



HABITAT  
CONSERVATION TRUST  
FOUNDATION

## **HCTF Project Evaluation Workshop 2012**

### **FISHERIES**

June 7-8, 2012  
Richmond, BC

### **Summary Report**

## Introduction

In an ongoing effort to evaluate the outcomes of investments, HCTF uses several vehicles:

1. Technical committee review: annual technical evaluation of continuing projects.
2. Grant reports evaluation: review of project reports by HCTF staff.
3. On site visit: HCTF staff and Board of Directors on-the-ground evaluations of individual projects.
4. Detailed project evaluations: evaluations of specific projects including on-the-ground and financial audits.
5. Project evaluation workshops: project leaders present their results for peer review.

To date, HCTF has held four project evaluation workshops, the most recent is the HCTF Fisheries Evaluation Workshop, held in Richmond, June 7-8, 2012. This report summarizes the workshop.

The goal of this workshop was to allow project leaders to discuss their projects in a mutually respectful atmosphere, so that HCTF representatives and other project leaders could learn from each other's experiences.

Specific workshop objectives were to:

1. Understand what each project accomplished and what difference it made to benefit fisheries management in BC
2. Review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in fisheries projects; and
3. Provide a forum for individuals and organizations to share information and ideas on how to improve fisheries management projects, programs and activities in BC.

A blend of the following criteria was used to select projects to be presented:

- Multi-year projects that are at or near the end of their project life;
- High dollar projects;
- Mix of small, site-specific and larger, wider ranging projects;
- Mix of 1-year and multi-year projects;
- Geographic spread throughout BC;
- Blend of proponent types by organization (i.e., government and non-government organizations).

Based on the criteria above, HCTF selected 14 projects and invited project leaders to make presentations on their projects at a 2-day workshop. Of the 14 presentations, 11 were from the provincial government, and 4 were from non-government organizations (Table 1).

Table 1. Presentations at the June 2012 HCTF Fisheries Evaluation Workshop

Organization	Presenter	Project
FLNRO*	Tom Johnstone	<b>Keogh River Steelhead Population Dynamics (1-319)</b> Monitor smolt emigration and adult return of Steelhead in the Keogh River to evaluate success of habitat restoration and other conservation strategies for endangered Steelhead stocks, and to provide guidance on recreational fishery openings.
BCCF*	James Craig	<b>Keogh Lake Storage Improvements (1-461)</b> Building on 2009 maintenance work to re-established full access to existing licensed storage at Keogh Lake, an additional license will be secured and weir modifications completed for 15 cm of new top storage (100 ac-ft) to further improve summer fish rearing conditions throughout the Keogh River.
BCCF	Dave Harper	<b>Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring (2-408)</b> BCCF fisheries technicians will conduct seasonal physical assessments and quantitative fish counts of restored habitat with Large Woody Debris (LWD) structures, and restored off-channel habitat on a subset of habitat restoration projects.
BCIT* River's Institute	Tom Saare	<b>Restoration of Guichon Creek (2-449)</b> This project is intended to restore native fish and riparian habitat in Guichon Creek which runs through the BCIT campus in Burnaby BC. Guichon Creek has been heavily modified by urbanization during the past 70 years, resulting in a major loss of native fish, and instream fish and riparian habitat.
FLNRO	Rob Bison	<b>Interior Fraser Wild Steelhead Conservation (3-251)</b> Escapement abundance monitoring for Thomspson (Deadman, Nicola, Bonaparte) and Chilcotin steelhead.
FLNRO	Andy Morris	<b>Nicola Lake Kokanee Conservation Plan (3-260)</b> To collect baseline data on critical habitat use for Nicola Lake kokanee, including stream spawner enumeration and distribution mapping, shore spawner surveys and hydro-acoustic and trawl surveys.
FLNRO	Steve Maricle	<b>Thompson Region Small Lakes Hypolimnetic Oxygen Project (3-291)</b> Increase survival of overwintering trout and char in Red Lake by installing an oxygen injection system.
FLNRO	Andy Morris	<b>Shuswap Lake Shoreline Habitat Restoration (3-296)</b> Restore high priority areas of sensitive fisheries habitat on Shuswap Lake to improve spawning habitat for lake char and rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids.
FLNRO	Al Caverly	<b>Thompson Flow Sensitive Streams (3-297)</b> This project will document supply/demand effects on several streams in the Thompson watershed, and look for solutions to instream flow problems. This information will inform management regimes to maintain sufficient water during dry periods to protect fish rearing, migration, and spawning, as well as values extended to the riparian ecosystems.
FLNRO	Mark Beere	<b>Skeena Weirs &amp; Steelhead Stock Assessment (6-97)</b> Operate a fish enumeration weir on the upper Sustut River for the 19th consecutive year to determine the escapement of wild summer steelhead to this system; the Sustut weir serves as an index stream for upper Skeena steelhead stocks.
Lheidli T'eeneh Band	Brian Toth	<b>Improving Burbot Population Management (7-365)</b> Knowledge gained about local burbot population dynamics will help maintain both sport and sustenance fisheries in the Omineca Region where threats, such as the mountain pine beetle epidemic and high fishing effort, call for intensive fishery management.
FLNRO	Paul Askey	<b>Mabel Lake Rainbow Trout Stock Assessment (8-270)</b> Obtain data from rainbow trout tagging program to accurately estimate the exploitation rate and assess alternative harvest strategies to restore this fishery.

