper reaches to a gradient less than 0.5% in the unconfined areas in the valley flats. In the Anzac River, a 30-km stretch from a chute obstruction at 47 km to 16 km is assumed to provide productive summer rearing habitats for adult as it is characterized by a high abundance of Arctic Grayling (Hagen and Stamford 2021; Hagen, Pillipow, and Gantner 2019).

Table 3.1: Summary of derived upstream watershed statistics for PSCIS crossing 6745.

Site	Area Km	Elev Site	Elev Min	Elev Max	Elev Median	Elev P60	Aspect
6745	2.1	764	745	869	835	831	WSW

* Elev P60 = Elevation at which 60% of the watershed area is above

A summary of habitat modelling outputs is presented in Table 3.2 and a map of the watershed is provided in map attachment 093J.124.

Table 3.2: Summary of fish habitat modelling for PSCIS crossing 6745.

Habitat	Potential	Remediation Gain	Remediation Gain (%)
BT Rearing (km)	1.2	0.6	50
BT Spawning (km)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Network (km)	6.1	6.1	100
BT Stream (km)	3.7	3.7	100
BT Lake Reservoir (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Wetland (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Slopeclass03 (km)	2.7	2.7	100
BT Slopeclass05 (km)	1.0	1.0	100
BT Slopeclass08 (km)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Slopeclass15 (km)	0.1	0.1	100

* Model data is preliminary and subject to adjustments.

Stream Characteristics at Crossing

At the time of the survey, PSCIS crossing 6745 was un-embedded, non-backwatered and ranked as a potential barrier to upstream fish passage according to the provincial protocol (MoE 2011) (Table

3.3). Water temperature was 11°C, pH was 7.9 and conductivity was 102uS/cm.

Table 3.3: Summary of fish passage assessment for PSCIS crossing 6745.

Location and Stream Data	•	**Crossing Characteristics**	–
Date	2022-08-14	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	6745	Diameter (m)	1.6
External ID	–	Length (m)	14
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	533992	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6076165	Backwatered	No
Stream	tributary to Anzac River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Crocker FSR	Fill Depth (m)	0.6
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	0
Channel Width (m)	1.5	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	0
Stream Slope (%)	2	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	1
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	15	Barrier Result	Potential
Fix type	Replace Structure with Streambed Simulation CBS	Fix Span / Diameter	3

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Damaged near outlet. Small stream but flowing. Middle of pipe filled with fines. 11:18

Photos: From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.

Stream Characteristics Downstream

The stream was surveyed downstream from crossing 6745 for 200m (Figure 3.2). The dominant substrate was gravels with fines sub-dominant.Total cover amount was rated as abundant with undercut banks dominant. Cover was also present as small woody debris, large woody debris, and overhanging vegetation.The average channel width was 1.2m, the average wetted width was 1m, and the average gradient was 0.5%. There were pockets of gravels suitable for resident salmonid spawning. Habitat was rated as medium value for salmonid rearing and spawning with relatively low flow volumes and no deep pools.

Stream Characteristics Upstream

The stream was surveyed upstream from crossing 6745 for 550m (Figure 3.3). Total cover amount was rated as moderate with undercut banks dominant. Cover was also present as small woody debris, large woody debris, deep pools, and overhanging vegetation.The dominant substrate was gravels with fines sub-dominant.The average channel width was 1.5m, the average wetted width was 1m, and the average gradient was 1.7%. There were abundant gravels present, suitable for resident rainbow spawning. Some deep pools up to 45cm in depth were present that would be suitable for rearing and potentially overwintering. Overall, the habitat surveyed upstream of the crossing was rated as medium value containing habitat suitable for spawning and rearing salmonids.

Conclusion

Modelling indicates there is 1.2km of habitat upstream of crossing 6745 suitable for bull trout rearing with areas surveyed rated as medium value for rearing and spawning. Crossing 6745 was ranked as a low priority for proceeding to design for replacement. The culvert is considered a potential barrier but may not be a fish passage issue during all but highest flow levels. Fish sampling could be conducted to to determine fish presence upstream and downstream of the crossing.

Table 3.4: Summary of habitat details for PSCIS crossing 6745.

Site	Location	Length Surveyed (m)	Channel Width (m)	Wetted Width (m)	Pool Depth (m)	Gradient (%)	Total Cover	Habitat Value
6745	Downstream	200	1.2	1	–	0.5	abundant	medium
6745	Upstream	550	1.5	1	0.3	1.7	moderate	medium

Figure 3.2: Left: Typical habitat downstream of PSCIS crossing 6745. Right: Typical habitat downstream of PSCIS crossing 6745.

Figure 3.3: Left: Typical habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 6745. Right: Typical habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 6745.

