

First Nations Fisheries Legacy Fund Strategic Plan

2025

**FIRST
NATIONS
FISHERIES**
LEGACY
FUND





Background

Collectively, anticipating that the major projects of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure would directly impact fish and fish habitat, six First Nations recognized the importance of being meaningful partners in shaping these projects.

In the Spring of 2013, the Province of British Columbia made a one-time \$2 million contribution to establish a new fund to be co-managed by qííćáý (Katzie), qʷa:ńłəń (Kwantlen), kʷikwə́łəm (Kwikwetlem), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sćəwaθən məsteyəx (Tsawwassen), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations. Known as the **First Nations Fisheries Legacy Fund** (FNFLF), this fisheries-focused fund is intended to support the protection, restoration and enhancement of ecosystem productivity in the lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet by working together as a **stewardship alliance**.

A board of directors with delegates from each of the six First Nations oversees the organization.

Our Mandate

For the six First Nations to work together to protect, conserve and restore the health of aquatic species and ecosystems that have been, and continue to be impacted by urbanization and industrialization. FNFLF supports the advancement of informed decision-making through partnerships, capacity development and collaborative conservation. We work to support member Nations to achieve their environmental and sustainability goals in the lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet.

Our role is to help facilitate matters of broad concern between the six partner First Nations.



Our Vision

To establish a **stewardship alliance** for the preservation, protection, and restoration of our shared lands, waters, and resources. We will do this by working together to build collective capacity and bring Indigenous Knowledge and values to the forefront of environmental decision-making.

Areas of Focus



Fish

Protecting and enhancing fisheries and other aquatic resources



Environment

Protecting, restoring and monitoring water quality and fish habitat.



People

Pooling resources and building capacity within the six First Nations communities for the management of fish, ecosystems and natural resources.

Addressing Threats



The lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet are facing numerous threats including climate change, industrial activities, pollution, habitat & biodiversity loss, and cumulative effects. These threats create lasting impacts to all three areas of FNFLF’s focus: fish, environment, and people.

While each of the six FNFLF member Nations have independent stewardship initiatives within their territories, some region-wide threats will require a collaborative effort.

FNFLF supports projects that are of shared concern to the six member First Nations, but may not be feasible for one Nation to complete alone.

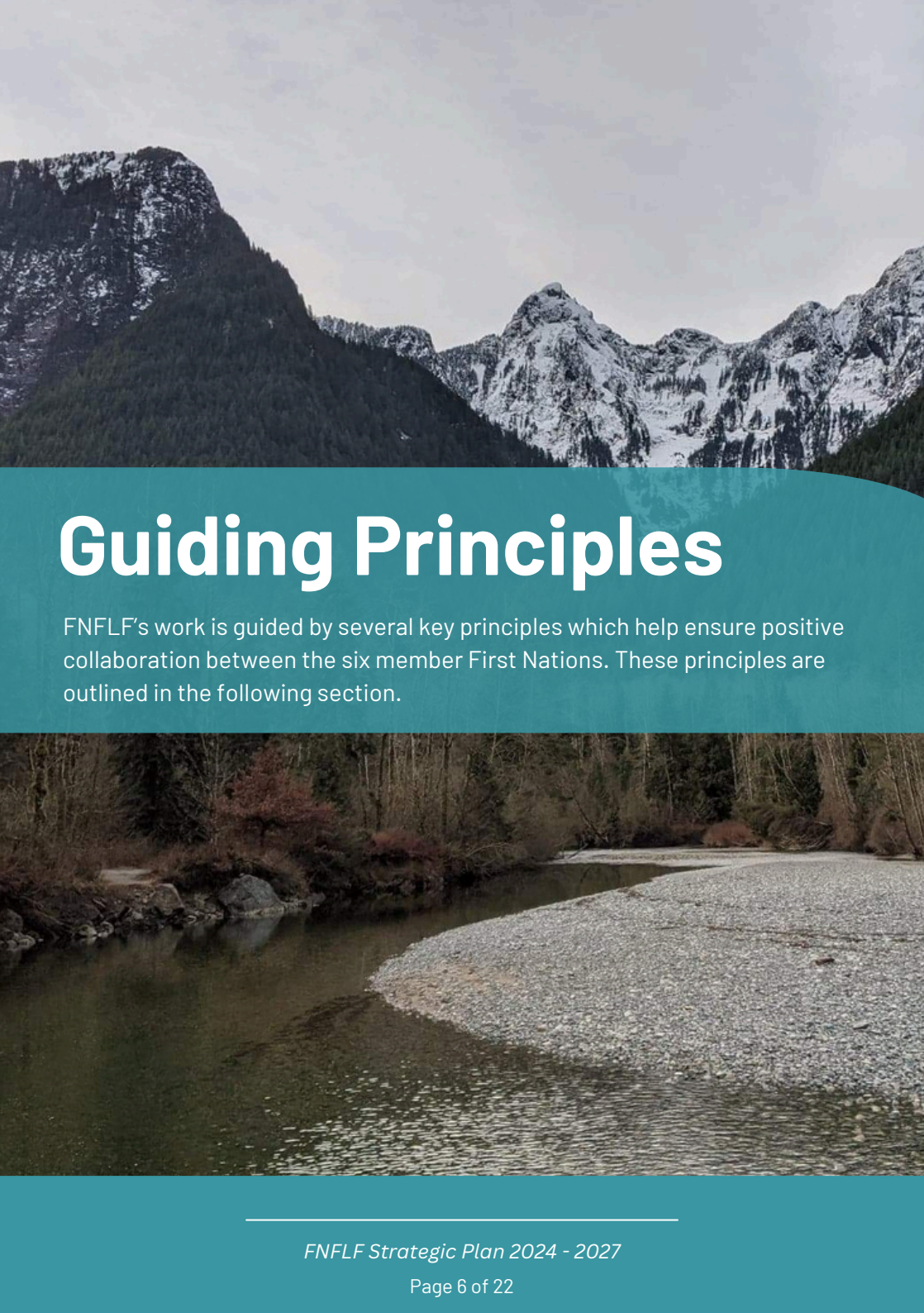
By coming together to form a **stewardship alliance** FNFLF will increase the capacity of the six member Nations by developing shared resources, knowledge, and partnerships.

