



# Getting Ahead of the Curve

## Habitat Conservation and Stewardship

An Assessment of Community-Based  
Processes and Organizations  
May 1999



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Pêches et Océans  
Canada

Canada

**GETTING AHEAD OF THE CURVE**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION**

**and**

**STEWARDSHIP**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF  
COMMUNITY-BASED  
PROCESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**Second Report  
in the  
Habitat Conservation, Stewardship and Protection Series**

**May 1999**

**Prepared for:**

**Habitat and Enhancement Branch  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

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**THE HABITAT CONSERVATION,  
STEWARDSHIP AND  
PROTECTION SERIES**

The Habitat Conservation, Stewardship and Protection Series of publications describes the activities initiated and funded under the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (FOC) Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program.

***A New Direction: Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Forum. January 8-9, 1999. Summary Report.***

A summary of a public forum launching the New Direction for the stewardship and protection of habitat.

***Getting Ahead of the Curve: Habitat Conservation and Stewardship.***

**An Assessment of Community-based Processes and Organizations, May 1999. Habitat and Enhancement Branch, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.**

This document describes the new and exciting challenges and opportunities that the New Directions Initiative offers for a major step forward in community involvement in fish habitat conservation, stewardship and protection.

***Additional Publications*** will be released as the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program proceeds.

***GETTING AHEAD OF THE CURVE: Habitat Conservation and Stewardship, describes the new and exciting challenges and opportunities that the New Directions Initiative offers for a major step forward in community involvement in fish habitat conservation, stewardship and protection.***

## **i. FOREWORD**

Over the past twenty years public attention has increasingly focused on the Pacific Fishery and its habitat base. Despite much of the negative news about the problems, there is positive news in the overall public recognition that there is a need to rebuild and conserve the fishery resource. There is a positive message that many public groups are now making demands and personal commitments to better protect the fishery and its habitat base. All of this has really come to a head in the past three years through the leadership and direction provided by the present Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honorable David Anderson. Despite all the enthusiasm, however, there have been contradictory messages about our success in actually protecting habitat and the reality is that there has been a slow net loss of productive fish habitat.

Budget constraints and government downsizing, coupled with an increasingly complex regime of regulatory programs along with public impatience for a job that does not appear to be properly done by government, have unknowingly joined forces to form a positive river of public opinion. When we look into that river we see a strong current of a public desire to get involved and to better control the future for habitat protection. Some traditionalists may not like the direction the river is carrying us but it has a direction and an energy that poses a challenge that as a department we have often unknowingly fed and must now address.

To meet this challenge, DFO has developed the New Directions Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program. The program sets out to strengthen and better empower citizen groups and communities involved in the conservation, protection, enhancement and restoration of salmon habitats.

If we look upon stewardship as an assumption of responsibilities to better look after something that we do not personally own, then this program really focuses on the strengthening of stewardship. By having society assume a greater sense of ownership of publicly owned fishery resources, it is hoped that we will collectively change our attitudes and behaviour to make these resources sustainable.

For the past decade, governments and the public as a whole have largely determined that local citizens must assume greater responsibility for the resources that they own, including the protection of habitat. Government intervention is not enough. This report addresses the question of how citizens can assume greater responsibility in the protection of habitat.

Two decades ago the Department of Fisheries and Oceans took a lead in public involvement through the Salmonid Enhancement Program. This program focused primarily on the biotechnical elements of fish production and, to a lesser extent, on the protection of natural habitat. As the program evolved, it served a valuable auxiliary function to the ongoing activities of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The challenge we now face is much greater. As public groups gained confidence through their involvement in programs like salmonid enhancement, both the groups and government began to understand the role that such groups could play in preventing habitat loss through more citizen involvement in the planning processes where the future for habitat is often determined. The citizen's role can go well beyond the role traditionally filled by government staff. There has been a gradual recognition that public groups can work cooperatively with governments in conserving fish habitat and that the programs to achieve this may be as complex and different as the fish habitats that must be protected.

There is recognition of a need to actually assist groups build up an independent capacity that goes far beyond their traditional dependence on government support. This poses a challenge both to groups and government staff to recognize their respective roles in habitat protection, conservation and stewardship, and how to coordinate and integrate their efforts.

To assist DFO in addressing these questions and challenges, we asked Howard Paish to use his many years of experience in working with government and with public groups to undertake an assessment of community based processes and organizations and their capacity to work cooperatively with government in "getting ahead of the curve" in the protection, conservation and stewardship of productive habitat. Mr. Paish was asked to focus his energies on producing a report and recommendations to enable the Department to design a program that really can take habitat conservation, stewardship and protection in a "New Direction".

Our collective success in understanding and implementing the views and recommendations set out in this report will have a significant bearing on the eventual success of the habitat conservation and stewardship program in empowering communities to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in protecting a resource that belongs to all of us; a resource that symbolizes a sustainable lifestyle and a positive future for a traditional way of life and way of living in British Columbia and Yukon.

**Otto Langer**  
Chief, Land Use Planning, HEB, FOC

## ii. AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This report deliberately focuses on the new and exciting challenges and opportunities that the New Directions Initiative offers for a major step forward in community involvement in fish habitat conservation stewardship and protection. The report takes pains to provide an historical context so that we can learn from experience, build on successes and avoid our past mistakes. While phrases like “*new and innovative*”, “*fundamental change*” and “*we can no longer accept the status quo ... we must get ahead of the curve*” characterize the New Directions, the report points out that we could still do much to make the existing mechanisms for protecting habitat work better. That in itself might be new and innovative! Newness and Innovation do not involve simply rejecting the past, but building on what we have learned from substantial investments in community projects over several decades. A good watchword phrase initially might be “if it isn't broke don't try to fix it”. **Once community groups begin to build on their unique strengths in the decision-making process, and not just as auxiliaries to DFO, they will likely find that they will make a start in getting ahead of the curve by making many aspects of the status quo work to their advantage and to the advantage of habitat protection.** New mechanisms built on that will stand a far better chance of succeeding than theoretical models for new levels of governance in a society that already feels it is over governed.

Many community programs in British Columbia and elsewhere that have addressed Habitat Conservation and Stewardship have been reviewed. I have also drawn heavily on almost a working lifetime of practical first-hand experience as a community

## ILLUSTRATIONS

The line drawings reproduced in this report are from the pen-and-ink originals by Artist/Angler/Conservationist Tommy Brayshaw for “The Living Land”, Roderick Haig-Brown, 1957.

Haig-Brown wrote: “*The salmon are a test of a healthy environment, a lesson in environmental needs. Their abundant presence on the spawning beds is a lesson of hope, a reassurance that all is still well with water and land, a lesson of deep importance for the future of man.*”

advocate. That experience has involved working professionally for province-wide community organizations spanning more than three decades, consulting assignments in the habitat and community development fields, being on the receiving end of community advocacy and helping to apply that to policy development. Much of this experience, right up to the present day has been at a strong personal level. I have deliberately avoided work in certain areas and on certain topics in order to give me the “personal space” to be a volunteer. It has been my good fortune to work professionally in a field where I would be acting anyway as a volunteer. It is from that perspective, as both a resource and process professional and as a lifelong volunteer in the conservation field that this assignment has been undertaken.

While the report has entailed a review of many documents and interviews with many cooperative people whose help I gratefully acknowledge, this report reflects the professional and personal views of the author, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

For the reader of the whole report, there will be some repetition. This is unavoidable because sections of any report can be read out of context. Repetition remedies that problem to some extent.

To conclude, it is my hope that this document will help stimulate action to ensure that a genuine community-based approach to Habitat Conservation Stewardship and Protection will succeed, and meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the New Directions Initiative.

A thought shared by Haig Brown's friend, Tommy Brayshaw, who lived on the banks of the Coquihalla River when it was a major steelhead stream. A good guiding message for the community groups working for Habitat Conservation, Stewardship and Protection

### iii. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 1998 the Habitat Enhancement Branch of DFO commissioned Howard Paish & Associates to undertake an initial analysis of the planned Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program to:

1. Provide DFO with independent advice on the respective roles and responsibilities of community based organizations, leading to meaningful fish habitat conservation and stewardship, and improved watershed planning and management.
2. Provide advice on the best means whereby DFO financial and staff resources could contribute to that purpose.

#### A Background Perspective

The work has entailed a review of similar work undertaken for DFO, a limited review of existing programs for habitat conservation and stewardship in British Columbia and other Northwest jurisdictions, and extensive discussions with a range of government and non-government people.

The Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program is an important part of a DFO policy statement, "A New Direction for Canada's Pacific Salmon Fisheries", October 1998. In pointing out that in spite of habitat protection and restoration critical fish habitat is still being lost, the Minister of Fisheries states, "*We can no longer accept the status quo.... we must get ahead of the curve*".

That statement, along with backup in both the announcement of the New Initiatives and specific background documents on the Habitat Stewardship and Conservation Program, indicates that habitat protection should become a more important element of DFO supported community programs. This moves beyond the traditional bio-technical orientation that, in effect, has had community groups serving almost an auxiliary function to DFO.

Since the New Initiatives program is intended to be new and innovative and is aimed primarily at communities, then approaches to involving communities in habitat stewardship and conservation will involve a departure from the *status quo*. This is all clearly implied in DFO's background documents on New Initiatives and, particularly, the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program.

#### Historic Perspective

There is a long history of Pacific fishery user groups actively protecting habitat, particularly the major joint efforts by commercial and recreational fishing organizations from the late 1940s on to prevent the building of hydro-electric dams on the Fraser river and elsewhere, and the stopping of log driving on BC rivers. These programs were carried out in an era when the province was undergoing rapid development and relatively little attention was paid to the environment. There were few formal mechanisms for public participation, and the fishery groups worked through the existing political and governmental processes, cooperating closely with DFO, with each party recognizing the different functions of community groups and government.

As environmental concerns gained a higher profile, both the federal and BC governments have undertaken on extensive public consultative processes and, in the case of DFO and its salmonid enhancement program, they provided organizational and financial support to community groups. Many groups now take this for granted and focus their efforts largely on bio-technical concerns which have often progressed at the expense of the kind of advocacy undertaken by earlier groups.

In recent years the initiative for habitat protection seems to have been picked up more strongly by protectionist groups who operate outside of most of the consultative processes, with some success.

History suggests that we are not looking at an either/or situation. There is a role for all community groups, ranging from the most strident preservationists through to consensus seeking groups working almost as a part of government. Each group has its place and it is unproductive for the various factions to belittle one another. Bringing the various community groups together to work on their common concerns will be a major challenge for the New Initiative Program.

In recent years the federal government's Green Plan and Fraser River Action Plan invested in pilot and demonstration community projects in the Fraser River Basin. It will be useful to evaluate the results of that investment in establishing priorities for the new Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program.

### **Geographic Context**

There are some major geographic hurdles in trying to focus community efforts on salmon habitat conservation and stewardship. With notable exceptions such as the Fraser Valley and parts of Vancouver Island, very little of BC's really productive freshwater salmon habitat is close to the type of community that can devote a major self-sustaining community effort towards safeguarding freshwater salmon habitat. Most of the major tidal fish harvesting areas are well away from the areas in which the salmon for those fisheries are actually produced. For example, stocks that are the basis of the major commercial fishery at Johnstone Strait or the Langara Island sport fishery depend on the Upper reaches of rivers like the Fraser and Skeena and distant ocean points in order to survive. Most community initiatives focus on relatively small local stocks, and in few instances is there likely to be a major benefit to the local fishing community. It is essential that a strong region-wide perspective be maintained.

While there are limitations on the type of geographic community approach that has been taken thus far, there is a challenge for coast wide interest-based communities to play a far more active role in habitat conservation and stewardship. Coastal harvesters must realize that, in order to justify their harvest, they have to be more involved with the resource communities in the interior whose activities affect the future for habitat, as well as have an understanding of, and support for, the perhaps more important ocean survival questions that are now receiving more prominence.

While there are strong pressures to devote resources to where the people are, the reality is that those places are rarely the places where the major productive natural habitat in need of protection exists. Interesting though it might be to rebuild "lost" streams in urban Vancouver, there is a need to protect major fish producing habitat on the Horsefly River, for example.

### **A Clarity of Terms**

Terms like "community", "stewardship", "conservation" and "ecosystem" to mention a few, are used so loosely that their meaning and precision becomes lost. Terms that mean all things to all people invariably mean little to anyone. There is a need to clarify terms that are used, particularly "ecosystem-based management".

### **The Community Groups**

Community groups operate as a continuum at five broad geographic and interest levels.

First, small-scale, local enhancement groups deal with a stream reach or a small stream, usually on a specific project. Second addresses the same kind of issues as the first, but in a more focused and sustained way, often associated with some form of hatchery or enhancement facility.

Level three involves well-established groups operating on a watershed basis who can act as advocates for fish habitat, stewardship and protection. These three levels are all directly involved in habitat and, hopefully, in improved fish production.

The fourth level is the watershed council type of organization incorporating the earlier levels with the interests of other watershed users and resource sectors. This broader type of group does not necessarily have a specific fish habitat protection, conservation and stewardship orientation. This fourth level will require strong cooperation including financial cooperation from other resource sectors if it is to succeed. Financial contributions to this fourth level from DFO should take this into account.

A fifth level of community is the interest based coast-wide community whose interests span the geographic interests of the other four levels, whereby the specific harvest interests of a particular community are linked to a distant community where the salmon are spawned and reared.

These five levels are not necessarily hierarchical but a part of a continuum, and community effort and DFO administrative structure must reflect that continuum. Major issues that surround the fifth level indicate a need for a strong regional presence that goes beyond specific geographic community interests.

### **Visions, Principles, Goals and Objectives**

A set of visions, principles, goals and objectives established for the habitat conservation and stewardship program as a whole can include more specific principles, goals and objectives for community groups, ensuring a continuity between the region-wide perspective and the needs and aspirations of local and/or interest based groups. Flexibility is required so that local groups have the

autonomy to reflect local interests within a broad regional vision, rather than establish a set of pigeon-holes into which local groups and local differences are expected to fit.

### **Project Criteria Guidelines**

The report develops a set of community criteria guidelines that could be used to assist groups that are proposing initiatives under the habitat conservation and stewardship program. The guidelines could be used in project selection, for ongoing monitoring, and as performance indicators to determine whether or not the program is on track and consistent with its original objectives. In short, an objective check on accountability.

The criteria guidelines include:

- The strength and depth of community support.
- The actual makeup and origins of the community group.
- The stability of the group.
- The group's understanding of the community at large.
- Financial responsibility.
- What does the group do?
- What has it done in the past?
- How well does it understand the various governmental processes that influence fish habitat?
- How can the group's efforts contribute to increased fish production?

### **DFO Support**

The report identifies the type of support that would be required from DFO to assist potentially effective groups at each of the levels described.

First is the provision of the technical information that already exists. Rather than have groups generate new information, the DFO should ensure that they understand existing information. This should be a major task for any new people appointed to work on the habitat conservation and stewardship program. A balance has to be found between the type of inventory and mapping information in which many groups have become involved and the volume of information that already exists. Too often the main problem is not the lack of technical data, but the ability to use it effectively within the existing processes for approving activities that affect fish habitat.

A second important level of help should be to assist community groups function effectively as strong, independent, community bodies rather than concentrate mainly on their bio-technical competency.

Third would be assistance in straight administrative help needed by groups to enable them to run the "nuts and bolts" of becoming effective community organizations. If the aim of the habitat conservation and stewardship program is to produce strong community groups, then some initial assistance to help groups organize themselves as local self-sustaining organizations is necessary.

### **Parallel Programs**

Other Federal and Provincial programs that support habitat initiatives are heavily oriented towards enhancement, restoration and job creation. They complement the more specific protection mandate of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program.

The community project criteria for the HCSP could provide a strong basis for cooperation with the parallel programs.

It is particularly important that the new Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program not be seen as a "cash-cow" to support other traditional DFO programs.

### **Involving Areas Not Served By Community Groups**

Given that much of the productive habitat that needs protecting is in remote areas not served by community groups, a major outreach program is needed that recognizes DFO's regional role and goes well beyond geographic community initiatives. Regional leadership is required to address the potential in these remote areas.

There is a major role here for existing geographic groups that may have reached their potential, to expand their geographic horizons. A challenge for both the groups and DFO. There is also a major role for coast wide interest-based groups, and for experienced individuals to act as part time mentors.

### **The Report's Key Recommendations are:**

- That the protection of existing habitat be given a major priority in the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program (HCSP).
- DFO encourage constructive advocacy for habitat in its stewardship and streamkeeper programs and make an understanding of it a part of training programs.
- Recommendations from a 1997 report on Fish Habitat Advocacy by community groups be pursued.
- DFO help potential partner groups function better as independent community organizations.



- That the community project criteria guidelines be adopted.
  - That DFO encourage clarity in the terms used to describe HCSP activities, particularly the term “ecosystem-based”.
  - Fish production potential become a major element in project selection.
  - The coast wide fishing community be encouraged to act as a major interest-based community.
  - That greatly improved liaison and cooperation among groups involved in fish habitat be actively encouraged.
  - That an outreach program be developed for remote areas.
  - That DFO continue to cooperate with parallel programs within and outside DFO without compromising the nature and identity of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program.
  - That a more “catchy” name be adopted for HCSP.
  - That DFO make improved use of existing staff who understand community initiatives.
- DFO provide a strong leadership role in the initial stages of the program.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The “*New Direction for Canada’s Pacific Salmon Fisheries*” document October 1998 says, “*the potential exists for greater community involvement in fisheries resource and oceans activity.*” This report provides an initial analysis of the potential roles and responsibilities for community- based organizations with an interest in the fish habitat, conservation and stewardship component of that New Directions statement. The purpose of this assignment is to:

*A new direction for Habitat Conservation and Stewardship*

*What is the purpose of this report?*

1. Provide DFO with independent advice on the respective roles and responsibilities of community based organizations, leading to meaningful fish habitat conservation and stewardship, and improved fish habitat protection and watershed planning and management.
2. Provide advice on the best means whereby DFO resources, both financial and staff, could contribute to that purpose.

The specific terms of reference for this assessment are:

*Terms of Reference*

*What would an effective watershed forum look like?*

*What is already happening?*

*How would a forum function?*

*How can DFO help?*

*What about areas where there are no community groups and where salmon production is high?*

1. **Explore and provide options on what an effective watershed council/forum/ roundtable might be**, incorporating visions, goals and objectives. (The term used here is watershed council, but options for names are open. The term forum is used wherever possible as a generic term).
2. **Review examples of community based groups that already exist** that have embraced or advanced fish habitat stewardship and/or developed/implemented plans that improve fish habitat protection. This includes both non-governmental and joint community and governmental groups.
3. **Explore and provide options on the structures required for the effective functioning of a “watershed council” (forum)**. This includes a review of the different interests and activity levels, and the composition and membership of a council.
4. **Explore and make recommendations on the type of support that will be required from DFO sources to assist potentially effective groups** at each level described. Particular attention would be paid to the extent to which such support could/should be used as leverage in getting support commitments from other governmental, resource sector and non-governmental sources.
5. **Provide recommendations on how the intent of all the above points could be applied to those areas where an existing vision and habitat conservation delivery mechanism does not exist**. This is a key consideration since most activity in this area, to date, has tended to focus on places where the people are, rather than on where the fish are. This task must also be closely linked to the technical realities of actual fish production of watersheds so that “*people interest*” can be linked to the realities of fish production, and the broader goals of the Pacific Fisheries Restructuring and Adjustment Program.

A final supplementary aspect of the terms of reference was the provision of data for a map illustrating the existing level of Community interest and involvement in fish habitat protection and stewardship in the Region.

In order to clarify the type of community activity being addressed, a brief description of the levels of community group activity as a part of a continuum is provided. This will be covered in more detail later.