Tributary to Parsnip River - PSCIS crossing 125000

PSCIS crossing 125000 is located on a tributary to Parsnip River, approximately 2km upstream of the confluence with the Parsnip River, on the Chuchinka-Arctic FSR approximately 9km north-west of the outlet of Arctic Lake. Arctic Lake is located within Arctic Pacific Lakes Provincial Park and has

an area of 112ha. The park has significant historical and recreational values and contains Mcleod Lake Indian Band reservation lands (Arctic Lake 10). The lake supports a diverse population of fish, including lake trout, bull trout, rainbow trout, kokanee, dolly varden, mountain whitefish, redside shiner, lake char, and chinook salmon, and arctic grayling (BC Parks 2020). There are no other stream crossings on the mainstem of this stream that block fish passage. Rainbow trout and sculpin have been captured in the past both upstream and downstream of the crossing. A map of the watershed is provided in map attachment 93I.111.

PSCIS crossing 125000 was ranked as a high priority for remediation following habitat confirmations done by A. Irvine (2020) in 2019. At that time, it was estimated that there was 3.5km of habitat with a gradient less than 5% available upstream of the crossing. Habitat was rated as high value for salmonid rearing and spawning. Fish sampling (minnowtrapping) in 2019 confirmed that rainbow trout and sculpin were present downstream of the crossing however no fish were captured upstream. At the time of survey in 2019, the culvert was a complete barrier to upstream fish passage, having an outlet drop of 0.4m and a outlet pool depth of 1.5m. A detailed overview of stream characteristics and habitat details can be found in the 2019 report.

Plans were in place for remediation of the site in 2022/2023 and 2023/24 with funding support from FWCP however in the spring of 2023 Sinclar indicated that updates to the road no longer made sense as most plans for logging beyond the stream were on hold due to old growth referrals (Figure 3.4). The British Columbia government has asked licensees to defer harvest of these areas until “partners develop a new approach for old growth forest management” (Ministry of Forests n.d.).

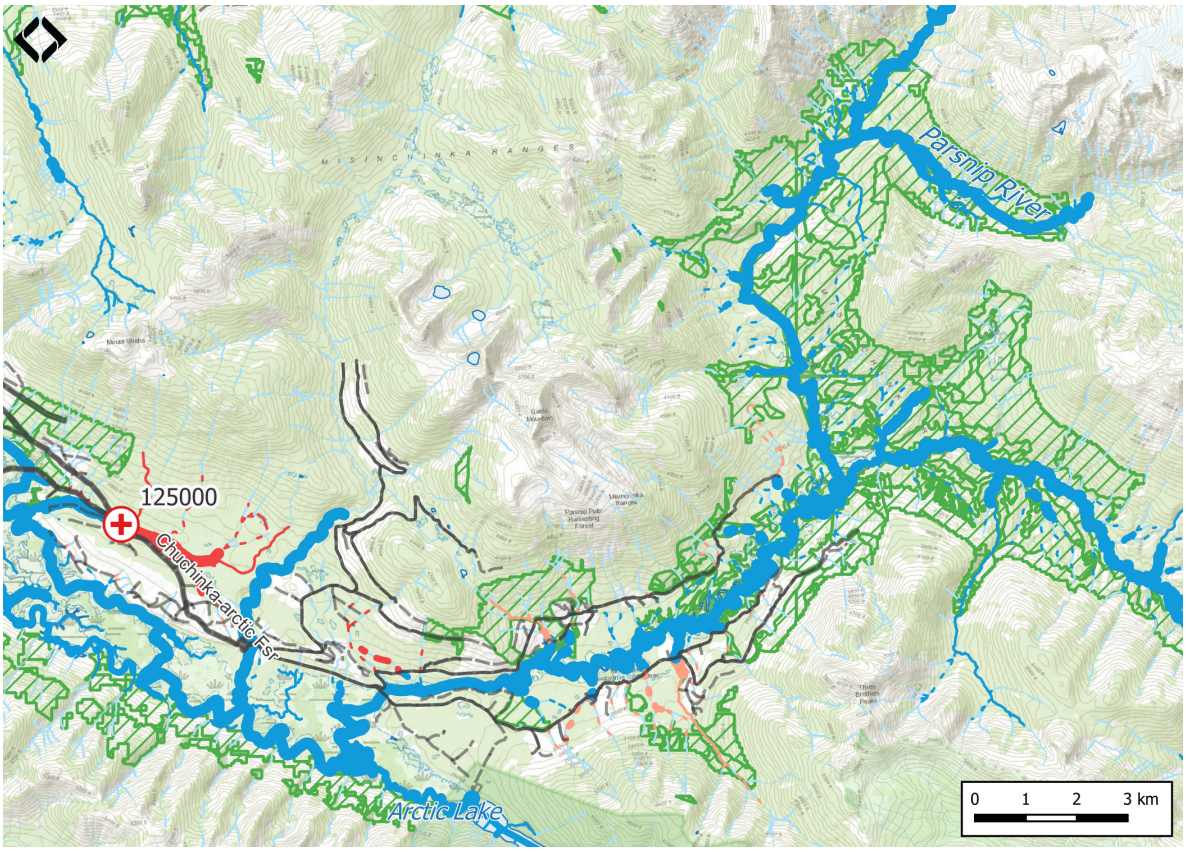

Figure 3.4: Map showing old growth management areas (green hashed polygons) beyond crossing 125000 accessed by the Chuckinka-Arctic FSR

This site was reassessed in 2022, with drone survey and fish sampling conducted. At the time of survey the crossing was un-embedded, non-backwatered and ranked as a barrier to upstream fish passage. The culvert was undersized - evidenced by the large outlet drop of 0.6m and outlet pool depth of 2m (MoE 2011) (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Summary of fish passage assessment for PSCIS crossing 125000.