Our Scope

The six member Nations' territories cover a large area of southwestern British Columbia which faces the numerous threats outlined above. By working together, the FNFLF will draw from the expertise and Knowledge of each member Nation to support projects that are out of scope for individual First Nations and increase our impact on the ground.



Map depicting FNFLF's area of collaboration (circled in red).



Guiding Principles

FNFLF's work is guided by several key principles which help ensure positive collaboration between the six member First Nations. These principles are outlined in the following section.



Demonstrate Stewardship and Leadership

Using a business model, integrate snəwəyəł (sno-way-eth; traditional teachings) and best practices to conserve and restore the health of ecosystems and aquatic species in our traditional territories.



Equity, Fairness, and Capacity Building

To support all partner First Nation communities and businesses develop the expertise to meaningfully participate in programs and projects that support our vision of preservation, protection and restoration.



Complement Programs, Projects, and Partnerships to Maximize Benefits

The fund does not duplicate, replace or directly compete with First Nation or Crown government programs, projects or partnerships, but may assume a more active role in projects beyond the capacity of an Individual First Nation community or business.



Evidence-based Decision Making

To make decisions with the best Indigenous and scientific information available.



Collaborative Problem Solving

To work inclusively on issues of shared interest and seek consensus on acceptable resolutions to disputes.



Balance Spending, Investment and Growth

To preserve a secure capital base for strategic investments in the short-term and seek additional funds to grow the fund to a diversified, productive and independent capital base for responsive investments in the long-term.



Accountability, Transparency and Responsibility

To maintain a reputation for the highest standard of responsiveness and inclusiveness in managing projects and the fund.



Clear and Consistent Communication

To maintain credibility by consistently reporting to communities and partners on the projects and progress of the fund.



Previous Projects at FNFLF

Over the past decade, FNFLF has achieved progress towards its vision and mandate through successful completion of various projects. These projects range from on-the-ground ecological stewardship and restoration, to governance and knowledge sharing, to development of innovative monitoring techniques.

A few key projects are summarized in the following section.



Past Projects

Surrey Bend Habitat Enhancement Project (2013 - 2015)

Funding: \$2,138,387

The Surrey Bend Habitat Enhancement Project was led by the Province of BC and includes significant improvements to salmon-bearing habitat on the Fraser River and improved public access through Surrey Bend Regional Park. The project established fish-rearing and over-wintering habitat for Coho and Chinook salmon in a productive area of Parsons Channel on the Fraser River and included 2.1 km of tidal channels, over 39,000 new plantings, the construction of two bridges (including a pedestrian bridge), and the removal of invasive species including hardhack. Twenty-three workers were involved from the six FNFLF First Nation communities, with seven employees immediately retained for continued work on other projects. This was the first completed project managed by the FNFLF and represents a successful collaboration with several levels of government.

