



Quality Waters Fund

Project 7-616

2025-26 Report

Omineca Region

Project Summary

With funding from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship completed annual snorkel drift surveys on the Stellako River following the Ministry's standard summer count protocol. In July 2025, three swimmers and one safety boat conducted triple pass snorkel drift assessments to provide current survey data for comparison with the 35 year Stellako Rainbow Trout dataset. A parallel analysis evaluated how effectively trends could be detected across three trout size classes, by varying levels of temporal sampling replication, helping inform monitoring design and interpretation. Project funds also supported the purchase of five new angling regulation signs for installation at key access points along Stellako trail networks. Together, these actions strengthened the information base needed for proactive fisheries management, supporting decisions that aim to maintain high quality, diverse angling opportunities while safeguarding the long term sustainability of wild Rainbow Trout populations.

Summary Funding Table

	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 Spending	Variance
Stellako River	\$3,000	\$1,451.25	-\$1,548.75
Total	\$3,000	\$1,451.25	-\$1,548.75

Progress and Challenges in Achieving 2025–26 Project Outcomes

Snorkel surveys were conducted under the lowest flows on record due to persistent drought conditions since 2023. Despite these challenges, swims were completed successfully under good visibility, serving as an important benchmark for this important wild Rainbow Trout population. Procurement of signs was interrupted during a Ministry-wide efficiency review, signs procured through King's Printer were received early in 2026 (see Photo 3), signs are ready for future installation spring 2026. Updated signage will improve angler awareness and compliance with Classified Water regulations.

Capital Asset Purchase Information

No capital assets were purchased

Additional Supporting Information

WLRS Omineca Resource Stewardship Division secured funds from BC LBIS to contract an analysis of the full time-series of Stellako River snorkel count data, which included data collected up to 2025. Attachment: Gibeau, P., & Burns, C. (2025, December 31). Time series of rainbow trout abundance in the Stellako River: Power analysis, simulations, and optimization of monitoring program – Phase 2 (Technical Memorandum). LGL Limited. Prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship – Omineca Region.

Photos



Snorkel crews entering a confined section in Reach 2 of Stellako River



Snorkel crews navigating a turbulent riffle section in Reach 4 of Stellako River

ATTENTION ANGLERS

REGION 7A – OMINECA – STELLAKO RIVER

OPEN MAY 15 – NOV 14:
 Classified Waters Licence required
(Class II water when open — Steelhead Stamp not required)

- Rainbow trout release;
- Fly fishing only between signs approx. 250 m and 4 km downstream of the bridge near the François Lake outlet; and
- No powered boats from François Lake to the falls.

Refer to the B.C. Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis for more information, and find in-season updates at:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/fishing>



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Your co-operation is appreciated.
 Thank you for helping protect the wildlife and habitat in this area!

Proof of BC GCPE-approved fish regulation sign, to be posted at trailheads of Stellako River