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-15	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	125000	Diameter (m)	1.5
External ID	–	Length (m)	18
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	577540	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6038199	Backwatered	No
Stream	Tributary to Parsnip River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Arctic FSR	Fill Depth (m)	2.5

Location and Stream Data	•	**Crossing Characteristics**	–
Stream Slope (%)	1.5	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	2
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	34	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Habitat survey done with drone. 11:15:00 AM

Photos: From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.

Aerial Imagery

In 2019 a video survey was conducted by drone and can be viewed here. In the summer of 2022, additional surveys were conducted with a remotely piloted aircraft at the crossing with resulting images stitched into an orthomosaic and 3-dimensional model presented here and here.

Fish Sampling

Electrofishing was conducted at the site with results summarised in Tables 3.6 - 3.7 and Figure 3.5. Rainbow trout and sculpin were captured both upstream and downstream of the crossing. Rainbow trout over 60mm in length were tagged using Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) so health and movement can be tracked over time. Fish sampling data and tag information can be referenced here.

Table 3.6: Fish sampling site summary for 125000.

site	passes	ef_length_m	ef_width_m	area_m2	enclosure
125000_ds_ef1	1	28	3.2	89.6	Open
125000_ds_ef2	1	7	3.0	21.0	Open
125000_ds_ef3	1	5	2.9	14.5	Open
125000_us_ef1	1	8	2.0	16.0	Open
125000_us_ef2	1	23	3.3	75.9	Open
125000_us_ef3	1	21	2.9	60.9	Open

Table 3.7: Fish sampling density results summary for 125000.

local_name	species_code	life_stage	catch	density_100m2	nfc_pass
125000_ds_ef1	CC	fry	3	3.3	FALSE
125000_ds_ef1	CC	parr	1	1.1	FALSE
125000_ds_ef1	RB	fry	20	22.3	FALSE
125000_ds_ef1	RB	parr	13	14.5	FALSE
125000_ds_ef1	RB	juvenile	3	3.3	FALSE
125000_ds_ef2	CC	fry	2	9.5	FALSE
125000_ds_ef2	RB	fry	3	14.3	FALSE
125000_ds_ef2	RB	parr	5	23.8	FALSE
125000_ds_ef3	RB	fry	1	6.9	FALSE
125000_ds_ef3	RB	parr	7	48.3	FALSE
125000_ds_ef3	RB	juvenile	1	6.9	FALSE
125000_us_ef1	RB	fry	2	12.5	FALSE
125000_us_ef1	RB	parr	1	6.2	FALSE
125000_us_ef1	RB	adult	1	6.2	FALSE
125000_us_ef2	CC	parr	1	1.3	FALSE
125000_us_ef2	RB	fry	2	2.6	FALSE
125000_us_ef2	RB	parr	1	1.3	FALSE
125000_us_ef2	RB	juvenile	5	6.6	FALSE
125000_us_ef3	CC	fry	1	1.6	FALSE
125000_us_ef3	RB	fry	1	1.6	FALSE
125000_us_ef3	RB	parr	4	6.6	FALSE

* nfc_pass FALSE means fish were captured in final pass indicating more fish of this species/lifestage may have remained in site. Mark-recaptured required to reduce uncertainties.