*Continuum of geographic and interest groups*

Community groups operate within a continuum of different levels of geographic and activity interest and this analysis identifies those levels of interest, and most particularly the links between them. Within the broad continuum the groups can be categorized into five interrelated levels of organization:

*Small Scale Local Enhancement and inventory*

**Level 1.** Small-scale local groups with a specific interest in a particular geographic site and usually for a specific project, a small stream, a stream reach, etc. This is the level at which most of the streamkeeper groups, for example, operate.

*Watershed Groups*

**Level 2.** Local groups addressing the same issues in a more focused, sustained and extended manner. This again incorporates streamkeeper groups, local enhancement societies, and other groups like Fish and Game and Naturalist Clubs that include fish habitat conservation in their activities, e.g. Port Coquitlam Hunting and Fishing Club.

*Watershed Advocates*

**Level 3.** Well established watershed-based groups that provide an advocacy function for fish habitat conservation, stewardship and protection. Such groups incorporate planning in their activities, but their principal focus is fish habitat, e.g. Alouette River Management Society.

*Watershed Councils/Forums*

**Level 4.** Watershed council type of organizations that incorporate the fish habitat interests of the other three groups with the interests of other watershed users and resource sectors, e.g. Salmon River Watershed Round Table.

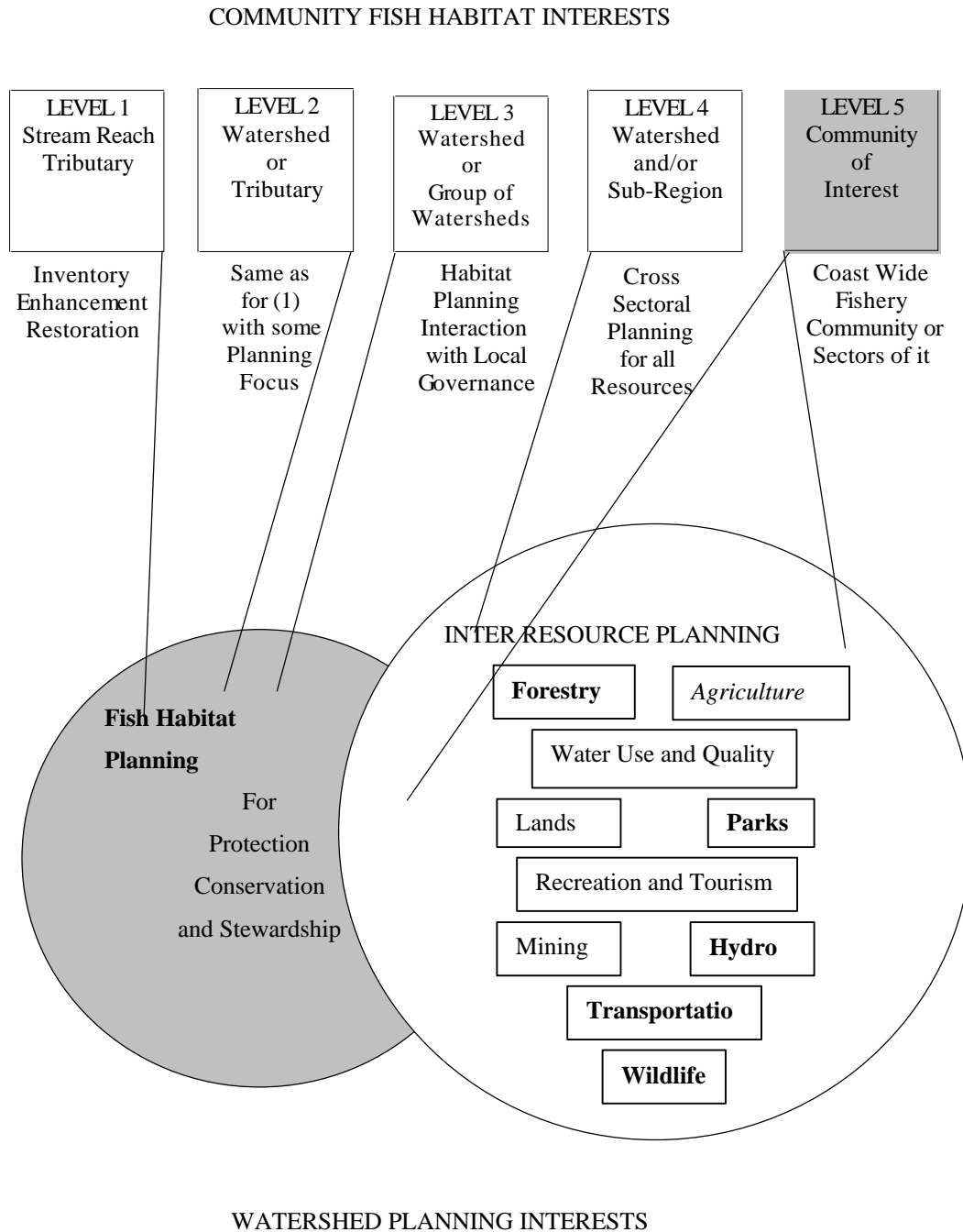
*Coast-wide Regional Interest Groups*

**Level 5.** Overlapping with these four community-based groupings are the specific fish user interest groups representing aboriginal, recreational and commercial fisheries interests as a part of the “fisheries” community. Members of these groups are often involved at a local level in the other groups described, but their interests often cut across geographic boundaries, and also involve other fishery matters, such as allocation and stock management. Some of these groups also have a direct interest in habitat in terms of employment for their members on habitat restoration and inventory projects. Examples include (or could include) UFAW Coast Wide Gear Type Associations, Sport Fishing Institute.

In recognizing those groupings this assessment addresses the linkages between these levels of interest that would lead to their most effective functioning at every level, acknowledging that each level is important within a continuum and that the “higher level” organizations are strongest when they evolve from the pioneering and building blocks created through levels 1-3.

**Figure 1**

**A CONTINUUM OF FISH HABITAT INTERESTS**



## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 A Policy Perspective

*In spite of enhancement and restoration, critical fish habitat is still being lost*

In a June 19 quotation in the introduction to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Policy Statement “*A New Direction for Canada’s Pacific Salmon Fisheries*”, October 1998, the Minister of Fisheries says “*We can no longer accept the status quo . . . . we must get ahead of the curve.*” The purpose of this assignment is to explore just how community-based efforts can help in moving from the status quo on habitat conservation and stewardship, to really “*get ahead of the curve*” in the protection and rebuilding of Pacific salmon stocks. Simply put, how do we deal with the fact that in spite of our efforts at protection and restoration, critical fish habitat is still being lost?

*Habitat protection—foundation for stewardship and conservation*

The introduction to the New Directions document talks about “*fundamental changes,*” and “*the emerging role of community groups in the decision making process.*” The document indicates “*the Federal Government is committed to working with communities to enhance their input into the decision-making process,*” Principle 3 of the “*New Directions*” is to “*continue to work toward a net gain in productive capacity for salmon habitat in British Columbia.*” **It goes virtually without saying that a crucial ingredient of a net gain will be the protection of the existing habitat base on which gains can be built.** In expanding on the principle of a net gain in productive capacity, the document states, “*our goal is to ensure that natural salmon habitat is maintained to support naturally reproducing populations of salmon.*” **Habitat is maintained through protection,** and as more specific DFO documents on the habitat conservation and stewardship indicate, protection is central to the new habitat initiatives.

*Shared Government and Stakeholder responsibility*

Principle 11 states “*government and stakeholders will together be responsible and accountable for sustainable fisheries.*” Sustainable fisheries entail a sustainable approach to habitat. This assessment addresses the joint responsibility and accountability for any government/stakeholder partnerships that address habitat protection, conservation and stewardship.

*Potential for local groups to assume a greater role in fisheries resource activities*

Principle 12 states “*enhanced community, regional and sector-wide input to decision making will be pursued through a structured management and advisory board system.*” Principle 12 is the only point at which “*community*” is actually stated in the principles, but the document’s explanation of Principle 12, says “*many communities are already actively involved in stream and habitat restoration, and stewardship; however, there is enormous potential for local groups to assume an even greater role in fisheries resource and oceans’ activities.*”

This report examines that “*enormous potential.*” A potential already described in an earlier document by the author “*Community Groups Stream Stewardship and Fish Habitat Advocacy*”, February 1997 - Fraser River Action Plan. The comments on Principle 12 specifically include habitat protection.

Within the broad policy context a specific DFO discussion paper on **Resource Rebuilding - Habitat Conservation and Stewardship** says “*the resource rebuilding strategy has four components which include: restoration; enhancement; long-range funding; and improved habitat protection. The latter component known as the habitat conservation and stewardship program is the focus of this discussion document.*” **Habitat conservation and stewardship is equated with habitat protection.**

*Locally designed Programs  
and Partnerships*

This report focuses primarily on the improved habitat protection element of the New Directions Program. In doing this, the relationship between habitat protection and other aspects of resource rebuilding are explored.

The DFO discussion paper goes on to describe the new program in terms of a network of habitat auxiliaries and stewardship coordinators, and indicates that the success of this program depends largely on the ability to “*locally design and deliver effective habitat protection and watershed stewardship programs*”. The program vision for the habitat conservation and stewardship program is “*partnerships to enhance habitat protection and expanded community capacity to steward fish habitat resources.*”

This report explores the potential of local groups to actually “deliver” as partners in these programs, since that will eventually determine the success of the habitat auxiliaries and stewardship coordinators.

*Community groups’ potential  
to become effective fish  
habitat protection advocates*

This focus on the role of the community in habitat protection is intended to be new and innovative, and must therefore reflect a break from the status quo. While much has been said in the past about the role of communities in protection and stewardship, much of that has been at a slogan level. The report cited earlier “*Community Groups Stream Stewardship and fish Habitat Advocacy,*” 1997, concluded that, for the Lower Fraser Valley, “*community groups have considerable potential to become effective fish habitat protection advocates, but very few of them are actually realizing that potential other than on a sporadic ad-hoc basis.*” In response to that, the report’s first recommendation was that “*DFO initiate a program to raise the profile of constructive advocacy as an essential element of streamkeeper and stewardship functions. Specifically, DFO should ensure that objective information on the role of government, including local government, in habitat protection, becomes a significant part of DFO supported training for community groups and streamkeepers. This information should receive at least the same emphasis that biophysical information does.*” A specific comment to DFO that accompanied the report said, “*quite simply DFO has to decide whether or not the encouragement of constructive advocacy is a legitimate function in which the department should be engaged*”, and asks “*how far should one level of government go in encouraging citizen group activity that has a direct bearing on the activities of another level of government?*”

*Understanding how local  
government works is as  
important to community  
groups as biophysical  
information*

The whole tone of the New Directions Document, and the DFO discussion paper on habitat conservation and stewardship, answers that question at a policy level.

*Still losing habitat in areas  
where community groups are  
active*

Although protection and stewardship have always been stated as being a part of governmental support for community groups, a historical perspective for community involvement in fish habitat that follows will describe the overwhelming emphasis in that relatively recent DFO supported community effort on information gathering, stream inventory, habitat enhancement, and the traditional biological aspects of fish habitat. This is quite understandable, given the technical orientation of the department. **However, in spite of all of the good work being done on information assembly, enhancement, and more recently restoration, we are still losing habitat, in some cases at an alarming extent, and frequently in the very areas where community groups are focusing their attention on traditional technically-oriented approaches to fish habitat.** In short, communities have provided useful auxiliary support to traditional habitat management

activity. Community groups and volunteers have been engaged in interesting work, but mostly as an extension of the kind of work that government could do on its own anyway.

*New and innovative change in this new program is an emphasis by the DFO on protection through community groups*

*Restoration reflects past failure to protect habitat*

*Community groups can bring a different perspective to habitat decisions than government*

*Protection demands an understanding of advocacy.*

**The really new, innovative, and probably fundamental change reflected in this new program is a formal emphasis by the DFO on protection through community groups.** Protection has always been a strong priority for some community groups. The advocacy goals, objectives and actions proposed in the discussion paper have been addressed for many years by some individuals and groups at a community level but not as a mainstream part of formal DFO community programs, although there has been a somewhat limited move towards local improvements in watershed planning and management as an element of fish habitat stewardship. Government has funded a few pilot and demonstration projects in improved watershed management, particularly over the past few years through the Fraser River Action Plan. These efforts have been commendable, but their results have mainly been traditional restoration, enhancement, technical inventory and training, rather than protection, even on projects that include protection and planning as a part of their visions, goals and objectives. **We are not talking either/or here, but we have to get the perspectives straight. Restoration is the reflection of our past failure to effectively protect the habitat base. For enhancement to proceed there has to be a strong natural habitat base to enhance. The new habitat protection and stewardship initiative sets out to address this imbalance.** The jury is still out on the long-term benefits of many restoration efforts. From a very practical perspective, restoration, and even enhancement, is incredibly more costly in terms of dollars and effort than protection. Most important from a community perspective, protection through citizen involvement in the development approval processes that lead to habitat loss, is the place where people can be experts in their own right to complement the technical expertise of government officials. They can use technical information, generated by others or by themselves, to demonstrate how the protection of fish habitat is indeed a community value. A value that can go beyond immediate benefits to fish.

Individuals and community groups can bring a perspective quite different from the traditional technical and governmental involvement in natural resource management, so why encourage volunteers to replicate what government can already do?. Volunteers and community groups commit themselves to causes for reasons often quite different from their day to day work or business life. That doesn't make their volunteer causes any less important, and it is a mistake to look at volunteers in just the same way that we look at business and work. Their strength lies in bringing additional value judgments, and sometimes passion to the deliberations of government and business. This is really important for the kind of political decisions that are essentially at the core of habitat protection. Technical objectivity doesn't have to be dry. Communities, groups and individual citizens can present technical information along with their personal feelings, attitudes and commitments as citizens to the decision-makers who are presumably accountable to them. This is what has been lacking in so much of governments' approach to community involvement in fish habitat. **Protection demands an understanding of advocacy. Not necessarily activism, partisan politics, or strident protectionism, but simply an understanding of the way in which governments at all levels go about their business, particularly the role of individuals and groups in what should be community decisions. That is a role that government officials cannot really fill.**



*New habitat positions:  
Habitat Auxiliaries,  
Stewardship Coordinators*

The habitat conservation and stewardship discussion paper places an emphasis on the roles of habitat auxiliaries and stewardship coordinators. For the purpose of this assignment we are dealing primarily with stewardship coordinators, although serious thought should be given to a much closer integration of the respective roles of the two types of position described. Single Habitat Steward responsibilities similar to positions in Washington State might be more appropriate. The present dual position proposal seems confusing. The habitat auxiliary positions would already seem to be close to some of what the existing community advisors are already doing, and other aspects of their proposed tasks, such as involvement in other resource management consultative processes like land and resource management plans could, over time, be far better filled by community group representatives

*New positions need to be  
matched by operational  
budgets*

Perhaps before moving too deeply into the job descriptions and training needs for these positions, **more thought might be given to precisely what the overall habitat conservation and stewardship program is trying to achieve, and mold the job descriptions and training around the program vision, the guiding principles and program objectives as set out in the discussion paper.** While there is a strong emphasis on local delivery, and a recognition that circumstances will vary according to the community and local issues, there are numerous common threads that apply region-wide. **No matter how many new positions are created, these positions must be matched by operations budgets to actually help groups in their steps to improved self-sustainability. Bodies alone are not enough!**

*New and innovative doesn't  
necessarily mean starting  
from scratch—make existing  
processes work*

In order to ensure accountability and meet the commendable principle of long-term community stewardship capacity, it would be timely to establish just how far some of the objectives of the program are already being met, and most particularly to carefully examine the various pilot and demonstration projects that have been carried out under FRAP, and similar programs that are aimed at increasing community capacity in the habitat field through the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, Salmonid Enhancement Program, and the more recent employment-driven projects that have been a complementary part of the Pacific Fisheries Restructuring and Adjustment Program. **In taking new directions we should try to avoid reinventing wheels, and most particularly try to learn from programs that started out as pilot and demonstration projects. New and innovative doesn't necessarily mean starting from scratch. A major challenge is to make existing processes work.** One major step here would be the creative deployment of people in the department and existing NGO groups who have already demonstrated their understanding of community stewardship, and in using their skills in this field as mentors for new people.

*The role of the stakeholder*

**Perhaps the most important program element identified as part of the job descriptions, is that stewardship coordinators “will encourage local watershed stakeholders to play an active role in local decision making by providing information, stating local concerns and supporting local habitat protection initiatives.” This surely should be a principal rationale for the protection and stewardship program as a whole, and since partnerships seem to be the name of the game, a major objective should be to ensure that local watershed stakeholders, and the rest of the community of which they are a part, really drive the process.** The job description approach to establishing a program, needs very careful examination because there is a danger that the program could really be little more than an extension of past advisory programs—which is hardly a new direction. A major purpose of this report that will be covered in more detail later is to explore what needs to be done to ensure that this “new” dimension of

community protection and stewardship is something that goes well beyond slogans

Perhaps the final major comment in this initial perspective based on the New Directions initiative, deals with the question of what will happen at the end of year five, “*The program will be evaluated on a regular basis to determine how effective these new positions have been, and how best to ensure continued delivery of effective program activities beyond 2003. Efforts will be made before the end of this program to redeploy the positions created under this program to self sufficient watershed groups or agencies and organizations that require this ongoing service, and are capable of supporting them.*”

*Distinct roles of government, and community groups*

While this seems to all relate to staff positions, in reality it should be applying to the program as a whole. The new dimension will be the provision of help and advice that will enable those community groups to indeed become self-sufficient, and capable of at least becoming major partners in these new programs. **Clearly there are very distinct roles that government, and probably government alone, can fulfill and some programs that community groups representing citizens can fulfill better than government. Some programs can best be delivered at a local geographic community level. Some must be addressed by a much wider community, based on interests. These are the exciting new areas that have to be explored.**

*New directions need new approaches through new skills*

They involve disciplines that DFO has not traditionally had to call on in any significant way. As the department evolved over time from virtually a regulatory and enforcement agency, it recognized the need for biological skills, followed by engineering and economic skills as a part of overall program delivery. This New Directions initiative opens up the need for skills and people who can really put substance into the terms “*community group*”, “*community stewardship*”, “*long term community capacity*”, and “*self sufficiency*” through programs that can enable community groups to become genuine working partners providing a complementary strength to what government can do, rather than an auxiliary service. This assistance in the development of public group capacity, not just bio-technical competence, should be an essential initial and continuing program priority. It should be complemented by specific programs that again call for specialized skills, that the department itself has just begun to acquire, in the whole field of resource planning. **New directions need new approaches through new skills.**

*Community group involvement in fish habitat protection is not new in British Columbia,*

## 2.2 An Historic Perspective

Community group involvement in fish habitat protection, stream stewardship and watershed management is not new in British Columbia, although stewardship and watershed management have come on the scene relatively recently. Some organizations in the Province that are over 75 years old, used to label themselves as “*Fish, Game, and Forest Protective Associations*”. They knew that protection just didn’t involve being co-opted to the management team.

*Fishers’ efforts stopped Fraser dams*

Groups like the BC Wildlife Federation member clubs lobbied actively on the high profile conservation issues of the day since the 1940s. Few of the present crop of conservation groups realize that it was the combined efforts of commercial fishermen through the United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union, Fish Processors, and the BC Wildlife Federation that led to the halting of proposals for a major dam at Moran Canyon on the Fraser River.

