

Terms of Reference

BC Fraser River White Sturgeon Management Plan

Version: September 29, 2022

1. Introduction

Co-Design and Co-development. This terms of reference (TOR) has been co-designed by the BC and First Nations representatives on the Steering Committee.

1.1. Context

The Province is committed to lead in developing a provincial, basin-wide management plan for Fraser River White Sturgeon in collaboration with federal and First Nation governments. The Tier 3 process will be inclusive of stakeholders and partners.

The Province's vision is to approach management planning for Fraser River White Sturgeon in a new way including increasing conversations and collaborative decisions with First Nations and working together to find new pathways forward that honour commitments to reconciliation and reflect the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). The Province proposes to engage with First Nations, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and stakeholders to inform the development of a BC Fraser River Sturgeon Management Plan through a collaborative process developed by a Province and First Nations co-led Steering Committee (i.e., Steering Committee).

The goal of this planning and collaboration process is for the province to generate / develop a BC Fraser River White Sturgeon Management Plan that reflects input from, and has the support of, First Nations, DFO, BC (Ministry of Forests & Ministry of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship), and stakeholders. Implementation of actions identified in the plan will involve collaboration and consultation with First Nations. We hope to work towards a new future of management and governance of Fraser River White Sturgeon that will evolve over time. The plan is intended to include tidal sections and non-tidal sections of the Fraser River and watershed and recognize the different jurisdictions over these areas. The plan will include Indigenous Knowledge and acknowledge current Species at Risk planning processes, and recovery plans.

White Sturgeon range throughout the entire Fraser River, covering over 2,000km, from the Pacific Ocean north past McBride and into many tributaries, including the Nechako River. Population divisions separate the Fraser into the Lower Fraser (confluence to Hell's Gate), Middle Fraser (Hell's Gate to Prince George), Nechako River and the Upper Fraser (Prince George to McBride). For the purposes of the management plan engagement process, the Upper and Nechako have been grouped into the Upper Fraser Area. The Lower and Middle Fraser have the largest of populations of sturgeon, and the Upper Fraser Area encompasses two federally listed Endangered populations (SARA 2006). The Lower, Middle and Upper Fraser areas will each have a series of Tier 2 (government to government) and Tier 3 (all participants) Information Sharing Sessions and Engagement Workshops (Figure 1).

The Fraser River White Sturgeon Management Plan will:

- Establish a Government-to-Government-to-Government relationship, inclusive of a Tier 3 process to involve stakeholders, to improve management.
- Articulate management objectives, actions and success criteria for the management plan
- Recommend governance and mechanisms to deliver future management and actions
- Summarize the current information including best available science and Indigenous Knowledge
- Identify knowledge gaps
- Identify and guide BC's Fraser River White Sturgeon priority management actions and science activities (e.g., research and monitoring)
- Align and update existing management frameworks, plans, and management actions
- Inform partner and collaborative initiatives as well as funding organizations about needs and priorities