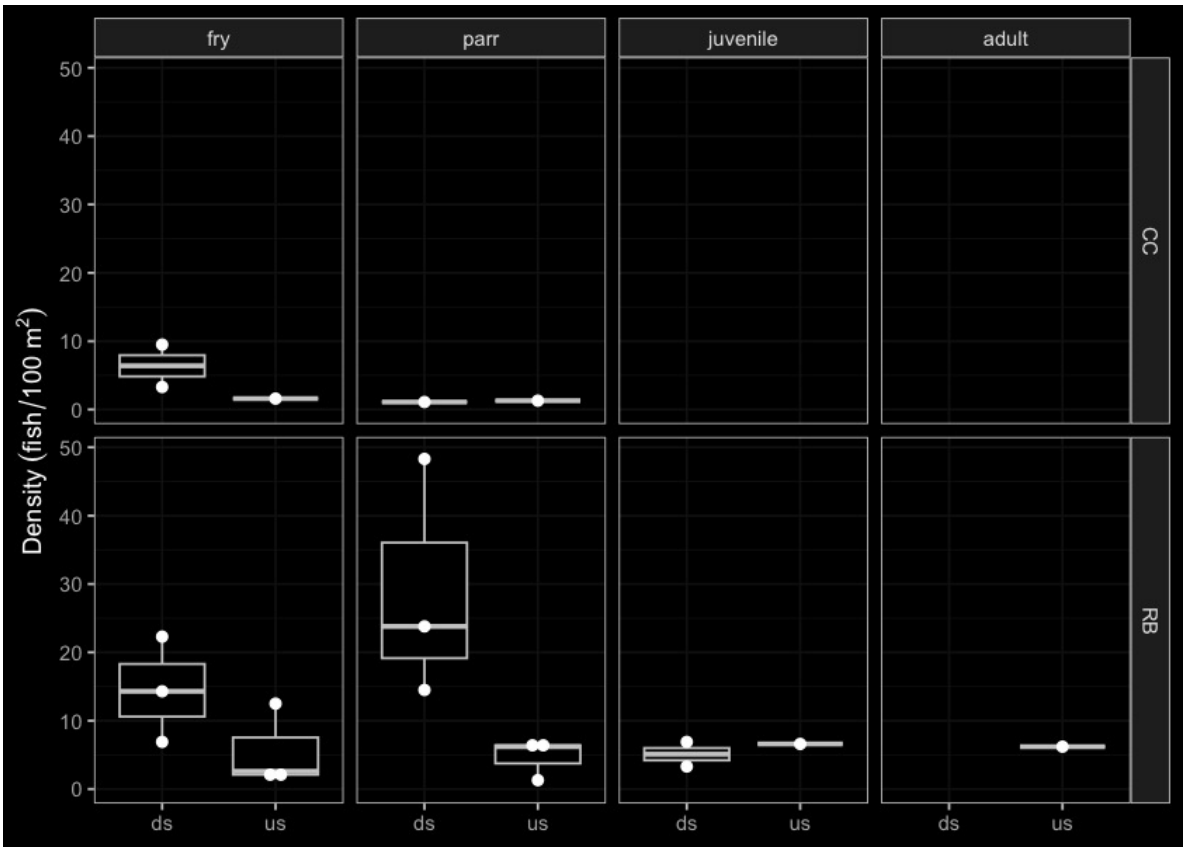

Figure 3.5: Densites of fish (fish/100m2) captured upstream of PSCIS crossing 125000.

Conclusion

Although at the time of reporting plans for replacement of this site had been delayed, future removal (or replacement) of the crossing is still recommended. Prelininary cost estimates for the work were estmitated at /$350,000 to /$400,000. Additionally, re-assessment of the site with electrofishing in the 2023 and/or 2024 will provide valuable information regarding fish health and migration at the site.

Tributary to Missinka River - PSCIS crossing 125194

PSCIS crossing 125194 is located on a tributary to Missinka River, on Chuchinka-Missinka FSR. The site is located approximately 0.6km upstream from the confluence with the Missinka River. At crossing 125194, tributary to Missinka River is a second order stream with a watershed area upstream of the crossing of approximately 2.7km^2. The elevation of the watershed ranges from a maximum of 1432m to 740m near the crossing (Table 3.8). Although there are numerous modelled crossings upstream of the subject culvert on the mainstem of the streawm, review of aerial imagery indicates that none of them are present. At the time of reporting, there was no fisheries information available for the area upstream of the crossing.

Table 3.8: Summary of derived upstream watershed statistics for PSCIS crossing 125194.

Site	Area Km	Elev Site	Elev Min	Elev Max	Elev Median	Elev P60	Aspect
125194	2.7	828	740	1432	936	914	S

* Elev P60 = Elevation at which 60% of the watershed area is above

A summary of habitat modelling outputs is presented in Table 3.9 and a map of the watershed is provided in map attachment 093J.115. Of note, the freshwater atlas erroneously indicates there are no wetland areas upstream of the crossing, however aerial imagery of the site shows that there are significant areas of wetland primarily caused by beaver activity.

Table 3.9: Summary of fish habitat modelling for PSCIS crossing 125194.

Habitat	Potential	Remediation Gain	Remediation Gain (%)
BT Rearing (km)	2.0	0.8	40
BT Spawning (km)	1.4	0.8	57
BT Network (km)	4.5	4.5	100
BT Stream (km)	4.5	4.5	100
BT Lake Reservoir (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Wetland (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Slopeclass03 (km)	2.8	2.8	100
BT Slopeclass05 (km)	0.8	0.8	100
BT Slopeclass08 (km)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Slopeclass15 (km)	0.7	0.7	100

* Model data is preliminary and subject to adjustments.

Stream Characteristics at Crossing

At the time of survey, PSCIS crossing 125194 was un-embedded, non-backwatered and ranked as a barrier to upstream fish passage according to the provincial protocol (MoE 2011) (Table 3.10). Water temperature was 10°C, pH was 8 and conductivity was 180uS/cm.

Table 3.10: Summary of fish passage assessment for PSCIS crossing 125194.

Location and Stream Data	•	**Crossing Characteristics**	–
Date	2022-08-17	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	125194	Diameter (m)	1.8
External ID	–	Length (m)	30
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	563293	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6050578	Backwatered	No
Stream	tributary to Missinka River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Missinka FSR	Fill Depth (m)	4
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	1.1
Channel Width (m)	2.4	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	0.3
Stream Slope (%)	2	Inlet Drop	Yes
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	2
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	37	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Very narrow cascade at outlet, big outlet drop. Good size pools downstream. Upstream has evenly distributed shale. Lots of functional woody debris. 11:09

Photos: From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.

