

Funding and Fiscal Tools Working Group

June 17th, 2021

- Shona Smith - Senior Biologist with DFO (BC Salmon Innovation and Restoration Fund)
(Federal/provincial)
 - 142 M over 5 years support protection and restoration activities of priority food stock and ensure fishing sector is sustainable.
 - Lower Fraser absolutely a priority – Many priorities fall within the Lower Fraser.
 - § [British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](https://dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
- Sherry Yano - Director of Grants and Community Engagement at the Real Estate Foundation of BC (charitable sector)
 - Just started with REFBC (3 months).
 - AFER Network is so important because its heartening to see people getting together and bringing each other together and getting on the same page and taking shared action. Total together is so much more than the sum of our parts.
 - Difference in order of magnitude between foundations and province.
 - § The 27 M for HWI is huge compared to what REFBC usually works with.
 - § Government has more.
 - § Catalyzing is what foundations do, looking at where we can work together.
 - Peak behind the scenes – first intake – in March had an intake with 114 orgs applying for funding – a record high. Average a year ago was 50. No way they could fund all of them. Many new to them, many indigenous organizations. Very encouraged to see these. But also, very privileged to be in ongoing relationships with settler

organizations doing good work. Derives income from interest from property taxes. They needed to be flexible in what their priorities were. If they wanted to work with more indigenous leaders they needed to understand what the priority for them are.

- For example, one was for connectivity – because its impossible to participate in government or activism work without internet connection.
- Lots of other realities that limit access for Indigenous.

· Fin Donnelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Legislative Assembly of BC (Provincial gov)

- Mandate priorities - develop wild salmon strategy for BC (Lead), Development of healthy watershed strategy and fund (support), development of coastal marine strategy (support).
- Tasked with supporting development of biodiversity strategy for BC.
- Working on Aquaculture transition strategy.
- Main funding vehicle is BCSCRIF – there is a round two – part of strategy want to double scrif or have a second round. That has been secured. Federal recent budget has it in there, plus more, province has also committed to 42 million match.
- Healthy Watershed Initiative – Min. Heyman led – received 27 M in last budget. Part of recovery plan. Pushing Federal government to match as they look at the longer term strategy and fund.
- Has never seen a time when it comes to salmon with cooperation between federal, provincial and first nation governments – real opportunity right now.
- Should the Lower Fraser be a priority – absolutely, it's habitat for a number of species including salmon. Rich in biodiversity and also complex.
- Fits within funding priorities, he uses a salmon lens but pushing to use a watershed lens or focus in their approach.

- How to make the lower Fraser a priority – groups like AFER coming together is really important. Coordinating your issues – its going to be important how issues are presented to government because there is an array of issues its easy to get caught in we need to address everything, unfortunately gov doesn't work that way. Developing solutions – make solutions fit mandate priorities which will increase chances of success.

- Repetition and persistence are KEY.

§ Just when you get sick of saying it, its starting to penetrate into the public, or your target audience. It takes a long time for others, who may not care as much as we do to understand the issue, let alone the solution.

- Linda Nowlan, Senior Director, UBC Sustainability Initiative (academia)

- Small funding program, how it relates to the lower fraser. A lot more than money to offer.

§ Place graduate students in small research projects. Usually they pay for the student, last year and this year they have funds to be able to pay for NGO's to have access.

§ A Few examples of Lower fraser specific.

§ UBC is in the Lower Fraser – it is a priority. Repetition of all the ways Fraser is important and in trouble. Adopted an indigenous strategic plan implemented at UBC, obligation to Musqueam. Its at their doorstep, they want to have an impact in the immediate area.

§ UBC Sustainability Scholar projects on Fraser

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/about/resources/vision-restored-lower-fraser>

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/about/resources/quantifying-climate-mitigation-bene>

[fits-nature-based-green-flood-control](https://sustain.ubc.ca/about/resources/quantifying-climate-mitigation-bene-fits-nature-based-green-flood-control)

- How they would love to work together to increase impact.