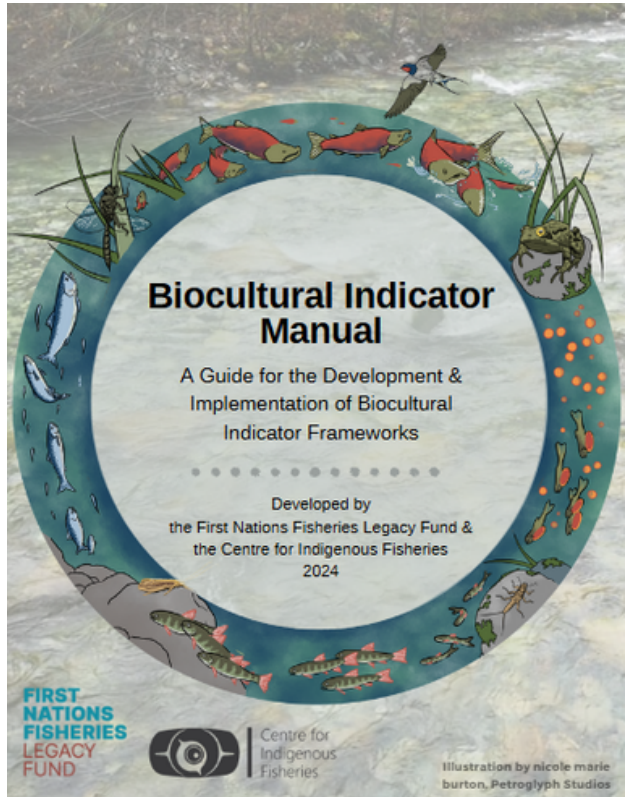


Developing a Bio-Cultural Framework for Fish Habitat & Water Assessments (2020 - 2023)

Funding: \$235,822

The Bio-Cultural Framework project aimed to align Indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge in the management of fish and freshwater resources. This was achieved by using bio-cultural indicators to develop a community-based water monitoring framework that integrated First Nations values to collect baseline data for the assessment of water

quality, quantity and habitat health. The framework helps express First Nations values, monitor change (spatially and temporally), respond to issues, inform planning and policy, and facilitate the long-term management of fish and freshwater resources. This project was largely inspired by the work done in Aotearoa or New Zealand by the Māori and New Zealand Government to develop a Cultural Health Index.



UAV Habitat Mapping to Inform Wild Salmon Stewardship (2021 - 2024)

Funding: \$2,478,221

The UAV Habitat Mapping project aimed to enhance capacity for monitoring and management of wild salmon habitat in First Nations through the integration of community mapping and geospatial technologies. This project inventoried baseline data, local fish habitat knowledge, and geospatial technologies available for undertaking long-term salmon habitat monitoring. This inventory informed how opportunities for capacity building were addressed by providing targeted training in community asset mapping, UAV data collection and related ground surveys, and spatial analytics of fish habitat data. One key outcome of this project was standardized methodologies and protocols for community-based watershed mapping and monitoring that incorporates Indigenous Knowledge and supports the development of similar data collection projects throughout BC. This project was completed in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance, Skeena Fisheries Commission and University of Victoria Map Shop.





Moving Forward

FNFLF has completed several successful projects since its formation over a decade ago. With several projects having recently wrapped, FNFLF is looking to improve their operations and internal capacity to help advance their vision and mandate.

Three distinct phases are outlined in the following section to showcase how FNFLF plans to progress towards their goal of becoming a *stewardship alliance*.





Phase 1

Increase Capacity and Develop
Internal Structures

Phase 2

Execute Stewardship Work

Phase 3

Implement the Stewardship Alliance

Phase 1

Increase Capacity and Develop Internal Structures



In order to progress to the desired **stewardship alliance**, FNFLF needs to increase its internal capacity to support organizational operations.

During Phase 1 of its re-development, the FNFLF will secure an office space and hire administrative staff to support the development of internal protocols for board governance, as well as project and partnership selection.

This phase will also involve the formalization of existing relationships between FNFLF and key partners, such as the First Nations Fisheries Council and the Indigenous Stewardship Fund.

Once staff have been hired and protocols have been developed, focus will shift to identifying and securing funding for project work and developing relationships with potential project partners.

FNFLF is interested in developing relationships with other First Nations organizations, stewardship groups, academic institutions, and various levels of government.

Working on First Nations-led, innovative stewardship projects is of particular interest to FNFLF.

Phase 2

Execute Stewardship Work



After phase 1 is complete, the FNFLF will progress to Phase 2. This phase will include conducting stewardship activities to execute funding and workplan agreements.

FNFLF will utilize the collective knowledge of the six member First Nations to staff and execute their projects, further advancing internal capacity and opportunities for individual First Nations. Collaborative execution of project work will also allow for equipment and resource sharing between the member Nations to help alleviate individual capacity concerns and maximize efficiency.

Development of partnerships and hiring of professional staff (e.g., biologists, restoration practitioners, etc.) will provide training and mentorship opportunities for community members from the six FNFLF First Nations. Providing these opportunities will promote collaborative relationships and help develop internal capacity over time within the FNFLF member Nations.

Taking on various projects and reflecting on lessons learned will contribute to the development of a **stewardship alliance**, which is outlined in Phase 3 below.