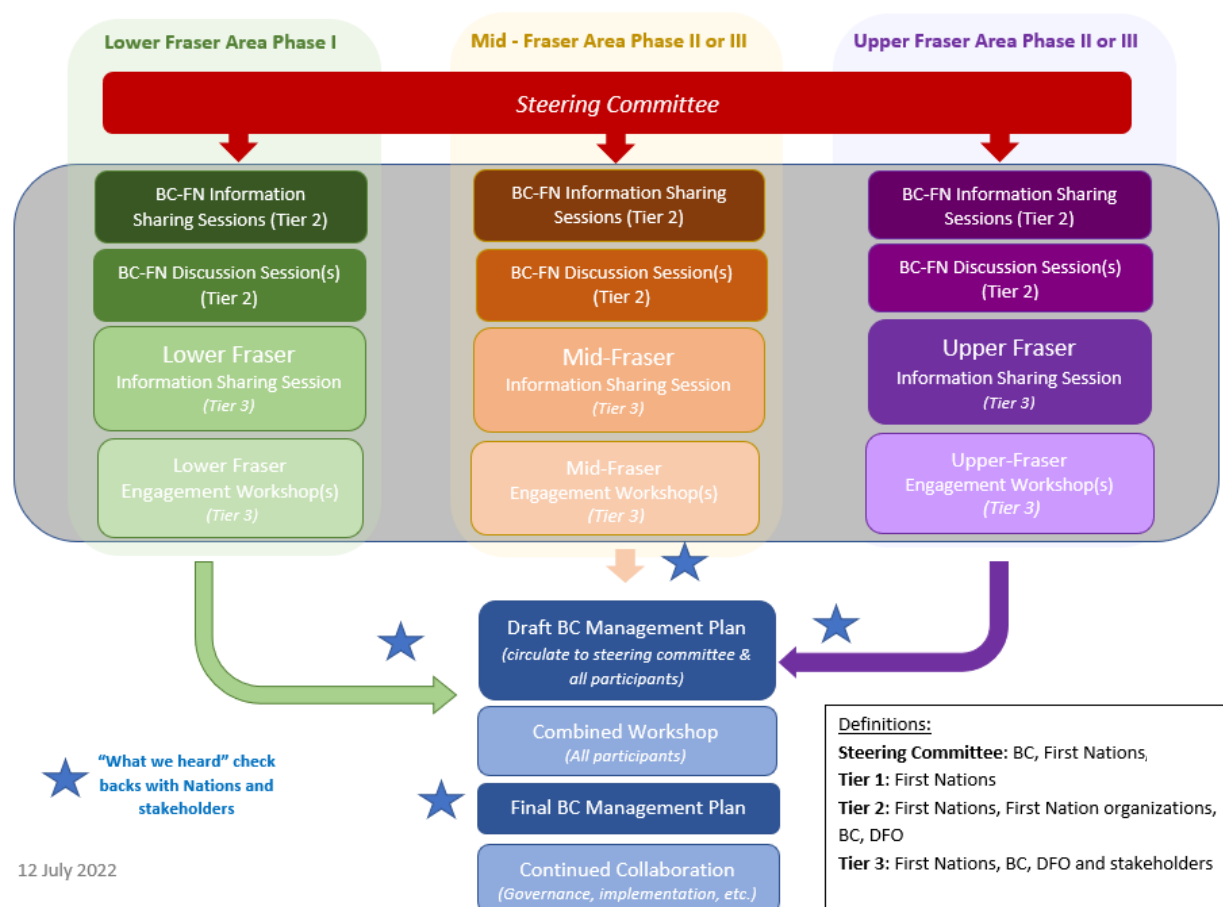
1.2 Planning roadmap for sessions

The management planning process is being developed and amended collaboratively by the Steering Committee including drafting a suggested process for engagement (Figure 1).

Individual Nations and First Nation organizations will be invited to participate in each step of the process. Invitations to participate in parts of the process will also be sent to stakeholders, DFO and internal provincial staff (Regional and Headquarter staff from the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship). The draft suggested process has three series of sessions and workshops, one each for the Lower, Middle and Upper Fraser River areas. Each series is envisioned to have an initial Tier 2 (First Nations, BC and DFO) Information Sharing session (with an opportunity for First Nations/Tier 1 discussions following), follow-up Tier 2 engagement and discussion, Tier 3 (First Nations, BC, DFO and stakeholders) Information Session and at least one Tier 3 Engagement Workshop.

A draft Management Plan will be authored by the Province as guided by the steering committee and input from the workshops as well as previous plans, best science and Indigenous Knowledge. The draft Management Plan will be initially reviewed by the Steering Committee before it is sent out to all Tier 2 and Tier 3 participants for review and comment. Management recommendations will be listed in this plan, but specific regulations, statutory decisions or management actions will require further collaboration and consultation before being implemented. Delegates from all the three Fraser River areas will be invited to combined session(s) to discuss the draft Management Plan. Feedback from the combined sessions will be used to finalize the Management Plan. The suggested process is intended to be intentional and adaptable, sensitive to the individual needs of each area, and able to have sessions or workshops added as required upon recommendation from the Steering Committee. Throughout the process there will be regular communication, including sharing meeting presentations, meeting highlight summaries, and "what we heard" documents.

