



Partnership & Steering Committee

Living Rivers - Georgia Basin

Living Rivers – Georgia Basin and Vancouver Island
Update for the Fraser Assembly – September 24, 2007

On April 6, 2006, the Living Rivers Trust Fund Advisory Group approved the Business Plan for Living Rivers – Georgia Basin at the notional level of \$2.8 Million for 2006 through 2009. This plan was accepted as a starting point and the required funds were released for 2006 along with an additional \$150,000 for Phase One of the Stoltz Slide Remediation Project on the Cowichan River. The Advisory Group also agreed to give consideration to an Enhanced Business Plan that would address priority concerns in watersheds flowing into Juan de Fuca Strait and on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Our ***Enhanced Business Plan*** was subsequently approved on May 2nd, 2007 thereby increasing total resources to \$5.5 Million from 2006 through 2009 and adding a West Coast of Vancouver Island business line.

The **Vision** of the Living Rivers Trust Fund (LRTF) is to *create a legacy for the province based on healthy watersheds, sustainable ecosystems and thriving communities*. Our vision builds on that of the LRTF: *Healthy watersheds and sustainable fish populations through shared responsibility, stewardship and wise use of water*.

We believe that our greatest challenge is to ***foster adaptation to climate change*** that has already impacted watershed conditions, fish populations and the economic vitality of many communities. For salmon, continued threats to habitat are likely, but proven techniques are available for reducing impacts on the relatively short, lake-headed coastal systems in our region.

Our work garnered a strong and positive public response in 2006. People in our region are actively seeking ways to deal with climate change, and especially its impact on watersheds, communities and fish populations. Pacific salmon, including steelhead, are icons that people relate to, and that we will feature in our enhanced communications plan to be done in partnership with the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program. Strong, effective communications will be implemented at both the plan and project levels.

We appreciate the personal support of the LRTF by the Premier. We have begun to deliver measurable progress towards restoring watershed health and sustainable ecosystems with growing community participation. Our Enhanced Business Plan is designed to build on the momentum created by the success achieved in 2006.

Our ***Partnership and Steering Committee*** are a group of talented, experienced and well-connected people who are committed to provide independent decision-making and advice and to achievement of goals through creative and strong partnerships. Our decisions, while independent, are well informed by virtue of our excellent working relationship with members representing DFO, MoE, BC Conservation Foundation and Pacific Salmon Foundation. We are seeking more First Nations representation, ideally from the west coast of Vancouver Island where interest is very high in our expansion to that area.

The British Columbia Conservation Foundation is the manager of our business lines: Program Innovation and Development; Water for Fish; River and Estuary Restoration; Enrichment and West Coast Vancouver Island. The Pacific Salmon Foundation manages our investments in their Community Salmon Program in our region.

We plan to invest in the highest priority areas and watersheds consistent with the Vision of the Living Rivers Trust Fund. All of our proposals have both a strategic element as well as high expectations for on-the-ground success. We are also open to new opportunities and the results of emerging science and knowledge, while remaining wary of commitments that may have unsustainable operational costs. Improved water and private land management are our highest priority areas for addressing long-standing impediments in achieving healthy watersheds and sustainable ecosystems in our region.

The Enhanced Business Plan recognizes the importance of forming and sustaining partnerships with First Nations in support of current government-to-government treaty processes. We believe that expansion to the Island's West Coast will significantly increase First Nations involvement at all levels since many are already focused on solving some of the serious problems facing salmon stocks in that area.

Our \$1.45 Million work plan for 2007 is expected to "lever" at least \$2.27 Million in additional partnered investments. A key example is our \$80,000 investment in the Millstone River "Salmon in the City" \$400,000 obstruction bypass in Nanaimo. Future examples will include improved water storage projects where municipal/regional governments, industries and NGO's now recognize the risk of extended droughts with climate change.

We plan to develop new innovative partnerships to link economic returns with sustained environmental benefits over time. For example, interest is very high in the independent power sector including the Stamp-Somass River where existing dam owners, Catalyst Paper Corp., want to sell or upgrade their water storage facilities that have reached the end of their life span and are no longer needed for mill production purposes. We have begun building partnerships to include local First Nations and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District who are working with us and other interests towards a collaborative, multiple-value Water Management Plan for this key system.

In Summary, our Enhanced Business Plan is leadership driven, has a strategic focus on adaptation to climate change, is based on the best science available and is innovative and entrepreneurial in approach. We have also asked Fisheries and Oceans to bring new resources to our Business Plan and to support complementary adaptive science work in Georgia Basin that will lead to potential ecosystem management measures designed to offset current low marine survivals of Chinook, Coho and Steelhead.

The key objective of our plan is to achieve measurable immediate benefits to fish populations and environmental health while building enduring community commitment and capability for long-term integrated fisheries management, environmental stewardship and effective governance. This will be the genuine legacy of the LRTF in our region.