Phase 3

Implement the Stewardship Alliance



As FNFLF's capacity grows, the organization will develop a network of staff, partners, resources, equipment, and collective knowledge regarding stewardship in the Lower Fraser River and Burrard Inlet. Acting as a stewardship alliance, FNFLF will continue to implement projects of shared interest and advance partnerships - working towards improved conditions for fish, environment and people in the region.

As FNFLF takes on additional work, it will need to ensure that the capacity matches the vision of the organization. A key indicator of achieving a functional stewardship alliance, therefore, will be securing long-term funding to support and maintain FNFLF activities through organizational growth.

Another indicator of success will be ability to share FNFLF's guidance and expertise with other First Nations and/or organizations looking to conduct similar work.

In phase 3, FNFLF can work towards expanding their scope by leading larger-scale projects and increasing partnerships.



Community Profiles

The following section provides additional information regarding the six FNFLF member First Nations, as well as an overview of the current board delegates.



Community Profiles

Katzie First Nation



The traditional territory of the Katzie First Nation is a geographic area that extends south from the headwaters of Pitt River to encompass Pitt Lake, a portion of the Fraser River, south to the area surrounding Boundary Bay. The easternmost portion of the territory encompasses LaTourette Lake, Trolley Lake and portions of Fort Langley and Hazelmere. The western boundary follows the height of land along the mountain range through Pinecone-Burke Mountain Provincial Park north to encompass all tributaries of the Pitt River system. The Katzie community is comprised of five reserves along the Fraser River and Pitt River located in the municipalities Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Langley and Metro Vancouver Electoral Area 'A'.

Kwantlen First Nation



The traditional territory of the Kwantlen First Nation is a geographic area that extends from Mud Bay in Tsawwassen in the south, to the top end of the Stave River reservoir to the north, east to Mission, and west to New Westminster. The Kwantlen community is presently comprised of six reserves in areas of Fort Langley, Maple Ridge and Mission, situated in both Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Regional District areas. Former reserve lands were also held in areas of New Westminster, Surrey, North-eastern Langley and North-eastern Maple Ridge.

Kwkwetlem First Nation



The traditional territory of the Kwkwetlem First Nation centers on the Coquitlam Lake watershed, including the upper and lower Coquitlam River. The territory extends to the east side of Pitt Lake, and includes both sides of the lower Pitt River. To the west, the territory extends along Possum Creek, across Port Moody Inlet to Stony Creek, and across Sapperton Heights to the north arm of the Fraser River. The southern extent of the territory extends from the west end of Barnston Island to the east end of Annacis Island, and includes that portion of the Fraser uplands two kilometers south of the Fraser River. The Kwkwetlem community is comprised of two reserves along the Coquitlam River located in the municipality of Coquitlam.

Musqueam First Nation



The exclusive territory of the Musqueam First Nation as set out in their Declaration encompasses the Cities of Vancouver and Richmond and parts of Burnaby, Port Moody, North Vancouver, and West Vancouver. The territory extends across the coastal areas of Howe Sound to the midpoint of the Salish Sea. The community of Musqueam is located in the Point Grey area of Vancouver at the entrance to the Fraser River.

Tsawwassen First Nation



TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION
s̓c̓awaθən məsteyəx^w

The traditional territory of the Tsawwassen First Nation is bordered on the northeast by the watersheds that feed into Pitt Lake, down Pitt River to Pitt Meadows where they empty into the Fraser River. The territory includes Burns Bog and part of New Westminster, following the outflow of the river just south of Sea Island. From Sea Island it cuts across the Strait to Galiano Island and includes all of Saltspring, Pender and Saturna islands. The territory continues northeast to include the Point Roberts peninsula, and the watersheds of the Serpentine and Nicomekl Rivers. The community of Tsawwassen is located along the shores of where the Tsawwassen Ferry and Roberts Bank are located.

Tsleil-Waututh First Nation



The traditional territory of the Tsleil-Waututh is a large geographic area that encompasses Mount Garibaldi in the north, Coquitlam Lake in the east, Howe Sound to the west, and the Fraser River in the south. The community of Tsleil-Waututh is located on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, east of the Second Narrows Bridge in North Vancouver, and has additional reserves located at the mouth of the Indian River.

Board Delegates

Katzie First Nation



Rick Bailey

Kwantlen First Nation



Les Antone



Tumia Knott (Alternate)

Kwikwetlem First Nation



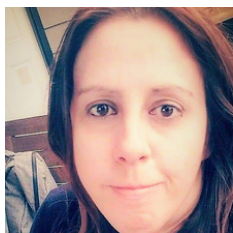
Lance Myers

Musqueam First Nation



Morgan Guerin (President)

Tsawwassen First Nation



Krystal Lockert

Tsleil-Waututh First Nation



Micheal George



Carleen Thomas (Alternate)



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