

**Round table Report**  
**March 2023 SEHAB meeting**  
**SEHAB Rep Ian Bruce, South Vancouver Island**  
**CA: Heather Wright**

**Summary**

1. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are directly related to DFO
2. Any positive things that are directly related to DFO
3. Any things coming up that DFO should know about
4. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are related to other agencies.

**Rep. Report**

1. We have a new CA, Heather Wright. This being well greeted by several of our groups who know and have worked with her in her several years working at World Fisheries Trust in Victoria. Heather is working hard to bring her knowledge of hatcheries up to speed. One issue that continues to bother me – I've been attempting to access to former CA 's technical files – this is to learn from past restoration efforts and guide future ones. For example, in the Town of Sidney spent \$1.5 M replacing a dam that DFO had rebuilt with Sidney in 1997 but Sidney had no files on it.
2. Stewardship for Salmon is growing in the area. For example, the KENNES Watershed Stewardship group has been revitalized and 15 new members have joined. Additionally, the Friends of Millstream Watershed stewards was formed in the fall with over 25 members and a strong contingent from Royal Roads University.
3. Many asking about how PSSI will affect their organizations and projects.
4. Section 36(3) of Fisheries Act (deleterious substances) delegation to ECCC again shows its weakness - with 2021 -300 cutthroat salmon killed on Reay (KELSET) Creek – bleach – ended up with an \$11,000 fine to the company – BC Conservation Officers did a great job after the ECCC folks didn't properly investigate.
5. Connections with FFHPP and provincial staff have been improved...I've given several restoration site tours with new hires and their mentors from both organizations – great that relationships with Province are improving

**Group reports**

1. Peninsula Streams & Shorelines currently has over 50 volunteers on the beaches successfully finding surf smelt and sand lance eggs on multiple beaches

- very successful year. Co-chairs of the BC Forage Fish Monitoring Network with Project Watershed.
2. Also for Peninsula Streams, a post-COVID fact of life, we have more stream and beach volunteers than can be accommodated on any given outdoor event – hence limiting participants by selective invites and RSVPs only. Peninsula is limited by resources to put these volunteers to work – contract support for more stewardship staff. Lots of beach restoration projects and studies going on. [www.peninsulastreams.ca](http://www.peninsulastreams.ca) and look for staff reports for more of what we are up to.
  3. Millstream Fishway Atmospheric River damage – over \$100,000 of damage, not budgeted for so we've managed to find most of it but we're still short. Additional note on value of PIT tagging – in 2022 of 1000 fish released in one upstream site, only 69 passed the downstream array, while the other site's release had 679 fish pass – needless to say we won't be releasing at the low survival site again.
  4. Salmon in the City on Colquitz River has replaced their counting fence from trap and dip net to camera with stock assessment & PSF support-lots less mortality by otters and seals – counts are great.
  5. Goldstream Hatchery had a water mix up issue caused by CRD water source but luckily PIT tagged fish were spared. Goldstream volunteers and others in the salmon community were disappointed that long time contract project advisor, Peter McCully, did not have his contract renewed.

## 1. Issues from Groups

### Comments from Don Lowen, former Education Coordinator in Victoria and SEHAB Chair

(Note: Ian spoke with Michael Crowe, Regional Manager, Community Involvement Programs (CIP) and he said he would reach out to Don Lowen directly to explain the situation which was *that CIP was not abandoning the S2S in-person activities.* )

## Experiential Learning: The Essence of Stream to Sea

### Issue

- Restrictions designed to minimize the risk of spreading the virus during the COVID pandemic included zero access to schools by community members and agency representatives, including DFO education coordinators (EC's). As a result, each EC's ability to reach students was limited to online learning, while deliveries of equipment and salmonids were made at the school door.

- A South Coast Area DFO employee, whose jurisdiction includes the delivery of the S2S education program, has made it clear that "moving forward" means that the Program will not re-establish the delivery design implemented prior to the spring of 2020. In other words, the extent to which the Program has been virtualized over the past three years is here to stay.

The following talking points should be considered if government is not willing to assure SEHAB, in writing, that its sole intent is to re-establish the Program's delivery model as it was designed and implemented prior to 2020. Reasons for government to maintain any other position might include:

1. Perceived need to decrease S2S budget (warm bodies not required for online learning);
2. The notion that virtual experiences of Nature are better teachers than real experiences in Nature;
3. Little or no institutional desire to change status quo;

### **Talking Points**

Stream to Sea is an education program that is experiential by design. Thus the need for warm bodies to deliver S2S.

- Experiential learning gives students the opportunity to understand how the real world works, beyond human constructs like political boundaries, religions, and law. There are critical rules for our own survival that apply beyond these constructs. These rules are seldom taught, poorly understood, and often not followed.
- How the Real World works: Nature vs constructs. Nature interconnects, humans separate. eg - there is no such thing as the environment outside of your body. That is a human construct.
- Experiential or virtualized learning to actually experience a place: eg Mexico - Being there or infomercial? "Unlike television, Nature does not steal time. It enhances it."(Louv, Last Child in the Woods) The very best nature documentary cannot compete with the learning potential of the outdoor classroom.
- Online or virtual learning has its place in the classroom. eg - the study of human constructs like macroeconomics or sixteenth century European history. S2S can help a child understand how the world really works, so it must put the child in the real world, the outdoor classroom.

- Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD, atrophy of the senses) - TV time vs time in Nature, related to the increase in human psychological development issues (ADHD, autism, etc.)

Quote from Last Child in the Woods: "Reducing that deficit—healing the broken bond between our young and nature—is in our self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depends upon it. The health of the earth is at stake as well. How the young respond to nature, and how they raise their own children, will shape the configurations and conditions of our cities, homes—our daily lives."

## Resources

Best Practices for Experiential Learning (McGill University) - [https://www.mcgill.ca/eln/files/eln/doc\\_ryerson\\_bestpracticesryerson.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/eln/files/eln/doc_ryerson_bestpracticesryerson.pdf)

Environmental Learning and Experience (BC Ministry of Education) - [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/environmental-learning/enviro\\_learning\\_exper.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/environmental-learning/enviro_learning_exper.pdf)

Last Child in the Woods (Richard Louv) - <https://richardlouv.com/books/last-child/>

Richard Louv Workshop on Nature Deficit Disorder - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P90NszopU28>

## Bruce Bevan – Esquimalt Anglers Association,

I think DFO through SEHAB needs to address the subject of beaver management, as a tool to improve salmon habitat.

Currently beavers are treated as a pest by most jurisdictions and are frequently destroyed. In reality, they are a keystone species that are tirelessly working to improve watershed towards the greater environmental balance that once existed before their elimination by trapping.

Until governments establish guidelines to manage and protect beavers in watersheds in our area, salmon habitat will continue to decline through low water flows in the dry summers. Let's take advantage of this free labour to help reverse the problems of climate change.

Peninsula Streams Society