*Protection has worked in the past*

That kind of cooperation led to positive things like the Salute to the Salmon on the Adams River and so on. We don't see much of that cooperation today, but habitat is one place where fish users could cooperate more. The Fishing industry began its criticisms of the Alcan project in the 1950s, and that has hit the headlines again in recent years. In the late 1960s the BC Wildlife Federation conducted a successful campaign to stop log driving on BC salmon rivers. These are all things that we take for granted today. At the same time those same groups were at the forefront of agreements for better land use planning, and the creation of more parks. There were none of the formal mechanisms that we have now for public participation, community forums and all of the alleged openness that we now see. Those efforts by community groups were all carried out in an era when the Province was undergoing rapid development. "Power means progress", and "Live Better Electrically" were the watchwords of the day. Groups like the Wildlife Federation were called "burrs under the saddle of progress", but they created the foundation on which so many of our present day processes can continue. The jury is still out on whether we are any further ahead with these present day processes. The old-fashioned protests and arguments in favor of protection have now been picked up by preservationist groups. Whether the more moderate "participation" groups like it or not, the preservationists are now the people who seem to be getting the results in protecting habitat. Perhaps it is all a question of a social pendulum swinging back and forth, and our biggest challenge is often to find out just where the pendulum is at the time that we want to make something happen. Timing may be as important as the tools used. History has shown us that protectionism, (for the most part very little of it was all that militant) worked for a long time, and created the kind of foundation on which today's processes are based.

*Cooperative resource management is not easy*

*Laws and attitudes are changing, but change is slow. Difficult to make consensus work with current resource legislation*

Increasingly governments began to realize that the public was becoming better informed on resource issues. Programs like the BC Natural Resources Conference that ran from just after the Second World War to the early '70s increasingly brought all of the people interested in resources together, to at least talk about resource issues. That led to a better level of awareness, and provided a start for the kind of cooperative approaches to resource management that we are trying to reach now. The problem was that those **discussions were going on against a backdrop of resource statutes, and institutional and ownership patterns that were anything but cooperative, coordinated, or participatory. They were based on traditionally adversarial approaches to law, and in spite of our best efforts the reality is that many of those old fashioned statutes, the various mechanisms surrounding them, and many of the public attitudes that they reflected are still with us—to the advantage of habitat in the case of the Fisheries Act. Laws and attitudes are changing, but change is pretty slow, and it is difficult to make consensus work in the face of much of our current resource legislation.** Some real efforts were made a few years ago with respect to forest lands and associated resources in BC when the pendulum had swung in favor of better resource protection, but the pendulum has now swung in a different direction, and we may already be losing the gains that were made as far as fish habitat protection is concerned. **That perhaps is why it is so reassuring to see protection put at the front of the agenda again, as far as DFO involvement in fish habitat in BC is concerned, through the New Directions initiative.** That does not imply protection instead of everything else. Cooperation, better planning and efforts to reach consensus wherever possible, are still all a part of the package. But the underlying message in the New Directions Policy is that protection is again on the front burner, and we should not be shy of working towards protection and consensus on parallel paths. **From a community group perspective, there are groups in the community that champion protection, others feel that feel consensus is the only way to go, with all ranges of opinion in between. All of them are working, hopefully,**

*Successful community can use both protectionist and conciliatory approaches*

**towards a common goal. Successful community initiatives will have to recognize, accommodate and reflect those different approaches to habitat protection and stewardship. The successful community groups will develop strategies that take advantage of both the protectionist, and the more conciliatory approaches. Each have their place, and it is unproductive for any of the various factions to belittle the other.**

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has been actively encouraging community type programs in association with fish habitat since the days of the Local Initiative, and Opportunity for Youth programs in the late '60s. A number of habitat related projects were carried out under those programs, with DFO personnel often acting as advisors, but for the most part there is very little record of what was actually done. That is a shortcoming that really has to be plugged for any of the "New Directions" initiatives.

*SEP laid a strong foundation*

The community projects under the ambitious Salmonid Enhancement Program began towards the end of the 1970s. That program was a multi-objective program that incorporated habitat protection and enhancement as one of its objectives. From the start the program had a fairly strong technical, communication and educational orientation. The actual community participation in projects leaned towards providing an auxiliary work force for the kind of things the Department could probably have done anyway. Still, through the public involvement program, and through community hatcheries and community enhancement initiatives, a foundation was laid for a sense of almost community ownership in projects. This was really a big step forward. The SEP community groups of the day expected much of the leadership to come from government officials.

*The National Green Plan and the Fraser River Action Plan programs*

The National Green Plan and the Fraser River Action Plan, which was an important part of it, provided another opportunity in the early 1990s to try out better community involvement on environmental matters, including fish habitat. A number of projects were begun primarily as pilot projects to further improve, or perhaps understand, the role of community groups and community action in fish habitat management. Most of those efforts were aimed at improving habitat protection through comprehensive land use planning exercises largely based on consensus. For the most part outright protection took a back burner, and the groups who were more interested in protection tended to stay away.

*Valuable lessons to be learned from what has been invested and spent thus far*

**One shortcoming of those pilot and demonstration projects is that we forgot they were pilot or demonstration projects. With the exception of the successful Alouette River Management Society (ARMS), they were monitored too late in the process. Inevitably projects that started out as pilot projects took on a life of their own, and became ongoing programs with little serious monitoring and appraisal to really determine what we could learn from them to help advance the cause of improved community involvement in fish habitat conservation and stewardship.** There is still a real need for a serious evaluation of those specific community projects in much more detail than they have been addressed in this assessment, which just touches the tip of the iceberg. There are many valuable lessons to be learned from those projects to help ensure that whatever is started or continued through New Directions, is really benefiting from what has been invested and spent thus far. We have to be able to build on what worked and avoid what didn't.

*Past lack of clear criteria for projects to ensure accountability*

Any attempt at evaluation has to be done in a positive sense, and not try to conduct inquests to lay blame where things have not worked well. We can learn as much from mistakes as we can from successes provided that in future we have the right kind of project selection, ongoing monitoring, and performance evaluation systems in place to make sure that we can tell the differences between success and failure early, and that we can repeat our successes, not our failures. The major criticism of what we have done in the past in the government sponsored and supported community approach to habitat conservation and stewardship, has been the lack of clear criteria for projects to ensure accountability.

### 2.3 Geographic Context

*Major geographic hurdles*

**In trying to focus community efforts on salmon habitat conservation and stewardship there is a major geographic hurdle.** With some notable exceptions, like parts of Vancouver Island, and the Lower Fraser Valley, very little of BC's really productive freshwater salmon habitat is close to the type of community that really can devote a major self-sustaining effort towards safeguarding those freshwater salmon habitats. Virtually all of the major saltwater fish harvesting areas are well away from the areas in which the salmon that support those fisheries are produced. For example, the major fish harvest at Port Hardy is on sockeye spawned and reared in the Upper reaches of the Fraser. The best and rare example of a strong link between the community as a whole, and a fishery directly associated with it, is at Port Alberni. The Stamp/Somass River system provides productive natural habitat. Stocks have been augmented through hatchery production, and there is a clear link at a community level between overall resource management and use in the area and fish production and harvesting. A case can be made for other communities. Clayoquot Sound, and the communities around it, come to mind, particularly since the most likely harvesting in that area would be through First Nations and recreational fisheries that can base fisheries on terminal harvests. Similar cases can perhaps be made with respect to limited saltwater harvests for Campbell River, Comox Valley and the Cowichan Valley. At each of those locations a community group with a strong interest in the watershed exists, but, by and large, insofar as the tidal fishery is concerned, there is a real separation between the places where the fish are produced and the places where they are caught. **In short, for the tidal salmon harvest (which accounts for perhaps 95% of the total salmon catch) there is only a tenuous link between communities where the fish are produced and the tidal fishery.** For the fishing community as a whole, and the specific geographic communities that depend on that fishery, there are some real problems in terms of cooperative approaches to habitat management. They are not insurmountable, but they have to be recognized as problems right at the start. **It is not easy through a local geographically based process at a coastal location to persuade ranchers, loggers, miners, and other resource users that they should accept significant modifications in the way in which they do business in order to satisfy the needs of a distant community. No matter how strong the local community initiatives are, it is absolutely essential to maintain a region-wide geographic perspective.** There are possible ways of bridging those gaps which will be addressed later, but dealing with this major separation between the activities of a group of people who benefit from harvesting the fish, and the impact that the production of those fish can have on people who cannot readily see any benefits to them through the protection of their habitat, is a major challenge. First, for the fishing community as a whole in British Columbia, and second, for particular community initiatives aimed at protecting, conserving, and providing stewardship for fish habitat. Questions of this type have been dealt with, and can continue to be dealt with in a regulatory manner through the Fisheries Act. Can the same level of protection be provided through community initiatives?

*Most saltwater salmon harvesting areas are distant from habitat where fish are produced*

*No matter how strong the local community initiatives are, a region-wide geographic perspective is needed*

The issue is less complicated for river fisheries where First Nations and freshwater anglers have a real incentive to work closely together. Salmon can readily be identified as a part of the local resource use mix, and inter resource trade-offs have a better chance of working at this local level, but this is at odds with traditional commercial fisheries.

*Local habitat, protection, enhancement and restoration may have a limited bearing on local fish harvest expectations*

**One very practical consideration is the fact that for some major fishing communities on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, and along Johnstone Strait, for example, although there is some local “community” production, the vast majority of the harvest for those commodities takes place on passing stocks. While local habitat, protection, enhancement and restoration may be worthwhile it may have little real bearing on the level of fish harvest expected by those communities.** This is something that the coast-wide tidal fishing community has to come to grips with. Solutions are not easy when First Nations, commercial and recreational spokespersons from at least one coastal community publicly suggest that we should stop harvesting fish for any reasons in the rivers, and manage the stocks only for coastal communities. Apart from the fact that the in-river fishing community will not take kindly to that approach, the approach does absolutely nothing to persuade an Interior logger or mill worker that he should be curbing his activities in the interests of someone from a distant community.

*A lack of clarity in the terms that are used by both governments and community groups to describe conservation and stewardship*

#### **2.4 A Clarity of Terms**

One major problem associated with much of the talk about improved habitat conservation and stewardship over the past decade or so has been a lack of clarity in the many terms that are used by both governments and community groups.

Clarification of terms like “conservation”, “stewardship”, “community based”, “ecosystem based”, to name but a few, is essential. Too often terms are used virtually as slogans rather than as terms that have some meaning and are used with some degree of precision. This is not being pedantic, getting hung up on semantics, or using the ploy of “defining” the question without addressing it. It is really important that we do not wander any further into an Alice in Wonderland world where any particular term or word means what we want it to mean when we use it.

*Clarification of terms has legal ramifications*

Clarification of terms has real legal ramifications when parties are entering into the partnerships that we mention so frequently, but equally important is the discipline of ensuring that we all know precisely what we are talking about when we use a particular term.

*The nature of a Community*

Earlier in this report, the question of the **nature of a community** is mentioned. There is a geographic community and there is also a community based on interest, where the geographic area may be much larger—for example, the entire ecosystem that supports Pacific salmon of North American origin. A review of definitions for community, suggests that the community is first an area where most of the basic human needs are satisfied. This is really the geographic community, but modern communications technology has opened up that concept. This geographic sense has to be combined with the notion that a community is composed of the relationships among the people who consider themselves to be a part of that community, be it geographic or interest based. A big difference for the interest-based community is generally a much broader geographic area, as described earlier. In instances where all of the community interactions, with respect to salmon habitat, production and harvest can be related to a specific geographic area, then the process is pretty simple; but there are very few examples. Port Alberni has been cited as one. Atlantic salmon rivers in the Maritimes are another good example. Harvesting is carried out in the rivers

*Geographic Base*

*Interest Base*

where the harvest can be considered in concert with the other demands that the community places on the watershed.

*Need for balance  
between regional and  
local scenarios*

In each of the instances described, however, there is still the huge variable of ocean survival, that puts limits on community-based planning. The different activity levels described elsewhere in this document are all parts of the essential bottom-up building blocks that accept containment and lead to some kind of cohesive whole. If we did not accept this degree of containment, we would probably give up on the kind of habitat initiatives suggested in the New Directions policy. **A real challenge this new program faces is to provide some kind of balance between these much broader planning scenarios that virtually involve a global community and the real dangers of fragmentation and “Balkanization”, where fish harvesters in a particular community fail to recognize their dependence on a much larger community, and that parts of that larger community realistically gain virtually no benefits from fish that are to be harvested elsewhere. There are no easy answers, but they must be discussed and understood.**

*Conservation  
and  
Sustainability*

Other terms are often used equally loosely. **Conservation** is generally linked to use, especially when concepts such as stewardship are also being considered. The simplest definition of conservation is wise use in a manner that maintains the resource base for future use, although it is in part being supplanted by **sustainability**. Apart from some semantics, there does not seem to be that much difference between the notion of “conservation” and the term “sustainability” made popular by the Bruntland Commission Report in the 1970s.

*What is Stewardship?*

**Stewardship** is another term that seems to mean different things to different people. The term “stewardship” did not show up in North American dictionaries in the context that it is being used for resources, until about twenty years ago. In its traditional sense of taking care of something that actually belongs to someone else, the term did not seem to fit that well with the common property, North American, approach to resources, where most resources belonged to everybody. However, over the past two decades or so, the term “stewardship” has been applied to a general acceptance of responsibility for managing the resources that we may all own, but perhaps only a few may use. Stewardship does not necessarily imply use in the same sense as conservation or sustainability. Since the term “stewardship” is used to cover a wide range of activities, there is generally an assumption that stewardship implies some kind of ethical responsibility for resources; the kind of attitudes espoused by Aldo Leopold in “*A Sand County Almanac*”, that deal with the whole question of a land ethic and a respect for the land. In short, an ethical and moral way of thinking about land and resources.

*An ethical and moral way  
of thinking about land  
and resources*

*Differences between  
Stewardship and  
Husbandry*

But stewardship also has a practical dimension in terms of **husbandry**—the actual measures that one takes to achieve both stewardship and conservation through good management practices. To implement the concepts of conservation, sustainability and particularly stewardship, much of what has been described as stewardship, as the process that has evolved over the past few decades in North America, could equally well be called husbandry, although we have to be very careful of those aspects of husbandry that rely on artificial introductions.

*Both are necessary and  
complementary*

Without getting too deeply into semantics, the distinction seems to lie somewhere between an ethical approach of people wanting to do something for its own intrinsic value, and the things that make people want to volunteer, as distinct from their regular work and business life, and the type of activity carried out because there is a tangible reward at the end. Again, this is not a question of one

necessarily being better or worse than the other. It is simply a question of motivation, perhaps, and individual vision, guiding principles and objectives. Both are necessary and, ideally, both can be complementary.

This whole notion is important for this assessment since stewardship is such a key feature of it. One problem occurs with respect to people undertaking activities purely as volunteers with the objective of satisfying needs other than direct benefits, and those who work in the same general area, either for remuneration or with the prospect of benefits somewhere down the line from increased harvesting opportunities. In the context of what has been said about community groups in this report, and in the 1997 advocacy report for the lower mainland, this is a somewhat grey area. We need not be too disturbed about the question, provided it is recognized and addressed.

Much of the “fire in the belly” motivation that drove many of the community groups, including the whole fishing community in the past, lost some momentum when people who had traditionally been volunteers began to be paid, or people were hired to carry out the same type of functions. Virtually all of these functions, though, were simply a continuation of activities that DFO could have done for itself anyway. **The New Directions policy provides a solid underpinning for community groups to do what they can do best—act as citizens in their own communities, and influence the manner in which their community, however large or small it is, operates—in this case with respect to taking care of fish habitat within their community. The notions of stewardship along the Aldo Leopold model, and the practical considerations of husbandry are not mutually exclusive, by any means.** Maybe there can be important transitions. We saw a somewhat negative transition during SEP where some effective volunteers were sidetracked from the “old-fashioned” notions of community service into being paid volunteers. We are still seeing advocacy groups being similarly sidetracked from their historic advocacy roles in order to become restoration contractors. Perhaps now, with far more people who are not volunteers being paid to do enhancement work, the pendulum for community groups will swing back towards doing things that really do drive community volunteer efforts.

*Community groups should do what they can do best—act as responsible citizens in their own communities*

*Volunteers often sidetracked from the “old-fashioned” notions of community service*

*Most fish harvesting communities that argue for local decision-making based on an ecosystem approach, rely almost completely on fish production far removed from the harvest area*

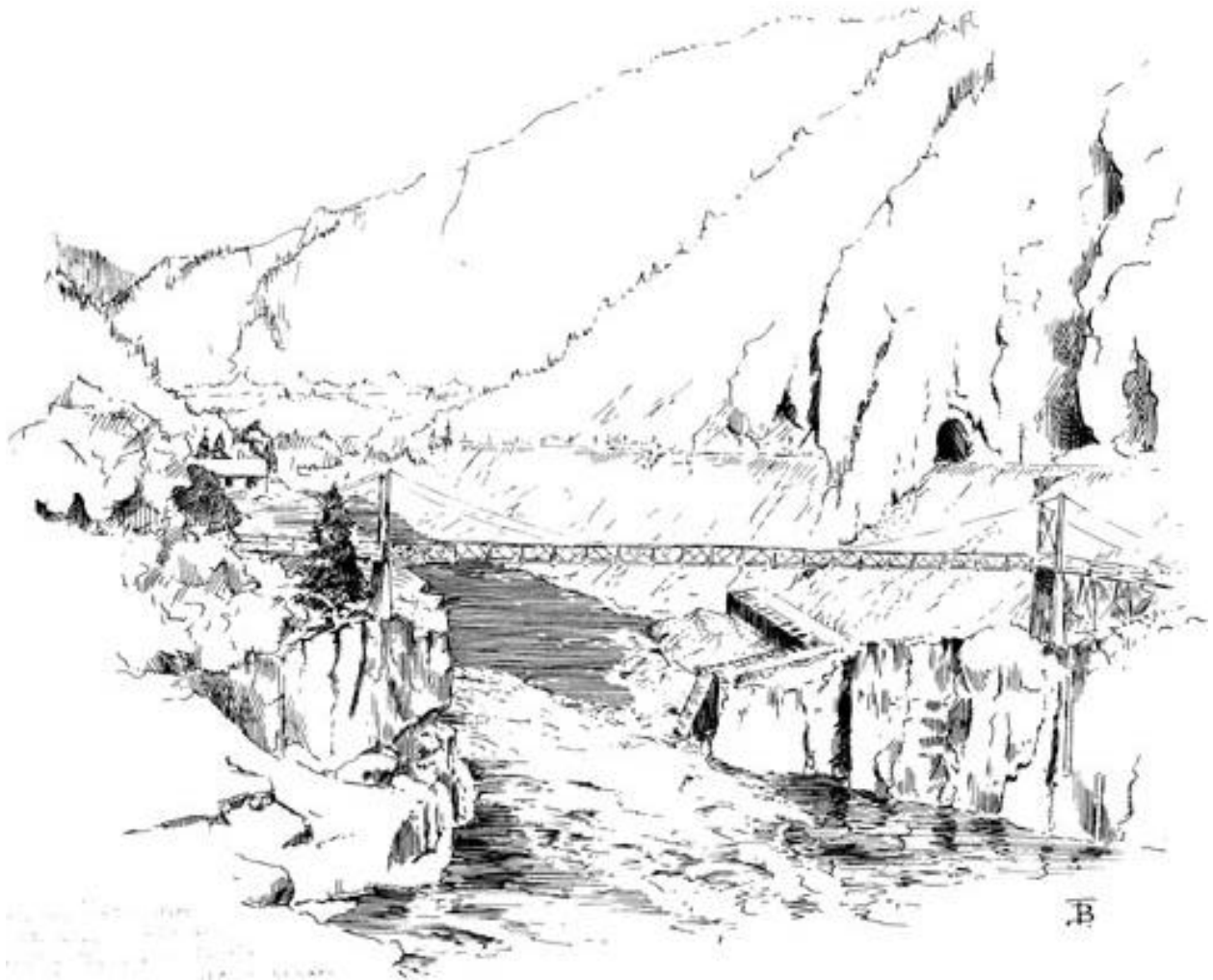
*Ecosystem approach should include ocean survival and fish harvests*

Another term that is used pretty loosely is **ecosystem**. It is somewhat ironic that fish harvesting communities that argue for local self-sufficiency and decision-making based on an ecosystem approach, have relied almost completely on fish production ecosystems far removed from the harvesting area. Ecosystems are logical units for the protection and management of fresh-water habitats, but this concept has to be used in concert with the equally logical rationale for much larger ecosystems that include ocean survival and fish harvests.