## HCTF Project Evaluation Workshop: Fisheries 2012

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Organization	Presenter	Project
FLNRO	Tara White	<b>Mission Ck. Habitat Restoration Coordinator (8-320)</b> Retain a Project Coordinator to facilitate a multi-year, multi-stakeholder initiative to restore fish and wildlife habitat on Mission Creek, the most important fish producing tributary to Okanagan Lake.
FLNRO	Paul Askey	<b>Priority Management &amp; Conservation of Okanagan Kokanee (8-321)</b> The project will focus on establishing sustainable exploitation rates on Wood Lake (Okanagan Region's top fishery) as well as developing key stock assessment tools for managing all the main valley lakes.

\*FLNRO – Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations

\*\*BCCF – BC Conservation Foundation

\*\*\*BCIT – BC Institute of Technology

### Additional participants

#### **HCTF Board members:**

Harvey Andrusak

Ross Peck

Ken Ashley

Al Martin

Andrew Wilson

#### **Other:**

Michael Burwash, Ecosystems Section, FLNRO Kamloops;

Shannon Harris, MOE, HCTF Fisheries Technical Review Committee, Chair

#### **HCTF staff:**

Brian Springinotic

Lynne Bonner

Jane Algard

## Methods

### Projects

Prior to the workshop, participants received a profile of the project (executive summary and objectives) gleaned from the most recent project proposal. The evaluation form was included at the bottom of the profile page.

Participants were required to make a 20-minute presentation with the following mandatory elements:

- Project summary including location, issue, methodology and activities. (5 min)
- Project objectives met or not met: results and issues arising. (5 min)
- Project accomplishments and implications for fisheries conservation and management: “What difference did this project make?” (10 min)
- Questions and group discussion. (10 min)

At the end of the presentation, participants were required to complete the evaluation form (see Appendix A – workshop forms). The form specifically asked “Do you think this project contributes to fisheries management in BC?” Participants could choose a significance rating from one of the following categories: a) significantly; b) somewhat; or c) not sure. Participants were also asked for written comments and suggestions regarding both the project and the presentation. A transcription of these comments and suggestions were forwarded to the individual project leaders and to the HCTF Board only.

HCTF Board members and staff also participated in the review, discussion and evaluation of each of the projects.

Of the 20 participants at the workshop, between 10 and 14 individuals actually completed this rating for each project, so the results are presented as a percentage of those answering. The projects that were rated as “significantly” contributing were then grouped into *high* (80 - 100%), *moderate* (50 - 79%) or *low* (0 - 49%) to provide an overall picture of how well these HCTF projects contributed to fisheries management according to the expertise in this workshop.

### Workshop

The workshop was planned for two days. In the evening of the first day, HCTF hosted a dinner at the hotel to provide networking opportunities for participants, the Board and staff in an informal environment.

In addition to the individual project evaluations, workshop participants were also asked for constructive feedback on the workshop and on HCTF and its processes.

## Results

### Projects

Figure 1 shows the significance rating for each of the projects presented at the June 2012 Fisheries Evaluation Workshop and summarizes the ratings for each of the 14 projects presented. There were eight projects rated *high*, four projects rated *moderate* and two that were rated *low*.

The highly-rated projects were those with either long-term data sets or that had broad and clear management applications. Conversely, the two projects with the lowest ratings had less clear objectives and management applications. The rest of the projects with moderate ratings elicited some concerns, but overall the participants still thought the projects were valuable.

In summary, 86% of the projects presented at this workshop were considered to be contributing significantly or somewhat significantly to fisheries management in BC.

