

Thompson Steelhead Working Group - June 2017 Update

The following is a quarterly update of the Thompson Steelhead Working Group (TSWG). The intent is to provide a regular update to keep the communication lines open with the various organizations and governments, to keep people informed, minimize duplication, and seek opportunities to work together.

Thompson Steelhead Working Group meetings

The TSWG is meeting quarterly, with our last meeting on June 22, 2017. There are a number of key areas we are either focusing on (dependent on funding), all within the context of the [draft recovery and management plan](#) and the planning framework steps:

- **Convene a science and management tools workshop** - Complemented by various initiatives already underway by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the province (BC), the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) review of Interior Fraser steelhead for endangered status, the TSWG would like to support a wholesome review of what tools/models exist for identifying, managing and addressing steelhead bycatch for commercial salmon fisheries. The move is from a current exploitation model approach to an exposure model approach. Ocean survival and other factors would also be explored.
- **Thompson system habitat** - The TSWG is working to compile existing freshwater habitat information and identify restoration needs for the Nicola, Deadman and Bonaparte systems. The goal here is to have a coordinated plan across many agencies/sectors that uses a “triage” approach to identify the areas of highest need for restoration and what type (i.e., streambank stabilization, riparian shading, in-stream habitat restoration, etc.). Information on past restoration projects is being collected. There are multiple funding opportunities to do implementation work, but we need a comprehensive plan with the most current information first.
- **Forest sector engagement** - The TSWG has secured modest funding from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative to engage the forest industry and BC Timber Sales about First Nations values and current status of steelhead, identify modified forest management practices that could help reverse the decline of Thompson steelhead, and seek future opportunities to collaborate. Meetings have taken place with West Fraser in 100 Mile House and BC Timber Sales in Kamloops, and identified some possible collaborative initiatives to pursue. Future meetings are being planned with Stuwix Resources in the Merritt Timber Supply Area.

Marine Stewardship Council: The MSC is a third party certification process for the fisheries industry. DFO and BC are working collaboratively on Condition 14 regarding steelhead conservation and management.

COSEWIC: The Marine Fish Subcommittee has agreed to review the status of Interior Fraser Steelhead.

Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Salmon - Southern BC: The 2017/18 IFMP is expected to be approved any time now; there is an objective for Interior Fraser Steelhead.

Provincial government initiatives: MFLNRO is proposing to establish fisheries sensitive watershed designations in the Coldwater, Spius and Deadman watersheds, and temperature sensitive designations in the Nicola watershed. Also, environmental flow needs work is proceeding in critical watersheds.

About the Thompson Steelhead Working Group

The Thompson Steelhead Working Group is a multi-governmental collaborative initiative formed in 2014 to bring together representatives of the Nlaka’pamux and Secwepemc First Nations, the Province of BC and the Government of Canada (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) to develop a recovery and management plan for Thompson Steelhead. The Fraser Basin Council serves as secretariat to the TSWG.

For more information:

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