Finally, the term **partnership** is being used too often merely as a slogan. Hopefully the recently released DFO panel report “Partnering the Fishery” will provide more clarity on this topic.

More terms could be explored but what is important is that we pose these questions and discuss them sufficiently so that we all know what we mean; more than anything perhaps, to clear the air. There can be some very positive outcomes, but those outcomes cannot happen until the various viewpoints are on the table. This is particularly important given the New Directions position on the creation of self-sustaining community organizations that can be partners with government in the protection, conservation and stewardship of fish habitat.





*Hell's Gate Fishway — a first for enhancement?*

### 3. THE TASKS

The first three tasks in the Terms of Reference are:

*Watershed Forum*

1. *Explore and provide options on what an effective Watershed Council/Forum/Round Table might be, incorporating options for vision, goals and objectives. (The term used here is “Watershed Council” but options for names are a part of this task.)*
2. *Review examples of community-based groups that already exist that have embraced and advanced fish habitat stewardship and/or developed/implemented plans that improve fish habitat protection. This would include both non-governmental, and joint community and governmental groups.*
3. *Explore and provide options on the structures required for the effective functioning of a “Watershed Council”. This would include a review of the interest and activity levels of the different groups interested in habitat conservation and stewardship, and the composition and membership of a council.*

*What do community groups do?*

*If habitat protection is a part of conservation and stewardship, the proof of the pudding is in the eating*

Although three different tasks have been identified, they are so closely interrelated that they are best dealt with together. The first task of describing what an effective forum might be is based in part on the experience of existing groups involved in habitat protection, stewardship and conservation. However, the analysis goes beyond that, and considers the many effective groups, and types of groups, that exist within communities outside of the accepted formal structure of community involvement. These include long-standing groups like Fish and Game Clubs and Naturalist Clubs that have deep roots in their communities, and some of the newer protest-type groups that have arguably done more to protect fish habitat, over the past decade or so, than the more moderate conciliatory consensus-seeking groups. If habitat protection is a part of conservation and stewardship, then the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

The third point in the Terms of Reference requires an exploration of the structures required for the effective functioning of a “forum”. This would include a review of the different interest and activity levels set out above, and the composition and membership of such a forum. (The term forum is used at this stage because it is a fairly neutral all-embracing term.)

This review of the different types of interests and activity levels is really the foundation on which the other aspects of these three tasks can best be based.

*Community groups operate at different levels in a continuum of geographic and activity interest*

*“Community” is not just a specific geographic term*

*Region-wide concept of community*

#### 3.1 The “Levels” of Activity

Community groups operate at different levels in a continuum of geographic and activity interest, and in order to understand the functioning of any type of forum, it is really important to understand the separate levels of functioning for these groups, and the links between them. It is particularly important too, to emphasize that “community” is not just a specific geographic term. There are some very real coast-wide community interests that have to be considered in tandem with the more specific traditional geographic community interests that have been the focus to date. It is this region-wide concept of community that can provide the essential links between over arching region-wide and even international approaches to habitat protection, conservation and stewardship, and specific geographically based initiatives. This broader community concept is far more than simply a network or communication mechanism. It really has to involve a larger community’s wide range of interests. These would include the overall fishing community, which again can be broken down into those who fish tidal waters and those who fish in the rivers. Another breakdown of this total community could be along the lines of First Nations, commercial and

*Dams on the Fraser River stopped because the fishing community took on the dam builders—protection pure and simple*

*The levels of activity by community groups*

#### *Level 1*

*The more people and groups involved the better*

*Depth and breadth of community support is important at any level*

#### *Level 2*

*Watersheds as a unit in which protection, enhancement and restoration are addressed as part of a broader spectrum of total fish habitat needs*

*Habitat activity influences other interests within the community*

#### *Level 3*

*Groups operating in a watershed as advocates for habitat stewardship and protection*

*Groups may have had their origin at a lower level*

recreational, and these all lend themselves to further breakdowns. Surely if we are trying to build on community strengths it is important to recognize these larger communities too. **Most of the problems that we have had thus far, with allocation for example, have been because of the fragmentation of the interests rather than a recognition of a common sense of community. Dams on the Fraser River were stopped because the fishing community as a whole acted as a community to take on the dam builders—protection pure and simple. We can learn something from the past, and the total fishing community has to get back to some of that.** (See Figure 1, following page.)

Recognizing, then, that there are different levels and types of community, what are those levels? **Level 1** is the small-scale local group with a particular interest in a particular site—a small stream, a stream reach etc. This is the level at which most of the streamkeeper groups and similar small-scale enhancement projects have functioned. At this level the community can be quite small and limited. Obviously the more people and groups that are involved the better, because depth and breadth of community support is important at any level. But depth and breadth of community support is not as important at this first level as it would be at a watershed council level where inter-resource planning is the focus.

**Level 2** of community involvement addresses the same kind of issues as the first, but in a much more focused and sustained way. Streamkeeper groups, local enhancement societies, local groups such as Fish and Game and Naturalists clubs look to a small stream, small watershed, a tributary of a larger watershed or even a group of small watersheds as a complete unit in which not only specific protection, enhancement or restoration issues are addressed, but a broader spectrum of fish habitat needs within the community group's area of interest. These groups are often associated with some form of hatchery or enhancement facility, and a broader interest in habitat can be a logical progression from that initial interest. The emphasis is very fish- and aquatic-habitat oriented, although there is often an understanding of the planning issues involved.

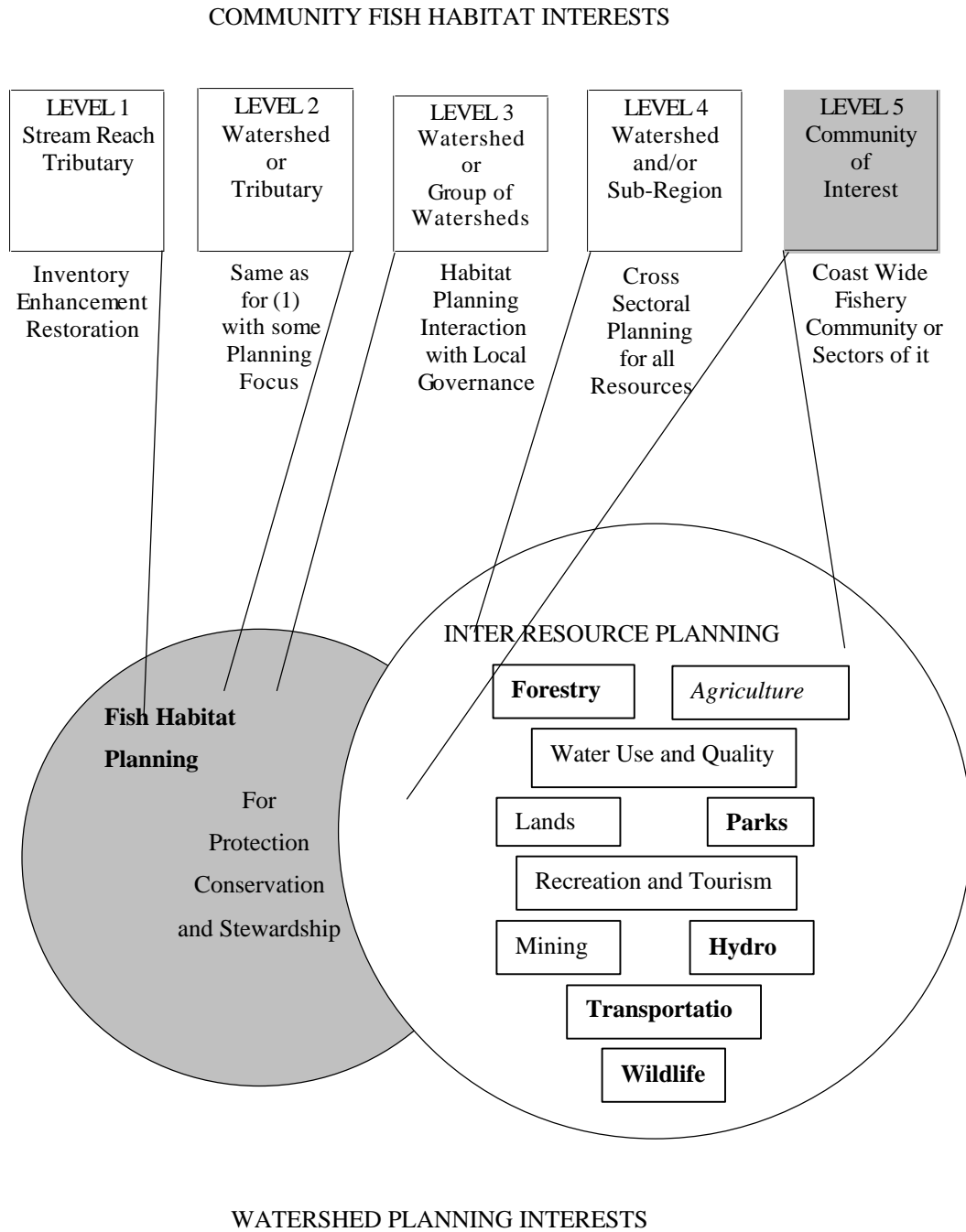
This second level of interest involves a broader and deeper type of community involvement and commitment

The aspirations and activities of this type of group need more physical support, more volunteers, more financial support and more overall commitment from a broader community than at Level 1. Activity at this level can begin to influence other interests within the community and justify involvement of groups other than those with a particular interest in habitat, but still habitat is at the core and the focus of the activities of the group at this level. The Port Moody Ecological Society, and Port Coquitlam Hunting and Fishing Club are good examples.

**Level 3** is yet another extension from the second level described. These are well-established groups operating on a watershed basis who can act as advocates for fish habitat stewardship and protection, in that watershed. Ideally, the groups are established on a watershed basis so that an ecosystem approach can be taken towards the overall management of that watershed or a grouping of small or single watersheds, like parts of the east coast of Vancouver Island. There may well be overlaps at an administrative level—watersheds running through several municipal or other administrative boundaries—but the focus is very much on what is happening in particular watersheds. These groups may well have had their origin in one of the lower level groupings, and a good example of an effective group in this category is the Alouette River Management Society, which had its origins in hatchery production. People

**Figure 1**

**A CONTINUUM OF FISH HABITAT INTERESTS**



associated with that, recognized that a hatchery approach to the Alouette River meant little if it was undertaken in isolation from all of the other realities of resource use and development in that watershed. The focus, however, has always been on fish habitat, and dealings with other resource interests, such as BC Hydro, to get improved water flows, have been from a fish habitat perspective.

Another group that has moved quickly into being a strong community group representing a number of small watersheds is the Fanny Bay Enhancement Society, which had its origins in Rosewall Creek Hatchery, on the East Coast of Vancouver Island, but with the building of the first sections of the Island Highway, the group moved rapidly into habitat advocacy. A single event that acted as a catalyst for a move from hatchery production to a much broader interest in habitat protection and stewardship without losing sight of the role of hatchery production. **Examination of a number of groups suggests that this initial orientation for a facility, followed by a particular event that affects fish habitat results in a far stronger level of community commitment, than a more abstract, almost political science approach to watersheds where improved inter-resource planning is the main concern.**

This is not to suggest an either/or approach, it is just to indicate the kind of event that triggers strong community support that can lead to protection and/or mitigation gains for habitat.

This third level of group requires an even deeper and wider level of community commitment, than that required from the two earlier groups. It requires more resources, its activities are more ambitious and it is moving closer to concern about governance and watershed planning.

Obviously, the dividing lines among these groups, or any of the groups, can be blurred. They are still a part of a continuum. There can be a state of transition, and at the margins groups could fit into either category.

#### *Level 4*

*Focus may move away from fish habitat as group is involved in a broader level of issues*

*Can serve best at a broad advisory level*

*Retain focus on habitat*

**Level 4** is the “watershed council” type of organization that can incorporate the interests of the three earlier level groups with the broader interests of other watershed users and resource sectors in a fairly structured manner. The Fraser Basin Council is an example of this function in BC, but groups in the Comox and Cowichan Valleys are smaller-scale models. For this type of group, strong community commitment is essential and the focus for groups such as this may move away from fish habitat as they become more of a group involved in a broader level of governance. In the case of the Fraser Basin Council the objectives are very heavily towards sustainable use, and to try and achieve sustainable uses that are complimentary. Its advocacy functions will be at a very broad, almost philosophical level, urging sustainability, improved management and so on, without necessarily having to address the nitty-gritty details of competition among resource sectors. This type of body can serve best at a broad advisory level recognizing that it is not another order of government, and that the more difficult resource allocation-type questions are addressed through other government processes.

**While the three other levels of community initiatives for fish habitat, protection, conservation, and stewardship are clearly oriented towards habitat, and are representing a fisheries interest, the broader type of council does not necessarily have that specific orientation. Fish Habitat may be an important part of its objectives, as is the case for each of the groups mentioned already, but it is not the major purpose for the existence of this fourth level group.** These groups can best concentrate on the longer

range planning questions that hopefully over time would reduce the adversarial approach to the interactions among resource sectors, but the track record for these kinds of approaches, certainly with respect to the forest sector in British Columbia, hasn't been very encouraging.

*Not either/or. Integration of each of the levels with each doing what it can do best*

**We should not be talking an either/or situation among these four different levels of interest and involvement; we really should be thinking about the integration of each of the levels with each doing what it can do best within the system.** In an ideal world the longer range planning approach and efforts to reach consensus would reduce the, at times, adversarial approach to habitat protection. In the meantime, there is still a need to protect, restore and enhance, while the longer range issues that are much more complex and go well beyond the direct mandate of the Department of Fisheries are being addressed.

At this fourth level, which involves planning for resource sectors other than fisheries, resources under provincial jurisdiction are included, and this is the point at which strong provincial cooperation is essential. Obviously at each of the three earlier levels, the more local government and provincial government cooperation the better, but it is unlikely that this fourth level of community involvement would achieve any positive results without a good level of cooperation from the province and from regional government. This link with provincial and local interests is a feature of the Fraser Basin Council.

*Three lower groups should unequivocally represent fish habitat interests*

Probably the most appropriate link between the three levels described above, and the fourth broader inter-resource type of forum would be for the three lower groups to be unequivocally representing fish habitat interests. (*See Figure 1*). Their collective interests, not necessarily in any sense of hierarchy, would represent fish habitat in the broader planning forum. The resources that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is prepared to commit to this fourth level of planning should reflect this interest in planning for the protection of fish habitat. Until now several of the cooperative type of planning exercises that have been supported by DFO and Fraser River Action Plan have depended heavily on DFO financial support. In some instances the initial support from DFO has been used to lever funds from other sources, for example, Environment Canada whose interests in many respects parallel many of the interests of DFO. Support has also been obtained from private foundations, and through tapping into other existing programs, such as Trees Canada. **However, there is limited evidence of other resource sectors being prepared to commit financial resources to these cooperative ventures. Obtaining that support has to be an essential feature for community groups embarking on broader, more ambitious cross-sectoral planning initiatives. DFO has provided much of the financial support for this type of project this far, as well as for parallel work through stream stewardship documents etc. This approach has helped encourage other interests to recognize that in protecting fish habitat other benefits are realized—a livable environment, wildlife, recreation, and in the case of the Salmon River Round Table (at Salmon Arm), direct benefits to owners of farmland. It is now time to go beyond the DFO and Environment Canada seed money contributions to these processes, and ensure that the other “communities”, beyond fish habitat interests, are paying their way.**

*Initial support from DFO has been used to lever funds from other sources*

*Who pays for cooperative management?*

*Ensure that interests beyond fish habitat are paying their way*

*Decentralization of fishery management authority to a local management board*

One broader level of geographic community interest goes well beyond the actual habitat protection interests that characterize the three earlier levels described. The Regional Aquatic Management Society (RAMS) project for much of the West Coast of Vancouver Island is a good example. The major impetus for this group has been the decentralization of fishery management authority to a local management board that assumes many of the responsibilities currently carried out by DFO. The emphasis here is on changing the type of governance for

fisheries resources, not just for habitat. It is beyond the scope of this assignment to address that broader issue, however the New Directions mandate for habitat, conservation and stewardship stresses local community involvement. The question that has to be asked of this broader type of organization, **with changed governance as its principle objective**, is the extent to which a very large geographic area actually represents a community in the same sense that other levels discussed here can. This is an issue that needs far more thought, but it is fairly apparent from the type of habitat projects that RAMS is initiating that they are thinking of communities within their broader area of interest. An earlier comment was made about the unique position of Port Alberni, and the Stamp/Somass River systems as being a place where clear links can be established between community interests in all resource sectors, and major fish user groups on both tidewater and freshwater. RAMS appears to be recognizing its sense of community within a broader almost political community, in an early emphasis on inventory work in the Stamp/Somass system, and a strong interest in the Kennedy Lake system on Clayoquot Sound.

At the same time, RAMS represents a geographic area of interest that involves a diversity of specific community interests, and RAMS has yet to persuade some sectors, and some parts of the area that their interests encompass, to become active participants in the RAMS exercise. The area covered by RAMS also includes geographic communities described earlier that have a demand for fish harvests that far exceeds local production capability, opening up the whole question of those geographic communities having to think in terms of a much larger coast-wide fishing community, rather than a specific geographic base. These issues are being addressed in another forum, however it is important to recognize them in dealing with this habitat, conservation and stewardship initiative.

**Level 5** is the concept of a broad community, within which quite different geographic communities are inextricably linked. The major production areas for some of the province's most important fisheries, sockeye and Chinook are prime examples, are found in areas far removed from the fishing effort. This has been covered in the earlier geographic perspective. The reality is that the fishing communities along both coasts of Vancouver Island, at Prince Rupert, and communities like Steveston, parts of Delta and the Langara Island sport fishery, are inextricably linked to the forestry, ranching and other resource sector communities in the Fraser, Skeena and many other drainages. Notwithstanding all the efforts at a geographic focus on community, these linkages between much broader coast-wide interests, often extending beyond provincial boundaries in the case of the fishery, are the realities that have to be addressed in both overall fisheries management and habitat conservation and stewardship. These have to be addressed on a much larger scale than a specific geographic community. This in no way undermines the kind of things that can be done effectively at a local level, but habitat initiatives on a relatively small number of watersheds adjacent to fishing communities, for example, are not really going to resolve the problem of persuading the resource communities in the interior of the province that their activities should be curtailed in the interest of communities far separated from them. This is not just restricted to the commercial fishing community; it is very much an issue for First Nations and recreational fisheries. The fishing community just has to begin to act collectively as a community that is going to protect the resource base on which it depends, in the same way that the fishing community, as a whole, worked very effectively almost forty years ago to prevent dams on the Fraser, as perhaps the best example. **In an age of abundance for the fishing community, cooperation on any issue was much easier then than it is now in an age of scarcity. The same is true perhaps for the relationship between the fishing community as a whole, and the other**

*Fishing communities are linked to the forestry, ranching and other resource sector communities*

*The fishing community needs to act collectively as a community to protect the resource base on which it depends*

**resource sector communities. In an era of abundance, competition didn't seem to be that much of an issue—today it is.**

**There is a real, but still exciting, challenge in getting the fishery community to speak as a community on these questions. Getting the people who fish on the rivers recognizing their shared interest with those who fish on tidal water; getting the interests of the fishers who live right near the fishing grounds together with those who live away from the area, and then enabling that collective community to deal with the resource communities far removed from the coast.** Parallel to these concerns is the question posed by some preservation groups who see no-harvest as a solution.

*Need for a region-wide presence and a recognition of region-wide communities*

There are no tidy answers to these complex questions, but they are questions that have to be addressed. **Notwithstanding all of the need to get specific geographic communities actively involved in habitat, conservation and stewardship, there is still an equally strong need for a region-wide presence and a recognition of region-wide communities that may go beyond our Canadian borders.** This is not being idealistic; it is a realistic comment on some of the limitations that will determine the effectiveness of our best community efforts and this must guide the allocation of resources for community-based habitat conservation protection and stewardship.