### Workshop

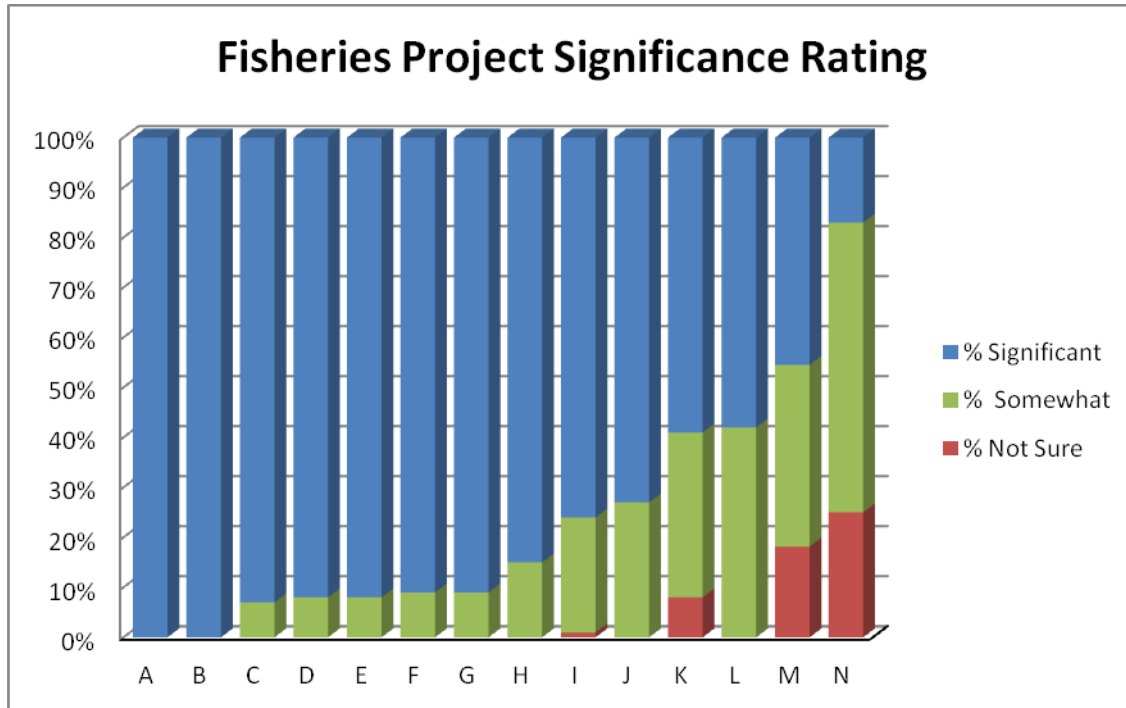
Feedback on the workshop itself was very positive. It was noted that the projects funded by HCTF are increasingly essential to conservation and management of BC fisheries due to 1) high quality of the projects funded, and 2) reduction of other funding for basic conservation work.

Benefits of the workshop include:

- Quality information about a diverse range of projects conducted throughout BC. Very useful for other proponents, reviewers, and Board members to hear first-hand about results of approved projects.
- Good opportunity to get feedback and suggestions from others.
- Very good networking opportunity, especially during informal sessions

The main negative comments related to timing of the workshop with respect to fieldwork season. There were mixed opinions on the appropriate length of presentations – some felt 20 minutes was sufficient, others felt that some projects warranted additional time to present important information.

Figure 1. Significance rating of each of the 14 projects presented at the June 2012 HCTF Fisheries Evaluation Workshop



Project	# Responses	% Somewhat	% Not Sure	% Significant	Overall Rating
A	14			100%	High
B	10			100%	High
C	14	7%		93%	High
D	12	8%		92%	High
E	12	8%		92%	High
F	11	9%		91%	High
G	11	9%		91%	High
H	13	15%		85%	High
I	13	23%	1%	76%	High
J	11	27%		73%	Moderate
K	12	33%	8%	59%	Moderate
L	12	42%		58%	Moderate
M	11	36%	18%	45%	Low
N	12	58%	25%	17%	Low

Some suggestions to improve future workshops included:

- Consider inviting additional technical review committee members and Ministry section heads.
- Participants should be asked to stick to the presentation outline.
- HCTF might consider giving presenters an HCTF hat, or some other token.