§ By working together and finding shared priorities and combining forces. We are bigger when we work together, whole is more than the sum of their parts.

§ Want to cluster research projects together and get professors to work with these clusters. Want to have issues they can make progress on with indigenous nations, other governments, NGO's. Multisectoral collaboration is the way to go. Research community define discrete problems that they can make progress on. How do we link science and law, marry traditional and western knowledge?

§ How do we focus the effort and work together?

§ Need more visibility for this ecological gem.

Kristen Walters – Raincoast Conservation Foundation – Funding landscape.

- Sneak preview of research on the funding landscape of the Lower Fraser region.
 - o Scale and scope of funding that's been invested in the Lower Fraser for fish habitat restoration and associated activities.
 - o One of the core suggestions was increase funding available, especially for indigenous led efforts.

Q&A session:

James Casey: Missing from today's conversation was funding that flows into the Fraser Delta to maintain bird habitat. We seen some collaboration between Ducks Unlimited and others on restoration efforts but there could likely be more. Could AFER arrange a similar discussion that invites Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture and perhaps Ducks Unlimited to explain the bird habitat funding priorities?

Shai Kroaker: Do you have stats for City of Surrey's funding? How does it compare to the other municipalities as it is the fastest growing municipality in the Lower Mainland if I am not wrong?

Kristen Walters – Most of Surrey's funding goes to SHARP.

Christianne Wilhelmson -How has the pandemic and other social realities (BLM, reconciliation, etc.) effected the projections and realities?

Smith - checking in with proponents regarding covid impacts and working to be flexible and support them. Only a few challenges. One of the BC SCRIF pieces they are proud of is that 75% of the projects have partners, and 40% of projects are indigenous led.

Fin – Last year has fundamentally shifted governments in how they respond to COVID and systemic racism. For COVID there's recovery plans, and the provincial government regarding racism is looking at developing anti racism regulations.

Agrees that while salmon are important other fish and birds, etc need to be considered.

Really thinks that Tara Martins research should be pushed, presented to province and federal government.

Steve Whitney – Fraser River, including Lower Fraser, has been a focus for Bullitt for at least 20 years. When he was made aware on the part of all of these organizations that we can get more done together than separately, intrigued enough to enhance funding to involved NGO's, and helped with the AFER organizing effort. Bullitt foundation is sunsetting by 2024 but as they do they have been keeping his eye open for opportunities, landscapes, and talented organizations working in the right way, where Bullitt might enhance their funding as they move on into next aspects. The Lower Fraser is one of those places. Rarely seen a collection of public, private, non profit people working together as talented as this group. Very confident in the ability of this team to get a lot done. Philanthropic contributions modest but at 450k in the last few years. Expectation is that funding would increase. Must be committed to working together and having collective impact. Want to see a strategy and commitment on part of other funders to continue this work even as Bullitt needs to sunset. Bullitt's intent is to stay with them for another few years, supporting the effort to collaborate. Many funders are enamored with a specific project, on a specific timeline, with specific outcomes, that's not what this is. This is relationships, this is development, creating new ideas, many other funders can fund this but Bullitt can. One of 3 or 4 priorities.

Sherry Yano – WE did receive more applications from Lower Fraser groups. Some which were obvious that they wrote them together, and were working closely, which is great.

Regarding equity and COVID – this is not a regular time, so in covid we had the extra can we leverage funds that are longer term for recovery, but its also the equity component, with HWI we were lucky to be able to resource an indigenous resource advisory circle, which has been so important to their own learning.

Impact report for REFBC, one of the findings was that you need to think about future leadership and more diverse future leadership.

Ross Dixon - Are some of the funders open to making more resources available to get projects to shovel ready? This still seems to be a gap that can delay progress (and investments) with restoration as most NGO's and Nations don't have internal resources to get major restoration projects to a shovel ready state i.e. project design, consultation and detailed costings.