*Limitations on community efforts*

### **3.2 Visions, Principles, Goals and Objectives**

*Visions, principles, goals and objectives vary according to community*

Given the different levels of involvement, specific vision statements, principles, goals and objectives will vary according to the level. Naturally they will also vary according to the particular circumstances of the community group or community initiative.

However there are some common elements that apply to all of the different levels and groups. The overall **Vision, Guiding Principles, and Program Objectives** as set out in the DFO discussion paper on the Habitat, Conservation and Stewardship Program provide a pretty basic set of statements that could be adapted by local community groups to suit their particular circumstances. It is best to have a common vision, objectives and principles, with sufficient flexibility to let these evolve through experience rather than through creating a set of pigeon-holes that may not be appropriate.

*A vision statement*

That **vision statement** is “*Partnerships to enhance habitat protection and expanded community capacity to steward fish habitat resources*”.

In adopting that overall vision, and adapting it to particular local circumstances there is a necessary common understanding of where the program in its entirety is headed.

*Guiding principles*

The DFO discussion paper goes on to set out **guiding principles**, and this may be a better term than goals. The guiding principles in the discussion paper are:

- *strategic delivery in priority watersheds*
- *scientific information exchange with stakeholders*
- *field oriented program design and implementation*
- *establishment of long term community stewardship capacity*
- *clear linkages with existing and effective habitat protection programs*
- *communication across governments, First Nations, industry and communities*
- *an adaptive program that responds to local opportunities, needs and fish benefits.*



	<p>The first principle, “<i>strategic delivery in priority watersheds</i>”, is an overall DFO principle to guide its approach to the program, but this must be undertaken in the context of regional ecosystem realities.</p>
<i>Information exchange</i>	<p>Scientific information exchange with stakeholders could perhaps be adapted at a local level to, “<i>information exchange with government and stakeholders at all levels of the community process</i>”.</p>
<i>Local program design and implementation</i>	<p>“<i>Field-oriented program design and implementation</i>”. It is assumed that “field-oriented” really means locally oriented and controlled, and not traditional fieldwork. This principle might better read, “<i>close cooperation with partners and other stakeholders to ensure local program design and implementation</i>”.</p>
<i>Long term community stewardship</i>	<p>“<i>Establishment of long term community stewardship capacity</i>” is a guiding principle to which every group at every level could aspire.</p>
<i>Linkages with existing programs</i>	<p>“<i>Clear linkages with existing and effective habitat protection programs</i>” is again a sound guiding principle for any community group program at any level.</p>
<i>Communication</i>	<p>“<i>Communication across governments, First Nations, industry and communities</i>” is again a useful guiding principle for a local group, but it could be adapted to suit particular local conditions even to the point of naming names.</p>
<i>An adaptive management program</i>	<p>“<i>An adaptive program that responds to local opportunities, needs and fish benefits</i>”. A local group might want to change this to read, “<i>An adaptive program that responds to the needs of other partners, fish habitat protection stakeholders, and benefits for fish</i>”. Again there is a need to recognize regional perspectives.</p>
<i>More guiding principles</i>	<p>Major additional guiding principles at the community level might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A program that recognizes regional concerns broader than the local community.</i></li> <li>• <i>A community program that represents the fullest possible breadth and depth of community support.</i></li> <li>• <i>An understanding of all of the local governmental, private sector and other community interests that influence fish habitat protection.</i></li> <li>• <i>The maintenance of an effective, well-administered organization that can generate volunteer, financial, services in kind, and any other form of support from the community at large.</i></li> <li>• <i>Effective administration and management to ensure accountability to partners and to the full range of community supporters.</i></li> <li>• <i>Effective coordination of volunteer work with other initiatives.</i></li> </ul>
<i>DFO HCSP objectives</i>	<p>The <b>objectives</b> set out in the DFO discussion paper are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Incorporate fish habitat protection requirements into local land and water use plans.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase stakeholder awareness of fish habitat requirements.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve habitat mapping and data inventory required for planning and decision making.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase local stream surveillance and monitoring.</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve compliance monitoring of development projects.</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide technical information and advice and support to partners in communities</i></li> <li>• <i>Pilot development of watershed management plans on several priority watersheds.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhance and restore habitats as part of a watershed management plan.</i></li> </ul>

*Again these objectives can be adapted to suit local needs thereby assuring continuity through every level of the proposed process, and compatibility of vision, principles and objectives among partners.*

*Incorporate habitat protection into local land and water use plans*

“Incorporate fish habitat protection requirements into local land and water use plans” is a desirable objective as is, for any community group at any level.

*Increase partners’ awareness of local community values*

“Increase stakeholder awareness of fish habitat requirements”, is again a good local objective that could be adapted in terms of increasing the awareness of local stakeholders. Perhaps a good parallel objective could be “*to increase partners’ awareness of local circumstances and community values that influence fish habitat protection*”.

*Mapping and inventory consistent with planning needs*

“Improve habitat mapping and data inventory required for planning and decision making”, is a desirable general objective for any group at any level, but the following wording may lead to a better focus, “*Generate habitat mapping and inventory data consistent with the need of the level of planning and decision-making being considered.*”

*Increase local stream surveillance and monitoring*

“Increase local stream surveillance and monitoring”. Maybe a specific community orientation (name) could be added, but this is a desirable objective that maintains the links between the different levels of community effort.

*Improve monitoring of development projects*

“Improve compliance monitoring of development projects”. A desirable local objective, but this should require involvement in every stage of development project approval.

*Seek and share information, advice with all sectors of the community*

“Provide technical information and advice and support to partners in communities”. A local adaptation of this could be “*to seek and share technical information, advice and support from/with partners, and all sectors of the community*”.

*Pilot management plans on priority watersheds*

“Pilot development of watershed management plans on several priority watersheds”. This would be an appropriate objective with modifications. At levels one, two and three, perhaps a better objective would be, “*Pilot development of a watershed habitat management plan for ‘X’ watershed*”. It would be a good idea for the DFO program objective to clearly establish a distinction between a watershed **habitat** management plan, and an overall watershed management plan. The development of a watershed management plan as an objective may be more appropriate for the fourth level, **but it is still important to recognize even there that this whole program is based on improved habitat conservation, stewardship and protection, and on cooperation with provincial and local government, not just watershed management.**

*Enhance and restore habitats within watershed management plan*

“Enhance and restore habitats as part of a watershed management plan”. This can be a specific objective for some groups specifically involved in enhancement and restoration. This would include many of the streamkeeper groups for example, but hopefully the “*protection*” emphasis of the New Directions will also attract many groups who are more interested in protection than in enhancement and restoration. DFO could encourage groups to do what they are best at and to do those things that best meet the particular objectives of their group that are compatible with the overall habitat protection, conservation and stewardship program. While restoration has short-term appeal, the real future for habitat lies in protection. Community groups can play a major role here through active participation in local planning processes.

*While restoration has short-term appeal, the future for habitat lies in protection*

*Program encourages local innovation to suit local circumstances*

Additional program objectives for a local group could be a follow-through on the type of guiding principles for a community group that deals with the organization and strength of the community group, (such as membership and support targets, budget objectives, etc.) not simply the technical and administrative requirements for the program as a whole.

The ideas set out here are strictly for discussion. Each group will have its own ideas, and it is really important that the program encourages local innovation to suit local circumstances within some pretty generic guidelines that have a region-wide application.

The kind of vision, principles and objectives set out here are consistent with the vision goals and objectives for the various groups that have been examined in BC and Washington.

*Common elements in visions, guiding principles and objectives*

### **3.3 Structure and Organization**

The levels described do not imply any rigid sense of hierarchy. The different levels and groups will have some common elements in their visions, guiding principles and objectives. That provides the real “glue” that enables them to work together—not some sort of top-down organization chart that sets out a pattern to which everyone must comply. Community groups sometimes pay too much attention to “councils of councils” at the expense of strong functioning local groups. As one long-time community observer noted, “we have too many generals trying to organize too few front line troops”.

*Advantages of cooperative links among groups*

There are obvious advantages to cooperative links among groups at all levels. Communication is one, whereby people can share their experiences and learn from them. There are advantages, too, in creating solidarity among groups in dealing with common issues, without interfering with their autonomy to act separately. Many separate voices speaking to a common theme are usually better than one “spokesperson”.

*Organizational structures work best when they evolve through experience*

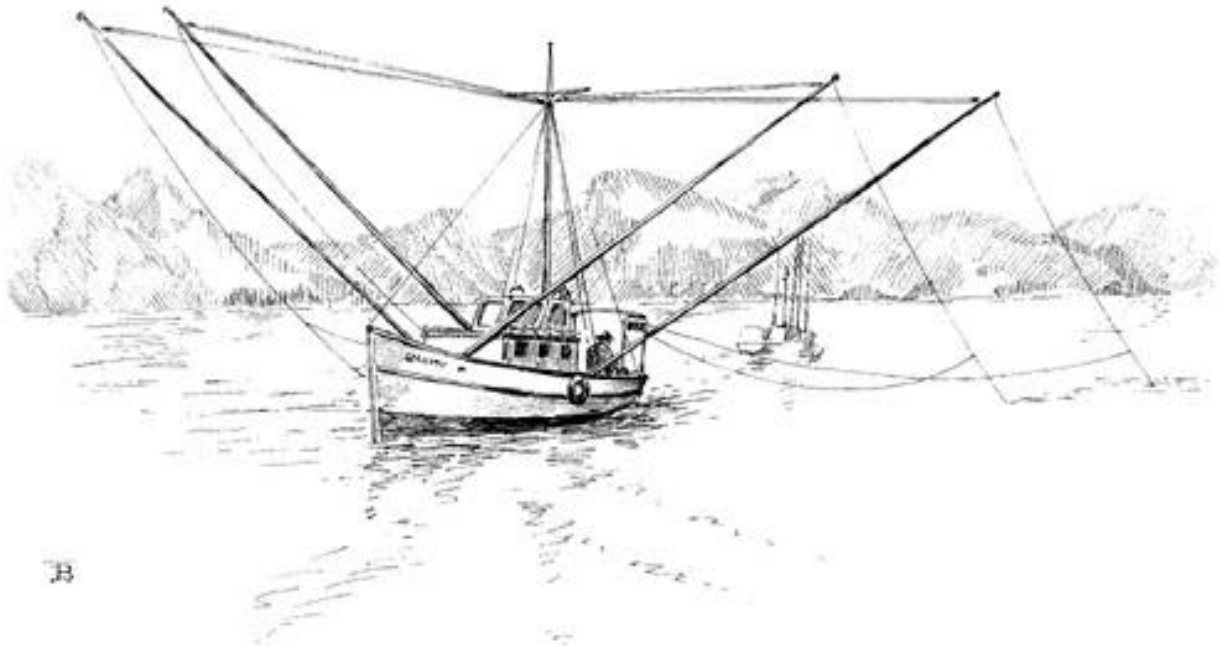
**Organizational structures work best when they evolve through experience, and create only the level of structure needed to enable groups to function and to meet their goals and objectives. This works right from the level of structure that enables individuals to work as a group, through to the type of structure (often only liaison) needed among groups to share their experiences and to address their common interests.**

*People volunteer to get things done*

**Structure and organization for its own sake, is the bane of community organizations. People volunteer to get things done, and all too often top-down structure and organization gets in the way of spontaneity, and the ability to respond quickly to local events and circumstances. Structure and an organizational framework should be built around the actions, successes and failures of the groups, not through the creation of hierarchical bureaucratic pigeon holes into which actions are expected to fit.**

These comments do not detract from the need for some structure and some rules to enable groups to function effectively, but these rules and structures must serve the vision, principles and objectives and actions of the group—not vice versa.

*Figure 1, p.3, 18, sets out a model of the linkages and minimal structure among the different levels of groups involved in fish habitat conservation and stewardship.*



*Salmon troller.*

## 4. PROJECT CRITERIA GUIDELINES

Some of the most useful outcomes from this assignment will be the provision of a series of project criteria guidelines. These could be used in several ways. First, to assist groups that are proposing initiatives under the habitat conservation and stewardship program. Second, the criteria could be used in the selection process. Third, and most important, would be their use for ongoing monitoring. Finally, they would serve as a series of performance indicators to determine whether or not the program is indeed on track and consistent with its original objectives.

*Criteria should cover project applications, selection, monitoring and performance evaluation. A check on accountability*

The criteria list should be comprehensive enough to cover all of the key points that would have to be considered in project applications, selection, monitoring and performance evaluation. In short, **an objective check on accountability**. The criteria guidelines would be set out under a number of groupings, but all of the criteria need not necessarily apply to every project. For example, some criteria might be far less stringent for a Level 1 group interested primarily in habitat enhancement or restoration, than for groups where anticipated outcomes include involvement in governance, and interaction with other resource sectors. The criteria would cover all of these bases.

### 4.1 Community Criteria

Since we are talking about communities, then the first group of criteria would deal with the groups and their relationship to the community—geographic or interest based. This is information that the proponent community groups should provide as a major contribution to the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program. The guidelines set out here pose the appropriate questions that both partners in the process must address.

*Need to judge projects on more than bio-technical basis*

**This group of criteria must receive a high priority. Most community projects to date have been judged on their bio-technical merits rather than on the ability of their proponents to establish themselves as self-sustaining groups that can serve as partners with government in meeting the objectives of the habitat conservation and stewardship program.** This report does not apply these criteria to specific pilot and demonstration projects that have been initiated in the past. However, if that is done, it pinpoints the reasons for both successes and failures and, not surprisingly, given the new approaches that were being tested, both occur.

*New and innovative program can move beyond funding projects that DFO could do any way*

**The objective in focusing on community is to ensure that a new and innovative program can move beyond simply funding projects that have just used people based in the community to do things that DFO does, or could do, any way.** That type of program does not entail innovation, and programs already exist to make use of what is basically an auxiliary workforce, like the various job-creation projects and enhancement, restoration and inventory programs for displaced fisheries workers and most of the “hands-on” projects for community groups. Valuable though these programs may be, they do not meet the ambitious vision and principles set out in the New Directions statement, particularly Principle 12 concerning enhanced community empowerment as it relates to habitat.

*Accountability to the community*

#### 4.1.1 Strength of Community Base

The first and most obvious criterion for the potential success of any community-based group is the extent to which the group has demonstrated its ability to reflect a community interest, concern or need that has genuine community support. That does not imply unanimity, but it should demonstrate that the

*Community base and support is the special element that DFO and government cannot provide*

group is recognized as serving a legitimate role in the community, and, most important, that the group can legitimately reflect a widely supported community view on its particular area of interest. In this case the interest is habitat conservation and stewardship, but the same community criteria apply to any community interest:— health-care, education, economic development, public safety and so on. What this all boils down to is **accountability to the community** that any group claims to represent. It's easy for any organization to use the term "community", either in geographic or interest terms. What is being urged here is that community support can and should be a demonstrable part of projects that DFO supports. This is likely the most important single factor that has to be considered in supporting a community group that is indeed trying to foster a broad community interest in habitat conservation and stewardship. The higher the level of interest group then obviously the higher the level of community commitment needed. **This community base and support is the special element that DFO cannot provide to the process through the traditional governmental/public service function. This is a major thrust of the new program and it must go beyond simply providing an auxiliary service to DFO that replicates the Department's work. New projects should demonstrate the potential for self-sufficiency through the community right from their inception. This does not imply handing government's role over to NGO's, but rather encouraging the strong complementary community role.**

This community support could be measured in terms of the **breadth** of community support—the different types of groups and interests that support the initiative—and also the **depth** of that community support. A fairly straightforward checklist can be developed of the type of organizations that can actually support a community project and this can vary substantially according to the level of the project. The projects that last, however, are those that really do have depth and breadth of community support commensurate with the vision, principles and objectives for the project.

The list would include, but not be limited to, existing conservation organizations, fish and game clubs, naturalists clubs, park societies, schools and other elements of the education system, service clubs, business organizations, chamber of commerce, specific user interest groups for other resources—particularly important in the higher levels of activities. Most important is the link to the local media

#### **4.1.2 Information on the Community Group**

A simple description of the community group under headings similar to those for criteria, would be necessary in developing any form of matrix to meet the same needs as the criteria.

*How does the group function?*

This would include, but not be limited to, the origins of the organization, startup date, type of organization, (informal, registered society, etc.) vision, guiding principles, objectives, executive structure, type of officers, etc.

*Financial Management*

Finances—Percentage of budget from government sources, membership fee structure if any, percentage of income from other community sources, percentage of income from other sources such as foundations.

Expenditures—Wages and salaries, expenses for volunteers, honoraria payments to volunteers or to others. Office expenses, travel expenses, project-related expenses, i.e. costs associated with inventory, mapping, report preparation, etc.

Budgeting process—Are audits carried out? Separate fund-raising or “ways and means” committee? Fund-raising initiatives within the community (other than seeking donations or grants). Fund-raising dinners, raffles, pledges for projects etc.

Services in Kind—Nature of services in kind. Estimated value of such services.

Some of this type of information on the structure of the community group will overlap with some of the actual criteria, but again it is an aid in helping groups provide the kind of information to assist the selection process and ongoing monitoring.

#### 4.1.3 Group Stability

*Community group stability*

A second important community criterion is the actual **stability** of the community group as an organization and the measures that it takes to ensure stability. Is the group well administered? Are there differing factions within the group or the board of directors that influence a group’s effectiveness? Do these factions lead to open rifts and resignations? Does the group ask for and use professional help effectively? How dependent is it on professional or government staff help? Does it have the ability to ensure good communication among its members and the community at large? Does it have a strong enough community support base to ensure continuity of leadership? Is the group adaptive enough to change to meet changing conditions? Does it have the ability to keep focused on its vision, principles and objectives?

There is a danger when you get to the end of the third and into the fourth level of community activity that the habitat orientation of the group might well be lost to other interests. That is why it is important that Levels 1, 2 and 3, with strong support from the fifth level, (the broader region-wide interest group), take a strong habitat conservation message to the fourth Level—the basin or drainage planning forum. Further, DFO support for the fourth Level should still be based primarily on habitat protection conservation and stewardship.

#### 4.1.4 Understanding the Community

*To function effectively, a group should know how the community functions*

To function effectively, a group should know how the community functions. First it should have an understanding of local governance. Who is on Council? Who is the Regional District representative? What local functions are carried out by which body? This will vary from community to community depending largely on the size of the community. Who are the key local officials in planning and engineering? Who is the municipal/regional environmental officer? If there isn’t one, why not? Who is the local MLA, MP and Member of the Senate (if there is one)? How aware are they of habitat issues?

*Who are the key people whose activities influence fish habitat?*

Who are the key people in the government agencies whose activities influence fish habitat: BC Ministries of Environment, Fisheries, Agriculture, Forestry, Highways, Mines, DFO, Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, etc?

What is the record of all of the people described above with respect to Fish Habitat related issues?

*Straightforward understanding of civics as relevant as mapping and inventory*

This is all straightforward civics information that is every bit as relevant to habitat conservation, stewardship, and particularly protection, as mapping and inventory. Moreover, it is information that can be assembled with very little training. Just applied common sense. (Details on processes are covered later).

*Who makes things happen?*

What are the bases of power in the community? Who represent them? How are they involved in local politics? Who are the “key influentials” in the community? In short, who makes things happen (both above and below the surface?)

Do these people have any personal links to fish and fish habitat? e.g. a mayor or a regional district representative who are enthusiastic anglers, a Board of Trade official whose son is a biologist, an engineer in industry who wants to switch to the environmental field, and so on.

How does the local media function? Who are the key players? Do they want stories? Press releases? Interviews? What are their deadlines?

Again, all of this is as relevant to protecting habitat as knowing how to conduct water quality tests, or develop local stream inventories. Not either/or hopefully, but both.