### **Comments about HCTF in general**

- HCTF website should include a summarized list of “FAQs” including who to call, basic timelines, an application calendar with links to forms, etc.
- Consider hosting these workshops twice a year to profile more projects.
- Project names should be able to change throughout the length of the project if the project scope is modified.
- Consider developing a way to minimize equipment expenditures by sharing information about availability to all project leaders.
- Financial administration within provincial ministries is difficult and takes time away from delivery of the projects (this is outside of HCTF purview though).
- Most proponents would benefit by knowing the status of their applications earlier in the year to allow early season projects to proceed, and others to plan accordingly.
- Is there a mechanism for proponents to get some upfront indication that a project, or type of project, might or might not be considered by the Board? Some applications, particularly for multi-year projects, are very time consuming (and expensive) for the proponent to produce.



## **Discussion and Conclusions**

### **Projects**

While the significance ratings developed for this evaluation are opinion-based and cannot be precise, they do appear to be a valid reflection of the projects' conservation and management values.

The majority of projects presented were clearly considered to be contributing significantly to fisheries management in BC. HCTF staff noted an apparent correlation between the significance rating and how well the project objectives and management applications were defined in the original project proposals. This indicates that these areas need to be carefully scrutinized during the technical review of proposals.

### **Workshop**

This was the fourth project evaluation workshop that HCTF has sponsored over the past two years, but it was the first using the current approach. In previous workshops the evaluation form required participants to provide a score for different components of the project (objectives, methodologies/activities/outreach, outcomes achieved to date, budget and lessons learned). The results did not provide a clear picture and the totaled scores were not meaningful. The approach used in this workshop was to ask one question ("Do you think this project contributes to fisheries management in BC?") and allow more time for written comments. The responses were much clearer and more useful. In a sense, we asked for less and got back more from the workshop participants making this workshop the most successful yet as an evaluation tool. It should stand as a model for future HCTF evaluation workshops.

HCTF had three objectives for the Fisheries 2012 project evaluation workshop:

1. To understand what each project accomplished and what difference it made to benefit fisheries management in BC
2. To review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in fisheries projects; and
3. To provide a forum for individuals and organizations to share information and ideas on how to improve fisheries management projects, programs and activities in BC.

Based on the comments received from the participants, these workshop objectives were met. With respect to Objective 1, the significance of some projects may not be fully evident for a number of years. However, a judgment of significance at this point of time served as an indication of success.

Participants were in general agreement that HCTF should continue to hold evaluation workshops, and examine the possibility of inviting additional Technical Review Committee members and representatives from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources and from the Ministry of Environment. However, HCTF should also be cautious about keeping the group relatively small to retain the collegial dynamic.

In conclusion, this workshop clearly indicates that HCTF investments in fisheries projects are resulting in significant contributions to fisheries management in BC.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this workshop, HCTF staff makes the following recommendations:

- Continue holding project evaluation workshops annually (i.e., one each year).
- Use the June 2012 fisheries evaluation workshop as a model for future workshops.
- Set a specific month to hold the workshops each year so there will be clear expectations for both HCTF and proponents.
- Incorporate workshop results into HCTF strategic planning and policies, where relevant and practical.

**PRESENTATION OUTLINE:** *In previous workshops, participants indicated that it would be easier to follow presentations that have the same format. Please use this outline for your presentation.*

### **A. Title**

Project number and name.

Project leader and organization.

### **B. Introduction to project and project implementation**

**5min**

Background information, location, issue, etc.

Brief discussion of methodology and activities.

### **C. Summary of objectives and results**

**5min**

Discuss objectives as specified in application (see project profile)

- Objectives met and results.
- Objectives partially or not met - Issues arising and results (i.e. report on any technical or other difficulties, and any strategies used to solve problems).

### **D. Project accomplishments and implications for fisheries conservation and management.**

**10min**

What difference did this project make?

What were the management applications of this project? Were any specific actions taken as a result of this project? As a fisheries professional, what was the most valuable aspect or outcome of this project?

### **E. Group discussion.**

**10min**

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## HCTF PROJECT PROFILE AND EVALUATION FORM

Project#

**Project Name:**

**Project Leader:**

**Project Dates:**

**Total Approved Funding: \$xxxxx**

**Project Description**

*(from proposal)*

**Executive Summary**

*(from proposal)*

**Objectives**

*(from proposal)*

**Project Evaluation and comments**

**1. How well do you think this project contributes to fisheries management in B.C.? : \_\_\_ significantly; \_\_\_ somewhat; \_\_\_ not sure.**

**(Notwithstanding current provincial fisheries program capacity limitations.)**

***Comments and suggestions?***

**2. Did the presentation follow the format and provide the information clearly? (Your response is meant only for constructive feedback to the presenter)**