
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Aug. 8, 2020

Office of the Premier
Ministry of Agriculture
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Modern hatchery brings hope for Island salmon populations

SOOKE – Future generations of wild salmon in the Salish Sea are being supported through the federal and provincial governments’ funding of the Creation of Salmon Conservation Facility in Sooke.

The conservation facility will lead to the potential for better salmon-stock assessment capability in the redesigned and enhanced Sooke River Jack Brooks Hatchery. It will also feature upgraded effluent treatment equipment, reduced power consumption and community engagement in protecting wild salmon. It will be owned and operated by the Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society, in partnership with the Sooke Salmon Enhancement Society.

“We are proud to be working together with our federal and local partners to help restore B.C.’s wild salmon,” said Premier John Horgan. “The hatchery funding announced today is a key step to helping protect and repopulate wild salmon stocks, while balancing the need for environmental sustainability with the needs of Indigenous communities and local businesses.”

The main project components include:

- equipment to support the marking of hatchery fry, so they can be identified in later life stages and provide valuable scientific information to support the management and restoration of Pacific salmon;
- creation of an effective aeration system customized for community-run hatcheries. The systems ensure the oxygen and nitrogen levels in the hatchery water are optimal for the holding of broodstock (mature animals used in aquaculture for breeding purposes), harvesting of eggs and growth of salmon fry, but are designed at a smaller, cost-effective, efficient scale than commercially developed and sold systems;
- an effluent treatment system that ensures only clean water leaves the hatchery; and
- cross-cultural learning opportunities for volunteer stewards, as well as Indigenous and academic partners.

The project will provide strategies, methodology and cost-effective procedures for other hatcheries to follow in meeting expanded requirements, as more and more British Columbians become involved in supporting wild salmon.

“The British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) supports projects that are restoring and rebuilding salmon habitats, which are crucial for the communities and the industries that rely on them,” said Bernadette Jordan, federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. “The Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society’s work to upgrade the Sooke River Jack Brooks Hatchery facility will provide invaluable guidance to support similar

upgrades at other hatcheries and make the community-based enhancement facilities more efficient.”

BCSRIF is one part of the B.C. government’s response to the Wild Salmon Advisory Council’s recommendations to develop made-in-B.C. solutions to support wild salmon. An update on the Province’s response includes information on additional efforts to date that support wild salmon, such as the implementation of the Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Program in the Broughton Archipelago and changes to the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation.

Quotes:

Lana Popham, B.C.’s Minister of Agriculture –

“When people see salmon fry in the hatchery and fish swimming in the river, it helps them connect to the importance and value these remarkable fish bring to our province and oceans. Improving the equipment and infrastructure in the Sooke River Jack Brooks Hatchery recognizes the iconic role wild salmon have in our ecosystems and communities, and the hard work and time that so many British Columbians are volunteering to help their populations recover. I’m proud of our government’s investment in this project.”

Elida Peers, secretary-treasurer, Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society –

“This facility will stand as a testament demonstrating the environmental legacy that can be produced when government funding assistance and our myriad of dedicated volunteers join forces to work together for Pacific salmon and our ecosystem.”

Learn More:

Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society: <http://salmonforsooke.ca/>

Sooke River Jack Brooks Hatchery and the Sooke Salmon Enhancement Society:
<http://www.sookesalmonenhancement.com/>

BCSRIF: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/initiatives/fish-fund-bc-fonds-peche-cb/index-eng.html>

BCSRIF will be accepting new applications for funding until Sept. 15, 2020. Details on the application process can be found at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/initiatives/fish-fund-bc-fonds-peche-cb/apply-demande-page01-eng.html>

Information on projects selected for the BCSRIF can be found at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/initiatives/fish-fund-bc-fonds-peche-cb/projects-projets-eng.html>

For the B.C. government’s response update to the Wild Salmon Advisory Council’s recommendations, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/fisheries-and-aquaculture>

For a news release with links to the Wild Salmon Advisory Council’s recommendations, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/19117>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Facts about salmon in B.C.

- The British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) awarded the Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society \$920,000 for its Creation of Salmon Conservation Facility project. The project is scheduled to be complete by March 2022.
- In March 2019, the federal and provincial governments partnered to help restore salmon habitats through the BCSRIF.
- This \$143-million cost-shared fund targets salmon habitat protection and restoration. It also ensures the fish and seafood sector in British Columbia is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.
- The fund has supported about 40 projects with approximately \$70 million to date.
- Salmon are a part of intricate food webs in both freshwater and marine environments, affecting everything from tiny zooplankton, to large mammals like whales and bears, to birds of prey.
- Wild salmon are culturally important for many First Nations in British Columbia. Wild salmon is also part of the province's long-running tradition of recreational and sport fishing, which is directly connected to its tourism industry.

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