



Quality Waters Fund

Project 0-545

2025-26 Report

West Coast Region

Project Summary

The second half of the project continued to run smoothly. Survey design remained roving-roving, with randomized days across spatial and temporal strata. Creel surveys were completed from April 1st, 2025, through to July 4th, 2025, as proposed (covering the last 3.5 months of the 10.5-month fishing year). In total, 26 survey days were completed during this period (10 weekend and 16 weekday) using a combination of shore-based (15) and boat-based (9) survey efforts. Two (2) survey days were car counts only. A total of 150 angler interviews were completed during this period. In total, over the entire 10.5-month fishing year, 87 surveys days (37 weekend and 50 weekday) were completed, 40 surveys were boat-based, 45 surveys were foot-based, and 2 were car count only. A total of 680 angler interviews were completed over the entire fishing year. Supplemental information is also being obtained through the establishment of relationship development between vehicle counts and angler counts as well as through fixed camera stations to monitor access points of significance. Public encountered have been broadly supportive. Analysis has started now that the creel surveys are officially complete. A review of historic reported guided angler activity and Angling Guide Operating Plans on the Cowichan River was also conducted, with a focus between the 2019-2020 and 2023-2024 angling seasons.

Summary Funding Table

	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 Spending	Variance
Cowichan River	\$35,000	\$33,805.01	-\$1,194.99
Total	\$35,000	\$33,805.01	-\$1,194.99

Progress and Challenges in Achieving 2025-26 Project Outcomes

During the 2025-26 project year the remaining 3.5 months of creel surveys were completed from April 1st, 2025, through to July 4th, 2025. These surveys continued to follow a roving-roving design with randomized days across spatial and temporal strata. Surveys during this period were a combination of shore-based (n=15) and boat-based (n=9) survey efforts (2 days were car counts only). In total, 26 surveys days were completed (10 weekend and 16 weekday). These surveys were completed by a combination of provincial biologists and contract staff through the BC Conservation Foundation.

The primary outcome of this work was the completion of the documentation of angler effort for the remaining 3.5 months of the 10.5-month fishing year resulting in the collection of an additional 150 angler interviews during that period. Synthesis of the collected creel data was completed and analysis is ongoing. In total, over the entire 10.5-month fishing year, a total of 87 surveys days (37 weekend and 50 weekday) were completed, 40 surveys were boat-based, 45 surveys were foot-based, and 2 were car count only. 680 angler interviews were completed over the entire 10.5-month fishing year. The review and synthesis of Angler Guide Operating Plans and Angler Guide Reports for guides operating on the Cowichan River was initiated and completed by BCCF contractors in March 2026 with a focus on data between the 2019-2020 and 2023-2024 angling seasons. This information will help inform the Cowichan River Classification process (e.g. historic projected angling guide use versus actual use, temporal patterns in use, numbers of guides, etc.).

The primary challenge was BCCF contract staff unavailability to complete creel surveys on the desired weeks/dates. This resulted in several creel days being missed, provincial staff completing the work where possible, and a surplus of funds that were not utilized by contractors. These funds were re-allocated to support contractor review and synthesis of the above-mentioned historic guide use on the Cowichan River. Additionally, a portion of these funds was originally requested to hire a government auxiliary staff member to be the primary lead on the creel surveys and subsequent synthesis and analysis. Early in the 2025-2026 fiscal year this auxiliary position was made permanent, and it was determined that in this circumstance these funds could be used to cover the salary of this newly established permanent position. The individual in this role was the primary government staff member undertaking the creel surveys and subsequent data management.

Capital Asset Purchase Information

N/A

Additional Supporting Information

Data synthesis completed, including review and compilation, of Angling Guide Operating Plans (requested guided activity) on the Cowichan River, focusing on requests between the 2019-2020 and 2023-2024 angling seasons. Data synthesis completed, including review and compilation of historic Angling Guide Reports (actualized guided activity) on the Cowichan River between the 2019-2020 and 2023-2024 angling seasons. This data is compiled in separate Excel documents (AGOP_Data_Master.xlsx and AGR_Data_Master.xlsx) in a format to allow for integration into R Studio for data analysis. The data is also presented in a way to allow for exploration using Pivot Tables in Excel.

Photos

N/A