Stream Characteristics Downstream

The stream was surveyed downstream from crossing 125194 for 250m (Figure 3.6). The average channel width was 2.8m, the average wetted width was 2.5m, and the average gradient was 2.8%.The dominant substrate was gravels with fines sub-dominant.Total cover amount was rated as moderate with small woody debris dominant. Cover was also present as large woody debris and overhanging vegetation. There were trace amounts of undercut banks and pools that were suitable for rearing. Abundant gravels were present that would be suitable for resident rainbow spawning. Habitat was reasonably complex due to abundant woody debris and rated as medium value for salmonid rearing and spawning.

Stream Characteristics Upstream

The stream was surveyed upstream from crossing 125194 for 500m (Figure 3.7). The average channel width was 3.4m, the average wetted width was 2.5m, and the average gradient was 6.2%.Total cover amount was rated as moderate with undercut banks dominant. Cover was also present as small woody debris, large woody debris, boulders, deep pools, and overhanging vegetation.The dominant substrate was cobbles with fines sub-dominant. The water was tinged brown at the time of survey; likely from beaver activity upstream. No gravels were present suitable for spawning in the area surveyed and the substrate was composed primarily of angular rock. Several rock steps 50-60cm high were present in the first 300m of survey that would prevent upstream juvenile salmonid migration. The location of modelled crossing 16601526 was accessed however no structure was present. There was however a large beaver dam approximately 1.6m in height at this location. Overall, the habitat surveyed upstream of the crossing was rated as medium value as a migration corridor containing suitable spawning habitat and having moderate rearing potential for rainbow trout.

Conclusion

Replacement of PSCIS crossing 125194 with a bridge (15m span) is recommended. The cost of the work was estimated at $375,000 for a cost benefit of 5333.3 linear m/$1000 and 6400 m^2/$1000.

Crossing 125194 was ranked as a low priority for proceeding to design for replacement. Modelling indicates 2km of habitat upstream of crossing 125194 suitable for rainbow trout rearing with areas surveyed rated as medium value. Due to the beaver influenced wetland character upstream of the crossing the stream is not expected to provide habitat for bull trout. Remediation of the crossing would therefore likely benefit rainbow trout and sculpin species if they are present immediately downstream.

Table 3.11: Summary of habitat details for PSCIS crossing 125194.

Site	Location	Length Surveyed (m)	Channel Width (m)	Wetted Width (m)	Pool Depth (m)	Gradient (%)	Total Cover	Habitat Value
125194	Downstream	250	2.8	2.5	0.3	2.8	moderate	medium
125194	Upstream	500	3.4	2.5	0.4	6.2	moderate	medium

Figure 3.6: Left: Typical habitat downstream of PSCIS crossing 125194. Right: Example of typical stream substrate downstream of PSCIS crossing 125194.

Figure 3.7: Left: Typical habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 125194. Right: Small rock step approximately 0.6m in height, upstream of PSCIS crossing 125194.

Figure 3.8: Left: Typical habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 125194. Right: Beaver dam 1.6m high at modelled crossing 16601526, upstream of PSCIS crossing 125194.

Fern Creek - PSCIS crossing 125261

PSCIS crossing 125261 is located on Fern Creek, approximately 0.3km upstream from the confluence with the Parsnip River, at km 2.1 on the Chuchinka-Table FSR. Canfor Corporation are the primary forest licensee at this location with the Ministry of Forests as the road tenure holders.

At crossing 125261, Fern Creek is a fourth order stream with a watershed area upstream of the crossing of approximately 23.5km^2. The elevation of the watershed ranges from a maximum of 1137m to 730m near the crossing (Table 3.12). Fish species confirmed upstream of the FSR include burbot, rainbow trout, bull trout, sucker, reside shiner, dace and chub. A total of 148ha of lake and 37ha of wetland are modelled upstream. This includes Fern Lakes, a collection of three lakes that have a combined area of approximately 138ha. The outlet of the first lake in the chain is 3.3km upstream of the FSR.

PSCIS crossing 198321 was modelled as located on Fern Creek approximately 700m upstream of crossing 125261. However, upon visiting this location, this site was located at the end of an ATV trail and there was no structure or ford location. Additionally, the ATV trail did not continue beyond this point as the historic road was completely overgrown. There are several crossings modelled on the mainstem of Fern Creek upstream of the FSR however review of aerial imagery and deactivation of the road closer to that FSR provide significant weight of evidence that no crossing structures are present.

A summary of habitat modelling outputs is presented in Table 3.13 and a map of the watershed is provided in map attachment 093J.119.

Table 3.12: Summary of derived upstream watershed statistics for PSCIS crossing 125261.

Site	Area Km	Elev Site	Elev Min	Elev Max	Elev Median	Elev P60	Aspect
125261	23.5	730	723	1137	844	835	SSW

* Elev P60 = Elevation at which 60% of the watershed area is above

Table 3.13: Summary of fish habitat modelling for PSCIS crossing 125261.