**All the points raised here relate to citizens understanding civics as much as aquatic biology, and using that civic know-how to more effectively back up the biology.**

#### **4.1.5 Financial Responsibility**

**Financial responsibility** is a really important community criterion. **It is absolutely imperative that community groups can demonstrate clear, financial accountability and that the funds that they receive or raise make a genuine contribution to habitat conservation, stewardship and protection.** This is a test of any good community organization. Quite specifically, any existing organization seeking approval for habitat conservation and stewardship projects should provide sound financial statements that demonstrate responsible financial management. The establishment of clear financial goals, the establishment of, and adherence to, budgets and clear evidence that value is being received for funds expended is essential. New groups should at least demonstrate their understanding of these questions and their proposals should demonstrate their capacity to answer them.

**In terms of the “outside” acceptability of programs such as this, the whole financial responsibility element is often the most important.**

*Project should attract funds and resources other than from DFO*

Sound financial management is really important in another context for this “enhanced” community program. **Project proponents should be able to demonstrate their existing or potential ability to attract funds and resources other than from this particular DFO initiative as a part of the overall New Directions rationale, otherwise little has really changed from DFO funded “auxiliary services”.** Some community projects in the past have demonstrated this ability to generate other funding, and services in kind, but some have depended almost entirely on government funds. The need for sources of funding outside of DFO is clearly incorporated in this new program., since the program is looking towards an improved level of self-sufficiency by community groups. That entails an understanding of financial matters, fund-raising, etc. that goes well beyond simply filling out applications for government grants. The most successful community groups are usually those that have some form of membership fee, and recognize that buy-in means more than simply a philosophical buy-in. **Community groups should strive to be as sustainable as the resources that they champion, and not simply survive from grant to grant.**

*Community groups should be as sustainable as the resources that they champion, and not simply survive from grant to grant*



One of the objectives of this program is for community groups to use funds that they receive as leverage to get further financial and service-in-kind commitments from other sources. All of this requires financial know-how and accountability, and where those sources might lie.

*“People-oriented”  
resources are needed*

**In summary, all of this community structure element of the program is a part of the “newness and innovation” and it is particularly important that “people-oriented” resources be applied to help groups in this area.** The earlier work on habitat advocacy in the lower mainland and a long-standing association with community groups, shows that groups often fail because of a failure to pay attention to their basic housekeeping as a community group, and a limited understanding of how their interests fit into the overall community structure. This is where some serious advice could and should be provided through DFO in order to help create “*partnerships to enhance habitat protection and expanded community capacity to steward fish habitat resources*”. Funding for projects has to be contingent on the ability of the proponent group to take care of these housekeeping-type functions and the projects should not be judged solely on their technical merits.

#### 4.2 What Does the Group Do?

A second major category of project criteria involves the actual nature of the work that the group has carried out in the past and intends to carry out in the future.

*Do activities relate to the  
group’s vision, guiding  
principles and objectives?*

It is really important to ensure that the actual activities of the group really do relate to the group’s vision, guiding principles and objectives. For example, project descriptions for important, but still Level 1 type projects for enhancement, restoration and inventory, often include phrases like “sustainability” “information and education”, “long range resource planning”, etc., yet no provision is made to even try to meet those kinds of objectives. They are really used as “throwaway lines” that will hopefully gain support for their projects.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with a project that has a social objective of providing income or training for someone displaced through restructuring. Why, try to pad that perfectly laudable objective with objectives that can’t be met? This debases both the legitimate objective and the stated, yet unachievable, objectives. Many groups that are involved simply in enhancement and restoration projects have objectives that reach beyond enhancement and restoration, but they should not try and use those objectives to justify every single task. Several very successful level two and three projects started at level one. This is where the links between guiding principles, objectives and actual action plans are important.

*Does action undertaken  
actually contribute to fish  
habitat protection,  
conservation and  
stewardship?*

A criteria checklist (*Table 1*), should include identification of the type of projects in which the group is actually involved, the type of project in which it intends to become involved and the manner in which the action undertaken, or proposed, actually **contributes to fish habitat protection and conservation stewardship**. The relationship between that habitat protection and production does not necessarily entail a complicated fish production plan, partly because that production plan is contingent on many other factors such as ocean survival. What it should be able to do is identify the importance of a particular piece of habitat from existing available sources, not necessarily on the basis of detailed inventories. The aim of the game in the protection approach is to identify the kinds of habitats that have to be protected and, equally important, identify the potential activities that could affect those habitats. A major and justifiable

*Identify habitats to be  
protected and activities  
that could affect them*

*Concentrate on habitats providing benefits to the fishery*

criticism of some of DFO approaches to habitat protection in the past has been a concentration of too much effort on habitats that have little likelihood of providing significant benefits to the fishery. This is often a very debatable point, but surely some order of priorities is essential in working with other interests towards some form of cooperative planning.

This category of criteria could also include hatchery production, artificial enhancement and any other direct fish-related activities. The category would also include traditional inventory and mapping in order to properly understand the components of a fish habitat plan.

Community Groups are well positioned to collect good anecdotal information to supplement the more traditional technical inventory type work. Inventory on spawner escapement, presence of juvenile fish, water and flow conditions is often a snapshot. **Observations from people in the community who live or work alongside a stream can be particularly important. Who else can really tell you about the run of a couple of dozen coho up the nearby ditch between Christmas and New Year, or the water discoloration that occurs every Friday afternoon (when the transportation outfit upstream is washing its trucks)?** Both of these are good practical examples of the kind of information that can be gathered from anecdotal sources. Scientists often tend to look down on this type of anecdotal information, but in many places, particularly in more remote areas, this is probably the only information that exists over a period of time and the trick is to assemble it and combine it with the more traditional scientific information with both parties recognizing the validity of both types of data.

Every bit as important as the data, however, is the way in which this approach can actually get the people who live and work in the watershed, and other watershed users, tied in to the “community” ownership aspect of the watershed. Their information is seen to be useful and it is a part of something that is taking place in their community. How often do we hear complaints from farmers about, “these guys from government walking across our land to look at the stream without even having the courtesy to let us know they’re there”? In projects that I was engaged in quite a few years ago on the Salmon river in Langley and to a lesser extent, the Alouette; **once the information available from government and other sources had been assembled, the next key step was a comprehensive watershed survey of watershed residents’ views and the information that they could provide. This was carried out largely by community volunteers with some limited supervision and support. Neighbours were talking to neighbours.** The results of both of those surveys are available and could well serve as models for high priority community group projects today instead of simply sending a group of paid people, some from other communities, to carry out a watershed inventory as a technical exercise by amateurs with a modicum of training. A major goal for the future should be to combine both of these quite appropriate approaches to get the best technical information and local knowledge.

*Get the people who know something about the watershed involved*

An extremely valuable workshop-type exercise is to get the people who know something about the watershed—folks who live there, folks who work there, including folks who’ve retired and the current crop of managers and/or scientists involved in the watershed, and have them work over a good watershed map, or better yet a photo, recording all of their information as they go. Scientific information can be explained and perhaps questioned by people with local experience in the area and the same can happen with the anecdotal information provided.

*Bottom-up approach, where local people see themselves being an integral part of watershed management*

This approach was taken on the Salmon River during open houses, and **folks got a focus by recognizing their house on the large air photo mosaic. That was a key part of the process. One does not have to be a rocket scientist to recognize how the process can gain momentum from that point with the right mix of people present. This really effective bottom-up approach, where local people actually see themselves being an integral part of the process, should be considered as a key start-up task in any new projects that are initiated. The process works from a small stream reach or tributary right up to a large, remote watershed.**

*Approval and regulatory process*

Usually the activities that destroy habitat have to go through some sort of approval and regulatory process. That wasn't the case in the past and we are paying the price for it now with a huge backlog of problems, some of which can be handled through restoration, costly though it is. The New Directions policy puts an emphasis on the protection of habitat and says quite clearly that we "have to get ahead of the curve". Quite simply that means preventing habitat loss from occurring in the first place. This can be done in part through the Fisheries Act, but, unfortunately the Fisheries Act has its greatest strength after damage has occurred, although the "big stick" strength of the Act allows for guidelines and a virtual demand for plans. Referral processes are only a partial solution, and reviews of the referral process over the years demonstrate how referrals contribute little to real habitat planning. The New Directions policy gives a real impetus to habitat planning. Not simply in the broad long-range type of inter-resource planning, but through understanding all of the various planning mechanisms that already exist and ensure that habitat is incorporated as a key part of them. If the existing mechanisms are so weak as to simply be a licence to abuse the environment, then a major task for a community group is to change that, if it really wants to "get ahead of the curve".

*Referral processes are only a partial solution*

*User and community groups often leave this involvement in process to government*

**For too long user groups and community groups have generally left far too much of this involvement in processes to government, particularly to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.** Working relationships between DFO and provincial, and to a lesser extent, municipal government, have been in place for years, but they tend to ebb and flow with the politics of the day and the inevitable sparring among the different levels of government. In fairness, it must be pointed out that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has the luxury of being able to focus on a single resource with a pretty strong piece of legislation, while the province has the responsibility for all of the activities that have an adverse impact on habitat. It is beyond the scope of this assignment to delve deeply into the details, and perhaps it would not be a good idea to do it, anyway, in a public report. Local government has a role too, but it is still, after all, a creature of the provincial government through the Municipal Act.

*Downloading?*

When DFO staff deal with issues at the municipal level that affect fish habitat and expect the municipalities to assume a greater level of responsibility, the federal government is accused of downloading responsibility. The municipalities take precisely the same position with respect to the provincial government—with some justification. Over time, perhaps fairly soon, this whole question can best be addressed by community groups acting in some kind of unified fashion so that the obstacles to the kind of cooperation that everyone seems to want are properly understood and creative solutions can be found.

*Community groups can address "downloading" question in a creative and constructive manner*

**There is a real role for community groups, particularly the free-standing citizens' groups, to become much more involved in this whole "downloading" question in a creative and constructive manner, particularly through their direct involvement on behalf of the resource but not representing a government agency in all of the mechanisms that the**

*What do groups do with all the information they assemble?*

*What is the planning process in the community?*

*Restoration taking place in watersheds where there is no guarantee that the problems that led to the need for restoration are not continuing*

*The Land Resource Management Plan's (LRMP) formal attempt to address longer range forest planning issues at a forest district-wide level*

*An advisory process for the Ministry of Forests*

*Other agencies are holding open houses and similar communications initiatives to explain their actions*

**different levels of government have set up to deal with the application and approvals for all of the activities that affect fish habitat. Until now, much of the community group effort has been directed towards the assembly of more information, but what are they going to do with all that information? It might be interesting and fun to assemble, but what next?** The first step following on from the criteria suggested earlier, (to really understand how the community works) is to understand the processes through which it works in a formal manner. These would include: What is the planning process in the community? Is there a formal planning advisory committee in the community? If so, how can the interests of fish habitat protection best be represented? If there isn't a process, why not?

**The types of processes will be different for urban and more settled areas than they will be for rural areas and the back country.**

### 4.3 Understanding of Processes

The next category of criteria moves on to an understanding of the actual actions and processes that have a bearing on fish habitat. Restoration projects are taking place quite regularly in watersheds where there is absolutely no guarantee that the kind of problems that led to the need for restoration in the first place are not continuing. A key recommendation in the Living Blueprint for Salmon Habitat says, "*with respect to the habitat restoration initiatives of both governments restoration work on a given watercourse only be authorized when the causes of habitat degradation have been addressed*". This recommendation should guide much of the work funded by HRSEP and Fisheries Renewal BC.

#### 4.3.1 Rural/Wilderness

These processes will vary according to the degree of settlement. Rural areas will involve processes related to resource use and extraction such as agriculture, forestry, mining, hydro development, wildlife, tourism, and so on. Processes will also include infrastructure issues such as transportation. Most of these sectors include some opportunity to become involved in a formal planning exercise, although that varies from resource to resource. The Land Resource Management Plans (LRMP) for forestry are a good formal attempt to address longer range planning issues at a forest district-wide level. The process is clearly an advisory process for the Ministry of Forests, and the focus is still very much on the traditional mandate for forestry, but a real effort is made to incorporate closely-related concerns such as fish, wildlife and recreation as well as other resource uses and questions that are affected by forestry decisions. For other resources the opportunity for community or individual involvement is focused more on specific projects. although, increasingly, other agencies, such as BC Hydro, BC Ministry of Highways, BC Parks, to name but a few, are holding open houses and similar communications initiatives to explain their actions and seek public support. Frequently these are held on an issue or project by project basis, with the early 1998 consultation by DFO on the coho crisis a good specific example. But increasingly these processes are opening up and providing opportunities for broader involvement in longer range planning. BC Hydro water-use plans are a good example. The type of approach set out at level 4 (inter-sector planning) earlier in this report could help a more open process evolve.

In the 1970s the Ministry of Forests initiated a coordinated planning initiative that began to open up discussion of cross-sectoral questions. It was not perfect, but unfortunately it became a victim of government restraint in the early 1980s and nothing really as comprehensive emerged to replace it until the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) processes for different parts of the

*Long range processes need milestones to measure progress*

*Difficult to solve problems that were a century in the making in the timespan between elections*

*Still locked into institutions that do not necessarily reflect changing resource values and changing public expectations*

*Guidance from informed community participation can span the narrower, politically-driven time frames that governments impose upon themselves*

*Official Community Plans are important for public involvement*

province. These really tried to achieve a lot, (probably far too much), in a short period of time, rather than simply continue with the longer range ongoing planning of the type that the coordinated resource-planning approach took. One key to success seems to be to ensure that the longer range processes set important milestones at which pre-established objectives are met, or a good reason is provided as to why they have not been met. Too frequently these longer range planning initiatives, especially when they are consensus based, do not follow such milestones and, in the meantime, ongoing resource extraction continues, and keeps on moving the goalposts for realistic planning. There are no easy answers. The CORE process tried to set some very tight time deadlines and did a fairly good job of adhering to them. Unfortunately the time deadlines were much too tight for such an ambitious process. It is difficult to really come up with solutions to problems that were a century in the making in the brief timespan between elections, laudable though the objectives might be.

Similar problems emerge in dealing with project by project initiatives where the planning or consultative processes are just too limited in their scope. There seems to be a general will from the public, from some parts of the private sector, and from some government agencies, for improved processes to resolve past and future problems, and provide more openness in resource planning. Again, there are no easy answers because we are still locked into institutions such as legislation and regulations with resource rights and property ownership based on them that do not necessarily reflect changing resource values, changing public expectations, the impacts of global economies and so on. All of this is coupled with a fragmentation among resource agencies and among governments that is only gradually being addressed. The New Directions Initiative from DFO makes a useful contribution to that evolving process, and the process will inevitably be an evolving one, as the approach through CORE and the follow up to it, or lack thereof, is demonstrating. That does not mean to say that processes like that are necessarily flawed. **We simply have to recognize that there are no instant quick-fixes. Problems that are a long time in their creation are hard to fix in a hurry. Fisheries and fish habitat are no exception, but outside factors such as climate change, coupled with cumulative impacts from habitat loss and over-fishing create the kind of urgency now being encountered. The same is true for other resource sectors, particularly forestry. The kind of guidance that comes from informed community participation in these processes can span the narrower, politically-driven time frames that governments frequently impose upon themselves.**

#### 4.3.2 Settled and Urbanized Areas

At the local and regional government levels the broader-scale resource processes described above may still be important, but there is a strong emphasis too on land development patterns for industry and settlement, and all of the infrastructure that goes along with it. Again there are a different set of specific opportunities for community involvement in these questions. Official Community Plans are an important step for public involvement. They can be more open than for rural-type resource activities for the straight logistic reason of people living closer together. But perhaps more important, local government with a much shorter “space” between voters and those seeking their votes, can be far more responsive to community and individual influences.

Community groups and individuals interested in habitat could play a far stronger role in these urban and settled area processes. Local officials complain, justifiably, that groups are quick to protest against a particular development or local government action after those same protesters have ignored or failed to recognize the quite legitimate approval processes in which the public could become engaged. The development community and others who influence urban

*A level playing field for planning would serve local government, every resource sector, and fish habitat*

*Community groups more effective if they act parallel to, but at arms length from, government agencies*

*Government officials and stakeholders have different roles*

change know how to take part in these processes. Many of them would welcome a more level playing field so that they don't get stuck with after-the-fact protests. A level playing field with the community habitat interests represented by the community and not just government officials would serve both local government, developers in every resource sector, and fish habitat needs. Community groups at both the urban and the rural level could be far more effective if they were acting parallel to, but at arms length from, government agencies, because governments have a different role to play and local governments are frequently mistrustful of senior governments.

The LRMP and LRUP processes for the Ministry of Forests are a good case in point. Forestry interests, fish and wildlife interests, agricultural interests, and a range of interests are represented by government people. The direct stakeholders participate on parallel paths, usually using the same database, but having separate roles in the process. The same is not true for DFO officials in a number of the LRMP processes that I have either been engaged in or am familiar with. DFO officials can probably function best with their counterparts from other governmental resource agencies at a technical and administrative level in the process. The specific resource interest users—the stakeholders—have a different role.

A community group that is going to be really effective should understand what these processes are and either demonstrate their awareness of the processes in their project proposals or demonstrate their ability to find out what the processes are. Once again it is a question of common sense “civics”, where informed community people can perform a role in the whole resource development, allocation and planning process that simply cannot be filled anywhere near as well by a government official. It does not involve turning people into amateur planning technicians in the same way we try to turn people into amateur biotechnicians. Rather it encourages and helps people to play out their roles as citizens in a public process. Just as other resource users use the system to protect and fight for their interests, those who care for fish habitat should be playing by the same rules.

As a final comment on the whole element of process, some community groups, including some that have received support from DFO and some of the newly-emerging proposals, seem to be concerned with trying to create a new level of governance without looking really hard at the existing processes to see how effectively they could be used, and simply seeing how they could be changed as needed in the interests of fish habitat protection, conservation and stewardship. The old maxim, “if it ain't broke don't fix it” should be tried before we try to create yet another level of governance in a society that frequently complains that it is governed too much.

*“If it ain't broke don't try to fix it”*

*New initiative is a part of rebuilding the fishery so fish production is important*

*Need for a renewed focus on fish production rather than on “feel-good” projects that just keep their proponents happy and busy*

#### **4.4 Group's Past Performance or Anticipated Performance as it Relates Directly to Increased Fish Production**

Comments have been made earlier in the report about past projects focusing on where people are located rather than on the locations where there is important fish habitat and fish production. Naturally there is value in having some projects as educational and public information type projects, where an ability to explain how habitat protection, enhancement or restoration works, may be as important to the particular location as the actual capacity to produce fish. But there has to be a sense of balance here. After all, **this new initiative is a part of an overall program aimed at rebuilding the fishery resource, so fish production must be the important component of it. There is a need for a renewed focus on fish production rather than on “feel-good” projects that keep their proponents happy and busy.**

*Already an awareness of the need to protect fish habitat. Need to publicize successful projects that actually protect and conserve important habitats*

*Lever support from other resource sectors*

A strong argument can be made that there is already a high awareness of the need to protect fish habitat, and that can now best be demonstrated through publicizing successful projects that actually protect, conserve and provide stewardship for important habitats as measured in terms of fish production. This could be organized in a number of ways in terms of the relative strength of the species benefiting from particular habitat conservation, protection and stewardship initiatives; the volume of fish produced; the likely beneficiaries of those fish; the estimated cost of protection, stewardship and conservation; and/or, where appropriate, enhancement and restoration. Some good criteria used by HRSEP can be adapted for this purpose. This, in turn, could lead to a relatively simple assessment of costs and benefits, without necessarily basing the entire approach purely on benefits and costs.

One further important dimension of assessing costs is to establish the benefits to sectors other than fisheries, and using this as an important element of leverage for support from other resource sectors, certainly at the Level 4 level, but possibly at Levels 2 and 3.