Figure 1. BC Fraser River White Sturgeon Management Plan Process



1.3 Engagement principles

The following seven principles outline the commitment to all those involved in this management planning process. The Province is committed to developing new partnerships to collaboratively deliver on Fraser River White Sturgeon management. We recognize that we must build on strengths while continuing to adapt and improve our approaches. We will make these changes in collaboration with First Nations, federal government, stakeholders, and supported by engagement with British Columbians.

Partnerships-based Process

Recognizing that we must build on our strengths while continuing to adapt and improve our approaches, BC will develop a provincial basin-wide management plan for Fraser River White Sturgeon in collaboration with federal and First Nations government. The Tier 3 advisory process will be inclusive of stakeholders and partners.

Reconciliation, DRIPA & UNDRIP

We will conduct the work collaboratively and in ways that respect Indigenous Knowledge and advance the objectives of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)¹. We will work with rights-holding First Nations communities to identify paths toward co-management, devolution and governance to ensure Fraser River White Sturgeon are cared for both now and for future generations.

Transparency & Public Confidence

We will build public trust and confidence in the stewardship of Fraser River White Sturgeon through our actions to develop and deliver this Management Plan.

Respect & Recognition

We recognize and respect that people hold deep and sometimes differing intrinsic, ecological, social, cultural, recreational and economic values for White Sturgeon.

Sustainability

We will work together to ensure that White Sturgeon are well managed and sustained for future generations, considering conservation, social, cultural and economic values.

Evidence-Based Decisions

We will use best available science and Indigenous Knowledge as well as the evidence and experience brought forward through the Fraser River White Sturgeon initiative to inform government-to-government decisions, establish monitoring and success criteria, and identify research and monitoring priorities.

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus means that all members of the governing bodies can accept the decision, even if the decision is not everyone's preferred solution. In areas of disagreement, facilitated focussed discussions will be undertaken to support agreeable outcomes. Implementation of any actions outlined in the management plan will involve additional collaboration as well as consultation on rights and title. In any situation where consensus was not reached the management plan will note this and steps to resolve disagreements will be identified.

2.0 Participation

2.1 Steering committee

The Steering Committee is an agile team that provides guidance on the process used to develop a BC Fraser River Sturgeon Management Plan by providing direction, oversight, and advice throughout the project. The Steering Committee will review the management plan drafts and participate in information

¹ From the [United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples](#): Article 18 states indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

sharing sessions and engagement workshops to ensure they are appropriate and valuable to First Nations governments and rights-holders.

Steering Committee members play an important role in linking participants to the process but do not speak on behalf of participants. Steering Committee members serve the three areas of the Fraser watershed and additional representation requests are considered by the steering committee with the understanding all delegates will remain involved throughout the entire process. The intention is to keep this a small nimble group.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chair: BC government lead. Coordinates and chairs Steering Committee meetings. Asks questions and is open and transparent about decisions around the management planning process.

BC Government Regional Members: Support the Chair with meeting planning and organization. Provide regional insight and assist with actions identified by the Steering Committee. Regional lead participation will shift depending on where the focus of the process is (i.e. Lower, Middle, or Upper Fraser area).

First Nations Members: provide guidance from the three identified regions (Lower, Middle and Upper Fraser). Provide insights around an effective process to developing the plan; identify potential barriers; and suggest potential solutions.

Independent Facilitator: Receives direction from Steering Committee. Tasks will include providing advice to the Steering Committee on session and workshop format, timing and approach and facilitating engagement sessions and workshops (Tier 2 and 3, and Tier 1 as requested). The facilitator will be the same across all area sessions to provide consistency towards the end goal of the management plan. Responsibilities include agenda creation, facilitation, and meeting notes from facilitated sessions.

Secretariat: Operates as directed by the Steering Committee. Provides technical and administrative support to the Steering Committee. Responsibilities may include sharing communications approved by the steering committee, writing summary meeting notes from steering committee calls/meetings and “what we heard” documents after each area’s Tier 3 workshops for the Steering Committee to review/approve. Other responsibilities as directed by the Steering Committee.