Habitat	Potential	Remediation Gain	Remediation Gain (%)
BT Rearing (km)	14.4	2.7	19
BT Spawning (km)	4.3	2.7	63
BT Network (km)	48.3	48.3	100
BT Stream (km)	38.4	38.4	100
BT Lake Reservoir (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Wetland (ha)	0.0	0.0	–
BT Slopeclass03 (km)	7.2	7.2	100
BT Slopeclass05 (km)	14.9	14.9	100
BT Slopeclass08 (km)	3.9	3.9	100
BT Slopeclass15 (km)	11.5	11.5	100

* Model data is preliminary and subject to adjustments.

Stream Characteristics at Crossing

At the time of survey, PSCIS crossing 125261 was un-embedded, non-backwatered and ranked as a barrier to upstream fish passage according to the provincial protocol (MoE 2011) (Table 3.14). The culvert has baffles in it to assist upstream fish passage. However, at the time of survey, the baffles were not functioning properly as they were not effectively holding back substrate. Rip rap at the outlet was creating a cascade approximately 0.5m in height that could block the migration of younger resident fish, depending on flow velocities. Water temperature was 17°C, pH was 8.4 and conductivity was 235uS/cm.

Table 3.14: Summary of fish passage assessment for PSCIS crossing 125261.

Location and Stream Data	•	**Crossing Characteristics**	–
Date	2022-08-15	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	125261	Diameter (m)	2.1
External ID	–	Length (m)	5
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	534600	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6067770	Backwatered	No
Stream	Fern Creek	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Table FSR	Fill Depth (m)	0.8
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	0.4
Channel Width (m)	5.1	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	0.4
Stream Slope (%)	2	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	1.5
Habitat Value	High	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	31	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Culvert has baffles in it but has significant riprap at the outlet that creates cascade approximately 0.5 m high. 14:36

Photos: From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.

Stream Characteristics Downstream

The stream was surveyed downstream from crossing 125261 for 250m (Figure 3.9). The dominant substrate was gravels with fines sub-dominant.Total cover amount was rated as moderate with deep pools dominant. Cover was also present as small woody debris, overhanging vegetation, and instream vegetation.The average channel width was 5.6m, the average wetted width was 4.1m, and the average gradient was 1%. Extensive gravels were found in the first 150 m surveyed downstream. The habitat then transitioned to beaver influenced wetland, with depths of up to 1m and deep laminar flow. The habitat was rated as high value for salmonid rearing and spawning.

Stream Characteristics Upstream

The stream was surveyed upstream from crossing 125261 for 700m (Figure 3.10). The dominant substrate was gravels with cobbles sub-dominant.Total cover amount was rated as moderate with deep pools dominant. Cover was also present as small woody debris, large woody debris, undercut banks, and overhanging vegetation.The average channel width was 6.2m, the average wetted width was 2.4m, and the average gradient was 2.3%. This is a large stream with abundant gravel suitable for spawning and deep pools for overwintering. Numerous fish were observed, with complex habitat due to abundant large woody debris and deeply undercut banks. At the top end of the survey, the locaton of modelled crossing 16601271 was assessed. The crossing was not present as the road had been deactivated (Figure 3.12). Overall, the habitat surveyed upstream of crossing 125261 was rated as high value as an important migration corridor containing habitat suitable spawning habitat and high rearing potential.

Conclusion

Replacement of PSCIS crossing 125261 with a bridge (15m span) is recommended. The cost of the work was estimated at $375,000 for a cost benefit of 38373.3 linear m/$1000 and 97852 m^2/$1000.

Modelling indicates that there is 14.4km of habitat upstream of crossing 125261 suitable for bull trout rearing with areas surveyed rated as high value for rearing and spawning. Crossing 125261 was ranked as a high priority for proceeding to design for replacement. Historic fisheries information upstream of the crossing indicate numerous species present including burbot and bull trout. As one of the larger tributaries in the area, this site is an excellent candidate for restoration. The presence of baffles within the pipe present at the time of assessment indicates that past efforts to facilitate connectivity have been pursued however the outlet drop and a lack of substrate in the pipe indicate those works are not functioning as intended. Although remediation of the site should be completed recommended regardless, it is recommended that if possible, Fern Creek be surveyed further upstream to confirm the presence (or absence) of road/stream crossing structures between crossing 125261 and Fern Lakes. Canfor has committed to replacement of the crossing in the coming years with an engineering design commissioned for the site in the spring of 2023. Additionally, materials for construction of the bridge (riprap) were purchased in the 2022/2023 fiscal

to facilitate future works. It is recommended that electrofishing of the site be conducted prior to replacement of the site with PIT tagging of target species tagged (rainbow trout, bull trout and burbot). Additionally, baseline photo monitoring of stream morphology is recommended to track changes related to the works.

Table 3.15: Summary of habitat details for PSCIS crossing 125261.

Site	Location	Length Surveyed (m)	Channel Width (m)	Wetted Width (m)	Pool Depth (m)	Gradient (%)	Total Cover	Habitat Value
125261	Downstream	250	5.6	4.1	0.3	1.0	moderate	high
125261	Upstream	700	6.2	2.4	0.5	2.3	moderate	high

Figure 3.9: Left: Habitat downstream of PSCIS crossing 125261. Right: Transition to wetland type habitat, downstream of PSCIS crossing 125261.