*Jones Creek spawning channel, 1950's.*

**Table 1****COMMUNITY PROJECT CRITERIA GUIDELINES****I. Group Structure**

1. Origins—Startup Date
2. Area of Operation
3. Type of Group—Registered Society, etc.
4. Vision
5. Principles
6. Objectives
7. Membership Structure
8. Executive Structure

**II. Group Finances & Administration**

9. Sources of Funding
10. Membership Fees
11. Government
12. Other Sources
13. Budgeting—Planning and Audit
14. Wages and Salaries
15. Expenses
16. Services in Kind
17. Overall Financial Accountability

**III. Community Base**

18. Breadth and Depth—Type of Support Generated
19. Conservation Organizations
20. Service Clubs
21. Educational Interests
22. Business Organizations
23. Chamber of Commerce, etc.
24. Resource User Interest Groups
25. Media

**IV. Group Stability**

26. Is the Group well administered?
27. Are there factions?
28. Use of paid help
29. Use of Government help
30. Continuity of Leadership
31. Adaptability to Change
32. Focus on Vision, Principles and Objectives

**V. Understanding The Community**

33. Awareness of local governance and its functions and their relevance to habitat
34. Awareness of local officials
35. Awareness of other levels of governance (provincial, federal)
36. Awareness of officials in all agencies related to habitat and their roles
37. Understanding of the community power base (Who makes things happen?)
38. How does the local media function?
39. How does habitat stewardship relate to other community concerns?

**VI. What Does The Group Do?**

40. Type of projects undertaken and type of projects proposed
41. Enhancement Restoration and Stewardship
42. Technical Inventory
43. Use of local knowledge

**VII. Understanding The Processes**

44. Awareness of processes that influence habitat
45. Involvement in those processes
46. Community Plans, etc.
47. Broader resource use processes, LRMP etc.

**VIII. Group's Past And Anticipated Performance**

48. Projects undertaken
49. Results of completed project
50. Perception of group and its performance by community and partners

**IX. Contribution To Fish Habitat Conservation, Protection And Stewardship**

51. Specific achievements

**X. Overall Contribution To Fish Production**

52. Measurable contribution to fish production



## 5. DFO SUPPORT

### *DFO support*

What type of support would be required from DFO sources to assist potentially effective groups at each of the levels described earlier? Particular attention should be paid to support that could or should be used as leverage in getting support commitments from other governmental resource sectors and non-governmental sources. This includes a review of the existing funding sources and an analysis of the options for the most effective use, including integration in shared fish habitat and stewardship objectives. Much of the background information required for this section has been covered elsewhere, most particularly in the project criteria section, that would help identify “potentially effective groups”.

### *The provision of technical information*

The **first** type of support is clearly the provision of technical information. This was covered in the 1997 advocacy report for the lower mainland. There is invariably too much of a rush by groups to generate new information, rather than in making a first class attempt to assemble the information that is already available from DFO and other technical sources and matching that information with the best information that can be obtained from other community sources. DFO should be allocating specific resources to this end to ensure that community groups have the best information applicable to their particular areas of interest. This should be one of the major criteria in selecting stewardship coordinators and habitat auxiliaries. **The habitat conservation and stewardship program has to find a real balance between the type of inventory and mapping information generated through both job creation and community group efforts and the associated training, and the volume of information that in many instances already exists. All too frequently the main problems in trying to protect habitat based on technical data is not the lack of technical data, but the ability to use it effectively within existing processes for development approvals and for any activities that affect fish habitat.** This has been covered in the Lower Mainland Advocacy Report and elsewhere in this report. One of the key recommendations in this assessment will be to implement the recommendations made in that 1997 lower mainland report, on a province-wide basis. (*See Appendix 1*).

### *Problem is often not a lack of technical data, but the ability to use it effectively*

### *Assist community groups to function as more than information gatherers*

A **second** important level of help that could be provided by DFO would be in the whole area of **assisting community groups to function at a community group level rather than concentrate solely on the bio-technical competency of the groups.** A somewhat parallel example right within DFO lies in the way in which the department has approached recreational fisheries. The department realized in the 1970s that recreational fisheries did not fit well with the traditional way in which the department had done business for a volume and fish quality based approach to commercial fisheries. Recreational fisheries depended on experiences based on fish, not simply on a volume of quality fish. Even before DFO established a recreational fisheries division in the Pacific region, it created a position for an internal advisor on recreational fisheries who had a good understanding of the recreational fishery and a good working relationship with those who were engaged in it. The first appointment was a long-time outdoor journalist and he was followed by a former executive director of the BC Wildlife Federation, who had been effective as an advocate for conservation causes, including recreational fisheries. This position has been valuable in providing advice internally to DFO on how to deal with an area of expertise to which it was new and to explain DFO to the recreational fishing community.

### *How to address a new area of DFO interest*

*Need for people with a good working understanding of community structure and community groups*

*Community involvement is an art as much as a science*

*Volunteer burnout*

*Assistance to help groups become self-sustaining organizations*

*Flexible specialized assistance, will likely lead to more effective use of limited funds*

*Funding should be strongly oriented to the initial vision and guiding principles of this initiative*

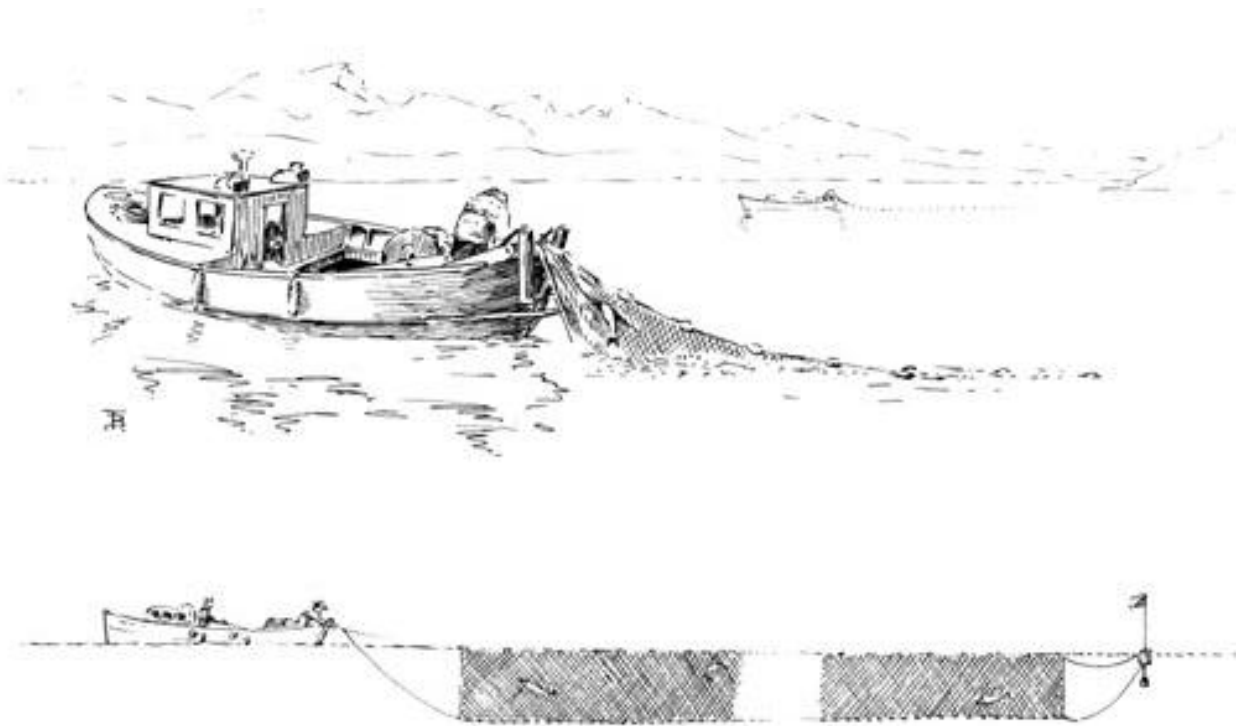
*HCSP must not be seen as a “cash cow” to support other programs*

The organizational moves to create a recreational fisheries division followed this gradual easing into a new area. Throughout its history DFO has gradually added people to provide new types of expertise, initially through consulting services and later through staff positions. As an organization initially oriented towards regulation and enforcement, it recognized the need for biologists, then engineers and then economists. This whole new area of really involving communities requires people with a good understanding of community structure and community groups, not in an abstract academic sense, but on the basis of practical working experience. DFO has made limited use of people with this type of experience as consultants mainly at an academic rather than a practical working understanding level. The habitat conservation and stewardship initiative has already retained consultants with these skills and understandings. These kinds of skills need to be made available to the community coordinators and the habitat auxiliaries, through assistance in training, and probably every bit as effectively through some kind of region-wide advice, in a “trouble-shooting” capacity. This is an area where experienced people who are retired and perhaps only want to work for a limited amount of time could provide invaluable advice to the Department based on their experience. **This whole area of community involvement is an art as much as a science, although there is some excellent social science to back the art up that is every bit as valid as much of the science we use to manage fish.**

A **third** level of assistance would be the provision of funds and administrative help to community groups to enable them to run the “nuts and bolts” of becoming effective community organizations. **Volunteers will donate all kinds of time to projects, but volunteer burnout often kicks in when, in addition to their time, they are having to pay for the stationery, phone calls, attendance at meetings, secretarial services, etc. If the aim of the game is to produce strong community groups, then some initial assistance to help groups organize themselves as local self-sustaining organizations would be in order.** This may seem like something of a contradiction, but some seed money will go a long way to help avoid volunteer burnout and the equally difficult problem of dependence on hired help. This kind of support can often be generated very much at the local level through services in kind being provided by local businesses and agencies, and sometimes all a community group needs is some advice and “hand-holding” on how to obtain that kind of support. **Funding should not be concentrated solely on salaries for the new habitat auxiliary and stewardship coordinator positions. Much more flexibility is needed to provide groups with specialized assistance, including trouble shooting. With careful controls, this approach to funding will likely lead to far more effective use of limited funds.**

On the question of **financial support** to cover the above programs and this initiative as a whole, **funding should be very strongly oriented to the initial vision of this initiative and its guiding principles.** The focus is habitat conservation and stewardship and in order to get ahead of the curve, this clearly implies habitat protection. Other sections of this report describe programs that already exist to take care of much of the effort needed for restoration, enhancement and some inventory and training. The social goals and objectives of those programs are different from the guiding principles and objectives for the habitat conservation and stewardship initiative. This is not to make any value judgment as to which is more important—both are important. An important point is to ensure that the new budgets for this program remain focused and are not diluted through being spread among other parallel programs. Particular care must be taken to avoid seeing HCSP as a “cash cow” to support other programs. HCSP started out with a specific purpose and identity beyond existing DFO programs and practices. This was because existing efforts were

not getting habitat protection “ahead of the curve”. It would be hard to justify funds for this “New and Innovative” initiative being diverted elsewhere. Understanding the distinction among the different types of programs as set out in the section of this report on parallel programs is important at this stage and understanding those distinctions will be absolutely essential if self-sustaining community groups are to emerge, able to act as partners with DFO.



*Gillnetters.*

## 6. PARALLEL PROGRAMS

The terms of reference include a review of parallel habitat programs.

*HCSP has a specific niche in overall habitat activity*

*Systems only work well when their different facets are properly understood and integrated*

*HCSP complements and adds to other fishery and habitat initiatives*

This report tries to identify the specific niche in overall habitat activity that the New Directions habitat conservation and stewardship initiative would occupy. **It seems clear that a primary intent of the initiative is to give protection a higher profile and ensure that the habitats that have been protected are maintained through sound stewardship. This is the really “new and innovative” element of habitat management/ protection/ conservation/ stewardship/ enhancement/restoration for community groups.** This report has already alluded to the blurring and lack of distinction among goals and objectives for different types of programs, such as enhancement, data collection, restoration and now the mandate for protection, conservation and stewardship. More important yet is the blurring between the complementary roles of government and community groups. Systems only work well when their different facets are properly understood and integrated.

When all of the foregoing points are considered carefully in the context of the specific niche for this New Directions program and in the context of the other programs that are parallel to it, then the relationship between the different programs in terms of visions, guiding principles, and goals becomes particularly important. This blurring occurs because of a lack of clarity, even among the terms that are used here: “community”, “sustainability”, “conservation”, “ecosystem based”, and so on. These terms, when used without clarity, enable them to be all things to all people, and their real currency and meaning gets lost. **Hopefully this exercise will provide some clarity and ensure that the Habitat, Conservation and Stewardship program, other DFO initiatives (particularly HRSEP), Fisheries Renewal BC and programs funded from other sources, are indeed complementary. In discussions with people involved in these parallel programs they all seem to be agreed that there is real merit in the type of clarification discussed here and there is also agreement that the project criteria guidelines that are being developed could be used for other programs and by other agencies.** This, in itself, could help materially in ensuring that different projects with different types of rationale can be complementary and contribute to the overall goal of rebuilding fish stocks and the fishery opportunities associated with them, while ensuring the long-term sustainability and conservation of the fishery resource.

The following programs have been considered briefly in this part of the report, **although a more thorough review is needed beyond the scope of this assessment.**

1. DFO Habitat Restoration and Salmon Enhancement Program.
2. Employment Initiatives through Human Resources and Development Commission, specifically the programs aimed at habitat restoration.
3. Community development through Western Economic Diversification—these are initiated primarily through Community Futures Development Corporations.
4. First Nations programs including DIAND community economic and development programs.
5. Fisheries Renewal BC
6. Other programs outside of government, such as support from private foundations, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, and possibly BC Conservation Foundation.

*A number of parallel programs are geared to providing employment for people who have been displaced by commercial fishery cutbacks*

A careful review of all of these programs and the kind of projects that can be carried out under other sources of funding, shows that these parallel programs (with the possible exception of HRSEP) are geared heavily to the social objective of providing employment and other forms of assistance to people who have been displaced by the commercial fishery. The DIAND program for First Nations has a broader goal of providing economic opportunities for First Nations, but again the emphasis is still on training, job creation, and improving self-sufficiency for First Nations' involvement in fishery matters.

*Programs addressing fish habitat are being addressed for different purposes*

While most of the programs outside of DFO refer to communities and the community base, apart from a potential with Fisheries Renewal BC, and non-government funding sources, the overall vision, principles and objectives, where they are set out, are not the same as those for the habitat conservation and stewardship initiative. This does not entail any value judgment; it simply means that programs addressing the same broad, general question of fish habitat are being addressed for different purposes.

*The limited funding for the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program should be concentrated on the objectives of that program*

There is a strong potential link between HCSP and HRSEP, which could be a source of funding for community HCSP projects. It is my understanding that these links are being pursued internally by DFO.

Most importantly, the limited funding for the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program should be concentrated on the objectives of that program and in no way be eroded through being seen as a source of funding for other programs with tenuous links to the real purpose of the habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program.

*There is room for cooperation among programs, and the Community Criteria suggested in this report could be a good starting point*

Clearly there is room for cooperation among programs, and the Community Criteria suggested in this report could be a good starting point. However, until the New Initiatives Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program has clearly established its sense of direction, it would be premature to consider programs outside of DFO as a vehicle for program delivery for HCSP projects.

## 7. OUTREACH TO AREAS NOT COVERED BY COMMUNITY GROUPS

*How can HCSP reach new areas?*

*HCSP will be judged by its “product”*

*Need for some free ranging people to generate interest in areas where habitat has few champions*

*At times DFO must lead and not simply follow community direction*

*Community efforts have been focused where there are people interested in fish rather than on areas where significant fish production can be protected and maintained*

*Correcting small-scale habitat losses at a local level has built a base of community action and support*

This section of the report addresses how the intent of all of the points raised thus far could be applied to those areas where an existing vision and habitat conservation and stewardship delivery mechanism does not exist. **This is a major question that has a major bearing on the direction and potential success of the HCSP, particularly in terms of fish production. Interesting though the “process” might be, HCSP will be judged by its “product”.**

The background to all of this will already have been covered in part elsewhere, particularly in the section on geographic perspectives. Realistically the big challenge here is to match the “people interest” capabilities with respect to fish habitat, with the actual production realities. This is a challenging and exciting prospect that will likely best be served by an outreach function that is a part of the Department’s central regional contribution to this program. One thing learned from the Washington State experience is that the watershed stewards are still State or County employees, and their job really is to act as a sounding board within the community, to bring community interests together with technical or other advice and support that the more senior levels of government can provide. In some instances there are local community councils etc., and there is a strong liaison with those. This is not to suggest at this point that this is the way the community steward coordinators should be operating, however there is a real need to have some free ranging people, probably under contract, to deal with the more complex question of generating interest in areas where community support is limited often by straight geographic isolation. At times DFO must lead and not simply follow community direction. For example, just how can we get the beneficiaries from sockeye production—the processors, the seine fleet and other commercial gear types—on the “front line” in resource planning for the Chilco or Horsefly Rivers? Some cursory attempts have been made at this but without much success. Some gains have been made through the Forest Ministry, Land and Resource Use Process for recreational fisheries where local fishery users are dealing directly with local users but commercial interests have not been addressed. There are no neat and tidy answers here, other than the fact that there is clearly a challenge that has to be met.

**A major conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is the extent to which community efforts thus far have been focused on those areas where there are people and groups interested in fish rather than on areas where significant fish production can be protected and maintained. Most of the efforts to date have really focused on enhancement and restoration, and generally in populated areas. None of this is the least bit surprising. It has simply been a rather drawn out evolutionary step that had to follow the path that it has.**

Correcting small-scale habitat losses at a local level and taking “bite-sized” achievable steps to improve and maintain limited fish production at a community level has built a base of community action and support. Most of this has been achieved through tangible, hands-on activities like stream cleanup, restoration through bank stabilization and the like, and through small hatcheries and in-stream production improvements. People could readily relate to those measures, and, with some outside help, the actions could be community-based.

Gradually community members recognized the need to better understand “their” streams and moved on to habitat inventory and mapping. This has been a major thrust for streamkeeper efforts, job creation, and similar training. But what is the purpose of simply assembling bio-technical information at a community level, and how is it going to be used? Is the right kind of information being assembled? Could communities gather different and perhaps more relevant information to help them protect and maintain habitat? Are these efforts being focused in the right places?

*The New Directions Initiative provides the framework for a new and improved approach to community action, particularly for protection*

These questions have been raised in earlier assessments of community programs. They are being reinforced in this analysis because the timing is now right to address them properly. **The New Directions Initiative provides the framework for a new and improved approach to community action, particularly for protection. This in turn opens up the whole question of community-based initiatives in areas where communities are either non-existent or where there is a limited interest in fish use, and where the protection of the good natural habitat we already have is a far higher priority than enhancement or restoration.**

*Existing community interest is largely focused on the interests and needs of the people already involved*

This is perhaps the major challenge and opportunity for this new program. **Somehow we have to build on the existing community interest that is largely focused on the interests and needs of the people already involved—worthwhile though that is—and extend that interest and support to high production areas where fish habitat and fish use have few champions.** The Geographic Context (2.3) earlier in this report, sets out the problem. How do we focus the interests of the coastal fish-using communities where local production is limited, on the areas where the fish that those communities use are actually produced? How can we direct the efforts of strong, existing community groups who operate in areas of very limited production, to systems outside of their limited geographic community? While everyone talks a lot about an ecosystem approach, they usually limit that to their particular geographic concerns. The challenge is to accept the ecosystem realities of the coast-wide community. This will not be met by devoting more resources yet to existing “processes” in relatively unproductive areas.

*How can the efforts of strong, existing community groups in areas of very limited production be directed to systems outside of their geo-graphic community?*

Obviously this is not an either/or situation. The geographic-based approach that meets community interest, local production and local employment needs, just has to be expanded to include the broader region-wide realities that cannot be addressed through strictly local initiatives in the wrong places.