Smith – in BCSCRIF they do fund the planning portion, a lot of the projects, in order to get to the final resotraiton stage, they need to spend time doing the planning. They do fund those activities.

Fin Donnelly – From the political perspective have seen a number of projects rejected that were looking at cooperation and they fell through the cracks because they couldn't measure with the requirements of BCSCRIF. It is a challenge for funders to be accountable and supportive of projects that have no definite outcomes/results.

Hoping to work with his team to bring funding opportunities that do this. They are still recovering from cut backs in departments. Need a whole systems approach that goes from concept, to monitoring in a long term way. How we do that is a challenge.

Dan Buffett – It is hard as a funder to do this. We encourage multi year projects where you have the time for planning, outreach, and implement. We need really clear priorities, and sometimes you don't know that until the planning and outreach is done. Its difficult to find that bridge. Theres work that can be done here, the people in this room represent the variety of roles in that process.

Christianne – What can we anticipate in terms of scale of funding post covid?

Deb Hartford – One of the beginnings of AFER point to a co-beneficial thinking, as the provincial government inches towards having an adaptation plan, federal funding is emerging for things like nature based solutions, Nature based solutions are going to become more important but it opens up multiple pots of funding if you are strategic. Also future benefits of this funding. Whole systems approach opens up other funding potential so long as we are thinking strategically together. Hope we see funders willing to fund the time and effort it takes to bring these conversations together. This is a labour and time intensive process and often not understood in funding categories.

Smith – We know BCSCRIF is being renewed, we don't know when the next intake is or what the refined priorities will be.

Fin – Asking for the crystal ball, which is difficult, but the announcements that have been made and will be made in the next year have been and will be substantial amounts. That's just on salmon. There's other envelopes. Is a point where that door will slam shut and they will move back to austerity but likely not any time soon because we are seeing a transition across the world, these new ideas are holding. How is anti racism and indigenous relations impacting government funding priorities? It's a huge impact, its changing how we view things and it will continue to. If there is a federal election in the next few months, it will be interesting to see what the priorities are. Stay tuned.

Steve Whitney – Funding from private philanthropy will not significantly change, the addition of reconciliation and anti racism focus adds a layer that will continue. The emphasis on infrastructure, significant component is natural infrastructure. Think about the work in the lower Fraser as restoring the green infrastructure under the cities that exist.

Christianne – final question – what do you need from us?

Fin – Coordinate, coalitions, be very clear on issues and solutions and then meet with Government. Come tell us what you want. Climate crises, reconciliation, racial justice, we are also in a pandemic and opioid crises. Build on Kristens good work talking about leveraging funds. Present possible funding models - what kind of fund? What does it look like? Do others exist? Come with Tangeable examples.

Cobenefits – really important. Provincially we have a wild salmon strategy, watershed security, and coastal marine strategy happening at the same time. They all overlap, they are all important.

The challenge of the group working on Tara Martins research challenging the government to act on it.

I am working right now to coordinate effort on Federal, Provincial and first nation governments to try to get one plan. Right now everyone has their own plans. I want to see a commitment at the political level to have one plan.

LFFA taking leadership role in lower Fraser is a fantastic offer.

Smith – When we do another intake, we offer engagement sessions to proponents. So we are talking to you and trying to offer some guidance. Please come to us. The Lower Fraser is a priority for us already but if you can put together a practical and technically feasible, with strong partners, it really helps us.

Sherry Yano – Invitation to engage. Because you are a coalition and are already working together – if there was a proposal that was convened for AFER that could be put together that would be great. That's not an easy thing but you already have so much of the underpinning in this network. Call on us, come talk to us, or ask us to come to these meetings so we can share what you need to know. It's really great to understand the priorities of the collective if that is possible.

Share your strategic priorities with us. It's very helpful for us to understand if there is a shared priority. Understanding the co-benefits, we can sometimes direct to other funders.

Linda Nowlan – What can the university learn from NGO's? What research needs do you have? We can be match makers for researchers and your work. What are your needs? We can try to make it happen!