Figure 3.10: Left: Habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 125261. Right: Habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 125261.

Figure 3.11: Left: Deep pool and functional woody debris upstream of PSCIS crossing 125261. Right: Habitat upstream of PSCIS crossing 125261.

Figure 3.12: Left: Downstream view at end of survey, at location of PSCIC crossing 198321. Right: Upstream view at end of survey, at location of PSCIS crossing 198321.

Fish Passage Assessments

Fish passage assessments were conducted at 12 sites in August 2022 by Allan Irvine, R.P.Bio., Mateo Winterscheidt, B.Sc., Nathan Prince, Traditional Land Use Coordinator - McLeod Lake and Eran Spence, Forestry Referrals Officer - McLeod Lake. Assessments were conducted at four previously unassessed sites, three assessments took place as part of habitat confirmation assessments and five sites were reassessed as they had either been replaced since the data in PSCIS was last updated or because they were being scoped for habitat values while serving as training case studies for collaborating technicians. All previously assessed crossings were either

fords or bridges so presented no concerns for fish passage. Detailed fish passage assessment data with photos are presented in [Attachment 3 - Phase 1 Data and Photos].

4 Recommendations

In addition to structure replacements and removals to restore connectivity - communications, research and monitoring are essential parts of any restoration initiative as they ensure that we identify the best and most efficient opportunities for fish passage restoration while incorporating adaptive management informed by traditional knowledge and real-time planning/monitoring data. Recommendations going forward include:

- Continue to engage partners to raise funds for remediations, identify sites for restoration, conduct remedial works and assess effectiveness of works.
- Continue to conduct detailed assessments where blockages are present and large amounts of habitat are potentially available within the Parsnip River and neighboring watershed groups. As timelines for remediations can be extensive, planning onerous and costs of remedial works significant, continuing assessments throughout the greater area will provide more options for remediation and engage additional funding partners (ex. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, alternative forest licensees). Identifying areas of concern near the community of McLeod Lake is expected to further engage community members and most effectively promote restoration activities.
- Conduct effectiveness monitoring where sites have been remediated, where sites have been prioritized and where remediations are planned. Electrofishing surveys including tagging of target species with PIT tags are recommended to understand the extent of connectivity impairments, track fish movement/health over time and inform adaptive management. Detailed habitat assessments and acquisition of temperature data can be considered along with photo documentation of stream morphology near crossings.
    - Conduct follow up monitoring at site 125179 in a tributary to the Missinka River watershed where the bridge was installed in 2022. Electrofishing with tagging of target species is recommended along with photo documentation of stream morphology near the bridge. Fish sampling in the adjacent similar sized stream (PSCIS crossing 125180) containing culverts ranked as barriers can provide reference site data for comparison.
    - As fish were tagged with PIT tags at site 125000 on the tributary to Parsnip River located on the Chuchinka-Arctic FSR in 2022 it is recommended that the site be reassessed with electrofishing in the 2023 and/or 2024 to provide valuable information regarding how the perched culvert may be impacting fish movement and health.
    - Of particular priority for monitoring is PSCIS crossing 125231 on a tributary to the Table River as this will likely be the first remediation to be completed by Canfor in 2024. As the pipe at this location is severely perched, fish sampling at this site before the actual remedial works take place will help demonstrate how project investments are positively impacting valuable watersheds in the FWCP Peace Region.

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Session Info

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Running under: , RStudio 2023.6.1.524

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Attachment 1 - Maps

All georeferenced field maps are presented at:

- https://hillcrestgeo.ca/outgoing/fishpassage/projects/parsnip/archive/2022-05-27/

Maps are also available zipped for bulk download at:

- https://hillcrestgeo.ca/outgoing/fishpassage/projects/parsnip/archive/2022-05-27/2022-05-27.zip

Attachment 2 - Habitat Assessment and Fish Sampling Data

All field data collected is available at https://github.com/NewGraphEnvironment/fish_passage_peace_2022_reporting/raw/main/data/ with habitat assessment data (including fish sampling and PIT tagging information) can be downloaded at https://github.com/NewGraphEnvironment/fish_passage_peace_2022_reporting/raw/main/data/habitat_confirmations.xls

Attachment 3 - Phase 1 Data and Photos

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-14	Crossing Sub Type	Bridge
PSCIS ID	6731	Diameter (m)	12
External ID	–	Length (m)	5
Crew	MW	Embedded	–
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	532823	Resemble Channel	–
Northing	6072543	Backwatered	–
Stream	Tributary to Anzac River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Colbourne FSR	Fill Depth (m)	–
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	–
Channel Width (m)	–	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	–
Stream Slope (%)	–	Inlet Drop	–
Beaver Activity	–	Slope (%)	–
Habitat Value	–	Valley Fill	–
Final score	0	Barrier Result	Passable
Fix type	–	Fix Span / Diameter	–

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Bridge was recently installed since 2019. 16:57