*DFO should retain a strong regional presence*

While the new habitat conservation and stewardship program emphasizes a decentralized approach, **this whole question of outreach to new areas not yet served by community groups is one area where DFO should retain a strong regional presence at least initially. If the real question is a region-wide matching of fish user interest, and community group strengths with production areas, this just has to be carried out and administered at a regional level.**

While the specific details of an action program go beyond the scope of this analysis, an outreach program somewhat similar to the **initial steps** taken in the Greenways Outreach Program (1997-98) is required. Specialists who understand communities and fisheries habitat coast-wide should be identifying the opportunities to bring together the fish users, existing community groups, knowledgeable individuals, and the unserved areas.

*Focus on areas lacking community support*

In the author's experience this is completely achievable. During the first stage of the Greenways Outreach, I was repeatedly asked by people with fish habitat interests why the focus was on Greenways rather than on fish and wildlife habitat. They rightly saw Greenways as just one tool for protecting habitat, and did not, as one person put it, wish to "dilute their habitat protection efforts". That is something that can be built on.

*Outreach workers have to operate proactively as catalysts to get things started*

In order for what is suggested here to work, outreach workers have to operate proactively as catalysts to get things started, help community groups build their strengths and recognize the ongoing type of support that is required. Most important is to know where and how to back off once a process is working.

The big difference between what is suggested here and the Greenways Outreach effort is that the emphasis here would be on fish habitat, and would involve a much broader geographic community.

To go much further at this stage would require a level of detail well beyond the scope of this analysis. However, developing the details of a program as suggested here should be a major and immediate priority.

*DFO has an over-arching stewardship role that is not solely dependent on community initiatives*

The principal elements of an outreach program should include:

1. A recognition that DFO has an over-arching stewardship role that is not solely dependent on community initiatives. The Department has to provide initial leadership in areas not yet served by community action—areas that include some of the highest existing and potential production.

*Many geographic based groups and the streams they serve may have reached their potential in terms of fish production*

2. A recognition that many geographic based groups and the streams they serve may have reached their potential in terms of local production. These groups should be encouraged to consider broadening their horizons and look to systems that need, but lack, habitat stewardship.

*Coast wide interest-based community groups*

3. A recognition that one major approach to stewardship in remote areas could be through coast wide interest based community groups.

*A network of experienced part-time mentors*

4. A recognition that a network of experienced part-time mentors might be developed to provide a flexible approach to initially meeting the needs for areas not yet served by community stewardship or local champions.



## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Comments are provided as a context for each recommendation.

The recommendations fall into two groups: while both groups are drawn directly from the analysis, the second set of recommendations involves more general observations on the habitat conservation and stewardship element of the New Directions Initiative.

### **Comments (1)**

*The intent here is that habitat protection should now be added to enhancement, restoration and inventory community projects.*

*The New Directions Initiative makes protection a key element of stewardship. It commits DFO to “Working with communities to enhance their input into the decision-making process” in the context of “fundamental changes” and “we can no longer accept the status quo .... we must get ahead of the curve”.*

*This is new and innovative. Until now there was uncertainty about DFO openly encouraging advocacy. New Directions clarifies this uncertainty.*

### **Comments (2)**

*This is a virtual repetition of the principal recommendation from the 1997 report: “Community Groups, Stream Stewardship and Fish Habitat Advocacy”. There was some uncertainty at that time about advocacy. The New Directions Initiative removes that uncertainty.*

### **Recommendation 1:**

**It is recommended that the protection of existing habitat be given a high priority in the whole direction of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program.**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**It is recommended that DFO incorporate a program to raise the profile of constructive advocacy as an essential element of all of its streamkeeper and stewardship functions under the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program.**

**Specifically DFO should ensure that objective information on the role of governments at all levels with respect to habitat protection, including local government, becomes a significant part of DFO-supported training and support for community programs. This information should receive at least the same emphasis that bio-physical information has received thus far.**

**Comments (3)**

*The 1997 recommendations were aimed at the Lower Mainland, streamkeepers groups, streamkeeper training and the urban setting. Those recommendations are valid now on a region-wide basis and extend to a much broader spectrum of community groups and resource issues than those being considered in the Lower Mainland in 1996/97. The details are in Appendix 2. A specific group within DFO could be established to deal with the details of those 1997 recommendations and their regional application.*

**Comments (4)**

*This move would help in achieving the intent of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program. The help that has been provided thus far on the bio-technical aspects of habitat conservation should continue along with help in understanding the geo-political and administrative aspects of land and water management with respect to habitat. Community groups are going to need some training and ongoing help.*

*Just as help has been provided help on biophysical and technical questions help will now be required to enable community groups to become independent, self-sufficient and able to address New Directions.*

*The project criteria guidelines (Chapter 4) provides a framework within which advice and support could be provided.*

**Comments (5)**

*A proposed set of criteria guidelines is perhaps the most important practical outcome of this analysis. It can ensure consistency and continuity for the program and for participants and enables the program to stay on track with its goals. It should lead to an open, transparent process to assist groups in their applications, and enable advisors to focus their assistance to community groups. It permits an objective evaluation of projects and a framework within which project results can be well documented as a part of a permanent information base.*

**Recommendation 3:**

**It is recommended that the recommendations from the 1997 report: “Community Groups, Stream Stewardship and Fish Habitat Advocacy” now receive serious considerations as the basis for a series of actions to be undertaken by the Habitat and Enhancement Branch as an essential ingredient of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Initiative.**

**Recommendation 4:**

**It is recommended that DFO take positive action to help groups function better as community organizations by providing more specific help and support to those groups to enable them to evolve as independent bodies, working closely with DFO and other levels of governments in exercising their real responsibilities as community groups, rather than simply functioning as an auxiliary service to ongoing DFO activity.**

**Recommendation 5:**

**It is recommended that the project criteria guidelines set out in section 4 of this report be adopted as a framework within which community projects are selected, administered, monitored and evaluated.**

**Comments (6)**

*A framework for this is set out in the criteria and in the body of the text.*

*When we think of programs as being “new and innovative”; it does not necessarily mean starting from scratch. Community groups have not been involved as much as they could be in the forums and processes that exist for making resource management and development decisions that have an impact on habitat.*

*Community groups acting on behalf of citizens fulfill a very different role in these forums than the roles of government officials. It might be advisable to have a working group deal with this, in concert with a follow-up to work that has already been done by on the BC Ministry of Forests, Land Resource Management Programs (LRMP).*

**Comments (7)**

*Through the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program, DFO will be entering into agreements with interest groups in areas covered primarily by the mandate of the Department. These programs and agreements involve a substantial outlay of financial and human resources. There has to be far more practical and legal clarity with respect to many of the terms that are being used in the agreements and in the work programs.*

*It is far more than a question of legal clarity. People have to be quite clear in their own minds what it is they are trying to achieve. Totally legitimate and worthwhile job-creation exercises involving stream cleanup and streambank restoration, for example, should not be described as anything more than what they set out to be. They may well contribute to long-term sustainability, improved ecosystem planning and the like, but in using a wide range of terms almost interchangeably, specific meanings and values get lost. This is important in terms of people really understanding what they are trying to do in the establishment of specific goals and objectives, and in their monitoring and evaluation.*

**Recommendation 6:**

**It is recommended that community groups be encouraged to act independently as community groups using all of the existing processes available to them through various mechanisms at all levels of government and for all resource sectors that have a bearing on fish habitat protection, conservation and stewardship.**

**Recommendation 7:**

**It is recommended that DFO seriously examine the various terms that are being used with respect to “conservation” “stewardship”, “community”, “sustainability”, “eco system based”, “watershed-planning”, “partnership” and any other terms that need clarification to ensure that these concepts are used consistently in community program initiatives.**

**Comments (8)**

*There is a need to clarify just what is meant by an “ecosystem approach” to resource planning and management. The term is used far too loosely by project proponents.*

*There are few instances where the direct benefits of habitat stewardship in a watershed can result in direct fish use benefits to people associated with that watershed if an optimum coast-wide harvest is to be achieved. The reality for most Pacific salmon stocks is that the fish produced in one “community” are invariably harvested in a different “community”. This creates a rationale for a strong continuing regional presence that can really reflect the total community within which Pacific salmon and their habitat have to be conserved and managed.*

*This does not diminish the critical value of groups being actively involved in habitat protection and stewardship at a local level when they may never get direct benefits from the fish produced. Other values are associated with the maintenance of fish habitat. There is a region-wide sharing and fish may be the catalyst for improved levels of watershed protection, stewardship, management and governance. When that is happening there has to be a clear understanding that all of the beneficiaries are making a legitimate contribution to the process and are not trying to “carry everything on the backs of the fish”.*

**Comments (9)**

*The purpose of this recommendation is to ensure that the focus of planning projects is maintained on fish habitat. While watershed planning is important to DFO, it is particularly important that DFO concentrate its limited resources on those aspects of watershed planning that have the greatest impact on its mandate. DFO’s investment in those aspects of watershed management of greatest concern to DFO should be constructively used as a lever to ensure that other beneficiaries of improved watershed management participate and pay their share of the costs.*

*DFO has already provided considerable leadership and funding to raise the overall level of awareness of the need for stream stewardship and better watershed planning and management. The focus for the future should ensure that other beneficiaries pick up their fair share of the costs. Something that has not happened thus far.*

**Recommendation 8:**

**It is recommended that DFO clarify from its perspective just what is meant by, “ecosystem management” in order that the broad regional perspective on the ecosystem for Pacific salmon be properly understood.**

**Recommendation 9:**

**It is recommended that the watershed planning element of the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program focus on habitat and those aspects of watershed management that have a direct bearing on fish habitat. It is further recommended that the actual fish production potential of the watershed be an important element in the selection of projects.**

**Comments (10)**

*The rationale behind this specific recommendation is to ensure that resources are concentrated on those areas of primary concern to DFO's mandate. It is a logical follow-on from Recommendation 9 but deserves particular attention.*

**Comments (11)**

*This specific recommendation is a logical follow-up to the whole notion of recognizing the regional ecosystem needs for Pacific salmon.*

**Comments (12)**

*The rationale behind this specific recommendation is to ensure that efforts are made to avoid duplication and to encourage the many groups that are involved in the whole fish habitat question to work together to ensure that each can do those things to which it is best suited. There is enough activity around to keep every conceivable type of community group busy for a long time to come. Ideally, this should be initiated by the community groups themselves. However someone, perhaps DFO, has to kick off the kind of liaison and communication needed. The intent here is to point out that the notion of more cohesion among the community groups needs attention.*

**Comments (13)**

*It was beyond the scope of this report to address the level of detail required for an Outreach Program other than to demonstrate that there is a strong need for such a program.*

*The following points need to be considered in more detail:*

*There is an opportunity for existing community groups with a good track record to enlarge their area of interest beyond their immediate geographic area. Some groups have built up a capacity beyond the habitat needs of their original geographic base. An Outreach Program could facilitate the transfer of some of that capacity and interest to areas not served by community groups.*

**Recommendation 10:**

**It is recommended that the bulk of DFO's funding and resources for the Habitat Stewardship and Protection Program be focused initially on the first three levels described in this assessment and in other DFO documents, where the focus is very much on the needs of fish and the fisheries community.**

**Recommendation 11:**

**It is recommended that major efforts be made to ensure that the coast-wide fishery community begin to act as an interest-based community that can effectively interact with the geographic community interests that have traditionally been the focus for community habitat conservation and stewardship.**

**Recommendation 12:**

**It is recommended that a major aspect of improved understanding of communities and community needs should incorporate communication efforts to ensure much closer liaison among the many groups that are involved in different aspects of habitat conservation, stewardship and protection.**

**Recommendation 13:**

**It is recommended that a major emphasis be placed on the development of an Outreach Program with the dual purposes of:**

**Establishing a community interest in areas that are not yet served by community group Initiatives, and**

**2. Providing specialized advice where required to existing and emerging community groups.**

2. *Mentoring.* There is already a network of individuals who could provide sound professional and organizational advice to existing and new community group initiatives. Some of these individuals are already associated with community groups and their skills and experience could be used to assist other groups. There are also a number of people with an excellent knowledge of Habitat Protection, Conservation and Stewardship who are not working with existing groups but who could probably be recruited as part of a well organized mentoring program. This could include retired people who can offer valuable insight and experience at a technical level.

In addition to these “Habitat specialists” there is a strong cadre of people from other disciplines who could assist community groups in areas outside traditional biological disciplines. This would include planners, communicators, educators, organization, financial and legal specialists, and so on, who could provide much needed assistance that goes beyond the traditional bio-technical focus. An important part of this aspect of mentoring would be to recruit people with proven track records in community organization leadership and local politics.

Such a program would need initial administrative and logistic support from DFO. The establishment of such a group outside of DFO, could be the foundation for a strong “bottom-up” stewardship coordination program that would complement the idea of a stewardship institute. Such a group would have the arms-length independence that would be essential if a strong network of self-sufficient community habitat groups is to evolve.

#### **Comments (14)**

This report indicates the differences between the objectives of the various habitat support programs. Most of the programs thus far have been aimed at physical habitat improvements, restoration and the like, usually with an emphasis on job creation. Job creation meets a desirable social objective, however, while these programs all complement the work of the Habitat Conservation Stewardship and Protection Initiative, their purpose and objectives are not the same. There is a need to ensure that the programs are proceeding in harmony in order to avoid duplication of effort, and wherever possible to take advantage of efficiency in program delivery.



*Purse seiner.*

#### **Recommendation 14:**

It is recommended that DFO make a particular effort to coordinate the activities of the Habitat Conservation Stewardship and Protection Initiative and similar programs including:

- **Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Program**
- **First Nations Programs through DIAND**
- **Community Economic Development Programs**
- **Fisheries Renewal BC**
- **Employment Initiatives through Human Resources and Development Commission**
- **Community Development through Western Economic Diversification**

*The project criteria developed through this analysis would provide common ground on which the different parallel programs and agencies could cooperate.*

- **Community Futures Development Corporations and other programs outside of government such as private foundations, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, etc.**

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the specific recommendations related directly to the work, a few general recommendations are based more on an overall knowledge of the program and a bit of history.

### **Comments (15)**

*The working title just seems to have carried on. It has been adequate for internal purposes, but there is a need to come up with something “catchy”, just as the “Trans Canada Trail” came up with a simple, but accurate title. While insiders can work with cumbersome titles, something more catchy is needed for the public.*

*Perhaps some link to the millennium might be worthwhile, since we are talking about a five-year program, starting in 1999, as a bridge into the new millennium. Some brainstorming is needed here.*

### **Comments (16)**

*This is intended to be a general recommendation to ensure the Department tries to make the best use of the resources that it already has. There may be room for secondments here. This happened quite frequently during the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy program, for example.*

*Something short of secondment might also be appropriate. There are people within DFO who have become accustomed to working well with community groups. There would be merit in having some form of internal workshop on the topic; something of a parallel to the community forum held early in January.*

### **Recommendation 15:**

**It is recommended that some alternative name to the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program be adopted for this new and innovative habitat initiative.**

### **Recommendation 16:**

**While there is a temptation to look outside for new people to take care of new jobs that are being described, there would be real merit in making better use of people who are already within the Department who have excellent community skills.**

**Comments (17)**

*Initially the program is only for five-years and five years can go by quickly. While continuous consultation is highly desirable, this should not preclude strong initiatives being taken by the Department itself, to put ideas before the groups that are offering advice and seeking project support.*

*One thing that has been lacking in enhancement and streamkeeper initiatives over the past couple of decades has been inspired, vigorous leadership. The type of leadership that has made a number of conservation organizations that have emerged in the province over the last thirty years, internationally acclaimed. This does not suggest that the tactics and strategies adopted by some of those groups be adopted, but an effort has to be made to get the kind of leadership and champions that will attract people to the programs. A major part of the problem here is that DFO's community programs have always really had one foot in the government camp and the other trying to operate at an "outside" level.*

*The political leadership is there; it now has to be matched at a program level both by HEB and the community groups.*

*There are no immediate, easy answers, but if the name of the game is to have the community habitat initiatives being undertaken by free-standing self-sufficient organizations, then leadership is going to be a key ingredient. The program needs some champions who can be publicly recognized as conservation leaders. The transition from a government-sponsored initiative with government always in the background to pick up the pieces, to free-standing, independent organizations that can act as strong partners with government, is not going to be easy. But questions surrounding that transition need to be addressed now right at the start of the process so that the steps in the transition are planned and understood by every participant.*

**Recommendation 17:**

**It is recommended that DFO recognize that since this habitat conservation and stewardship initiative originated within the Department, even though it was based on some outside consultation, the Department should provide a strong leadership role.**



## Appendix 1

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOWER FRASER VALLEY HABITAT ADVOCACY REPORT, 1997

Recommendations from *Stream Stewardship and Fish Habitat Advocacy - An Assessment of the Current and Potential Community Group Involvement in the Lower Fraser Valley, Urban Initiative Series #09, May 1997*, prepared for Fraser River Action Plan, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, prepared by Howard Paish, Howard Paish and Associates.

#### **Recommendation #1**

*“DFO initiate a program to raise the profile of constructive advocacy as an essential element of Streamkeeper and stewardship functions.*

*Specifically, DFO should ensure that objective information on the role of government, including local government in habitat protection becomes a significant part of DFO supported training programs for community groups and Streamkeepers. This information should receive at least the same emphasis that bio-physical information does.”*

#### **Recommendation #2**

*“DFO initiate the development of a concise information package (or packages) to help achieve the objectives set out in Recommendation #1 and new modules be created for Streamkeeper training manuals.”*

#### **Recommendation #3**

*“DFO ensure that the provision of information from DFO to community groups operating in these areas receives a high priority.*

*This is already being done in a number of instances, but it should be the initial priority for any program of technical assistance to community organizations.”*

#### **Recommendation #4**

*“Small workshops be organized, preferably at a community level, to assist community groups with advocacy initiatives. These should be objective workshops in communities to actually develop a community profile, and a strategy for local community group(s) to work within.”*

#### **Recommendation #5**

*“DFO act as a catalyst in bringing different groups together to share information, recognize region wide concerns and take the opportunity to spread messages learned in high settlement areas to developing areas. This can be done by improving liaison among existing groups. A new organization or process is not needed.”*

#### **Recommendation #6**

*“DFO refocus its financial support for community groups to provide small scale seed money to grass-roots groups, to enable them to function more effectively as voluntary organizations and habitat advocates.*

*This support would include basic administrative costs – such as telephone, stationery, brochure, limited secretarial help etc. – to enable volunteers to work more effectively. It would not include the cost of a paid coordinator.”*

**Recommendation #7**

*“DFO redirect the funds that are presently being used to provide paid help for groups that have become established. These resources should instead be used to provide advice on group administration, infrastructure and operations for a wider range of groups. The intent here is to provide start-up help to encourage groups to become self-sufficient (e.g. the approach to ARMS) rather than to continue funding established groups.*

*The advisory help would be oriented towards the needs of the group rather than to the group’s wish-list. This advice should be provided by individuals who have a good practical background and experience in community organizations, rather than just a technical background in planning processes or habitat protection or academic information or consultative processes. Where the technical and practical buttress each other this should be encouraged.”*

**Recommendation #8**

*“DFO ensure that any financial support provided to community groups be on a matching dollar basis from the very start of such funding, as an incentive for group self sufficiency.”*

**Recommendation #9**

*“DFO initiate efforts to avoid duplication of services and advice being offered by the various agencies involved in the support of community habitat protection initiatives. With the sunset of the Fraser River Action Plan, coordinators with the Fraser Basin Council might be able to provide this watershed council function, provided the Council can and will properly deal with the advocacy orientation recommended in this report.”*

**Recommendation #10**

*“DFO should make every effort to link its initiatives and this report to the real crisis in wild coho stocks. This would provide a focus on a genuine current problem directly related to small stream habitat, and would tap into the interests of the large and potentially effective sport fishing community.”*

**Recommendation #11**

*“DFO initiate discussions within HEB and other parts of the organization to achieve the recommendations set out in this report.”*