Collectively, these above organizations are represented by the individuals listed below and will collaboratively participate in the Steering Committee to follow through on the following responsibilities:

- Provide ongoing advice to guide an effective process that will achieve the goal of a BC Management Plan.
- Support development of agendas, participant lists and review meeting notes, communications with participants.
- Provide insight and advice around timing and process of collaboration with First Nations.

Meeting frequency

Steering Committee meetings will occur monthly from September 2022 to March 2023 and may be cancelled or occur more frequently as needed.

Steering Committee Membership

The composition of the Steering Committee includes the following delegates from First Nations and First Nation Organizations from the three areas of the Fraser River, as well as BC government representatives. DFO has been invited to participate

| Representation | Organization | Delegate | Alternate |
|------------------------|--|---|--|
| Nechako & Upper Fraser | Upper Fraser Conservation Alliance (UFFCA) | Marcel Shepert | Gord Sterritt |
| Middle Fraser | Cayoose Creek Band | Chief Michelle Edwards | TBD |
| Middle Fraser | North Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) | Victoria Frank (NSTC) | TBD |
| Lower Fraser | Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) | Murray Ned | Ashlee Prevost |
| All Areas | Province of BC | Trevor Rhodes | Jennifer Davis Sarah Stephenson |
| BC Regional | Province of BC | Lower – Kendra Morgan Middle and Upper TBD | Lower – Bryan Zandberg Middle and Upper TBD |

Support for Steering Committee:

| Representation | Organization | Delegate | Alternate |
|----------------|--|--------------|----------------|
| Facilitator | ESSA | Marc Nelitz | None |
| Secretariat | Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society | Karl English | Sarah Schreier |

2.2 Tier 1 Sessions

Purpose

The purpose of Tier 1 sessions is for First Nations rights-holders and organizations to independently discuss the management planning process and/or sessions. Tier 1 sessions may include a facilitator. These sessions may be scheduled to include all Lower, Middle, and Upper Fraser River area Nations or may only include Nations from one of the three Fraser River areas. These sessions allow for consensus-building between First Nations around important topics.

Participants

- All First Nations communities with interests in the Fraser River and White Sturgeon management will be invited and kept informed of the process.
- Meetings will occur upon request or as suggested by the Steering Committee, typically before or after Tier 2 sessions.
- Meeting notes will document attendance and Tier 1 participants will be invited to share highlights or key messages from meetings
- Steering committee may offer support through providing facilitation resources

2.3 Tier 2 Sessions

Purpose

The purpose of Tier 2 sessions is to support inter-governmental discussions and decisions between First Nations, the Province, and DFO. These sessions will provide opportunities to share perspectives, share data, contribute knowledge, share views and opinions, and review of the document.

Participants

- All BC First Nations communities with interests in the Fraser River and White Sturgeon, Provincial government (FOR, LWRS, as needed), Federal government (DFO)
- FN organizations are also invited (e.g. LFFA, UFFA)
- No constraints on membership, other than the request to participate throughout the process to contribute meaningfully.

Responsibilities

- Participation in Tier 2 sessions represent government-to-government-to-government discussions and will inform the management planning process, including identifying and discussing key uncertainties and direction in the management plan and outlining engagement session priority topics for Tier 3.

Frequency of meetings

- Two Tier 2 sessions are proposed for each Fraser River area, one to commence the dialogue in a region and the second prior to the Tier 3 sessions. Sessions will be scheduled on advice from the Steering Committee, including considering requests from any involved First Nation.

2.4 Tier 3 Sessions

Purpose

Tier 3 sessions will provide opportunities for all interested parties to share their perspectives, learn about other perspectives, contribute their opinions and review the document. Tier 3 includes all external stakeholders in addition to the Tier 2 members (i.e., First Nations, BC and DFO).

Participation

- All organizations with an interest in Fraser White Sturgeon will be invited with a goal of inclusivity.
- Organizations will be asked to limit their participation to 3 individuals per organization.

Frequency of meetings

- Meetings are proposed to include one information sharing session and a minimum of one engagement session per Fraser River area as well as at least one combined workshop

APPENDIX A: Amendment and version tracking