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.6731

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-14	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	6824	Diameter (m)	1.6
External ID	–	Length (m)	14
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	536665	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6076345	Backwatered	Yes
Stream	Tributary to Anzac River	Percent Backwatered	100
Road	Chuchinka-Crocker FSR	Fill Depth (m)	1.2
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	0
Channel Width (m)	3	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	0.6
Stream Slope (%)	0.5	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	Yes	Slope (%)	1.5
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	21	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Channel with and gradient estimated. Culvert is fully backwatered due to beaver dams at this time and passable but might be a good idea to assess flow velocities in the spring at higher flows. Habitat confirmation could be conducted to get an idea of fish values and habitat values to inform if are an issue. 15:54

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.6824

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-16	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	124963	Diameter (m)	1
External ID	–	Length (m)	12
Crew	AI MW	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	559940	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6046827	Backwatered	No
Stream	Tributary to Parsnip River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Arctic FSR	Fill Depth (m)	0.5
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	0.2
Channel Width (m)	2.7	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	0.6
Stream Slope (%)	1.5	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	3
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	31	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: 0.54236111111111118

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.124963

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-15	Crossing Sub Type	Round Culvert
PSCIS ID	125000	Diameter (m)	1.5
External ID	–	Length (m)	18
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	No
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	577540	Resemble Channel	No
Northing	6038199	Backwatered	No
Stream	Tributary to Parsnip River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Arctic FSR	Fill Depth (m)	2.5
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	0.6
Channel Width (m)	4.52	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	2
Stream Slope (%)	1.5	Inlet Drop	No
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	2
Habitat Value	Medium	Valley Fill	Deep Fill
Final score	34	Barrier Result	Barrier
Fix type	Replace with New Open Bottom Structure	Fix Span / Diameter	15

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Habitat survey done with drone. 11:15:00 AM

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.125000

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-16	Crossing Sub Type	Bridge
PSCIS ID	125179	Diameter (m)	12.5
External ID	–	Length (m)	4
Crew	AI	Embedded	–
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	570307	Resemble Channel	–
Northing	6052836	Backwatered	–
Stream	Tributary to Missinka River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-Missinka FSR	Fill Depth (m)	–
Road Tenure	Resource Demographic	Outlet Drop (m)	–
Channel Width (m)	–	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	–
Stream Slope (%)	–	Inlet Drop	–
Beaver Activity	–	Slope (%)	–
Habitat Value	–	Valley Fill	–
Final score	0	Barrier Result	Passable
Fix type	–	Fix Span / Diameter	–

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Riprap is 6.7m wide on east and 4.7m wide on west. Riprap cascade downstream of structure ~5m.

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.125179

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-14	Crossing Sub Type	Bridge
PSCIS ID	198320	Diameter (m)	15.3
External ID	16603769	Length (m)	5
Crew	AI MW	Embedded	–
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	537168	Resemble Channel	–
Northing	6075496	Backwatered	–
Stream	tributary to Anzac River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Fern Valley	Fill Depth (m)	–
Road Tenure	–	Outlet Drop (m)	–
Channel Width (m)	–	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	–
Stream Slope (%)	–	Inlet Drop	–
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	–
Habitat Value	–	Valley Fill	–
Final score	0	Barrier Result	Passable
Fix type	–	Fix Span / Diameter	–

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Bridge, overgrown vegetation at inlet and outlet. 16:35:00

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.16603769

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-15	Crossing Sub Type	Ford
PSCIS ID	198321	Diameter (m)	–
External ID	16601271	Length (m)	–
Crew	AI	Embedded	–
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	535101	Resemble Channel	–
Northing	6068381	Backwatered	–
Stream	Fern Creek	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Spur	Fill Depth (m)	–
Road Tenure	Unclassified	Outlet Drop (m)	–
Channel Width (m)	–	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	–
Stream Slope (%)	–	Inlet Drop	–
Beaver Activity	No	Slope (%)	–
Habitat Value	–	Valley Fill	–
Final score	0	Barrier Result	Unknown
Fix type	–	Fix Span / Diameter	–

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: No ford or crossing. This appears to be the end of the accessible remnants of this rough ATV road. 17:06

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.16601271

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–
Date	2022-08-17	Crossing Sub Type	Ford
PSCIS ID	198322	Diameter (m)	–
External ID	2022081750	Length (m)	–
Crew	MW AI	Embedded	–
UTM Zone	10	Depth Embedded (m)	–
Easting	575104	Resemble Channel	–
Northing	6051021	Backwatered	–
Stream	tributary to Missinka River	Percent Backwatered	–
Road	Chuchinka-missinka FSR	Fill Depth (m)	–
Road Tenure	Unclassified	Outlet Drop (m)	–
Channel Width (m)	–	Outlet Pool Depth (m)	–
Stream Slope (%)	–	Inlet Drop	–
Beaver Activity	Yes	Slope (%)	–
Habitat Value	–	Valley Fill	–
Final score	0	Barrier Result	Unknown
Fix type	–	Fix Span / Diameter	–

Location and Stream Data	•	Crossing Characteristics	–

Comments: Located at a quad trail. 13:53

Photos: PSCIS ID

. From top left clockwise: Road/Site Card, Barrel, Outlet, Downstream, Upstream, Inlet.2022081750