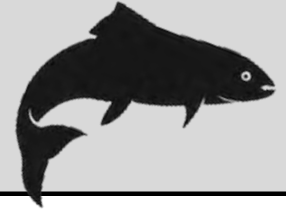



# BIG BAR LANDSLIDE UPDATE

AUGUST 9, 2021



 Response Webpage

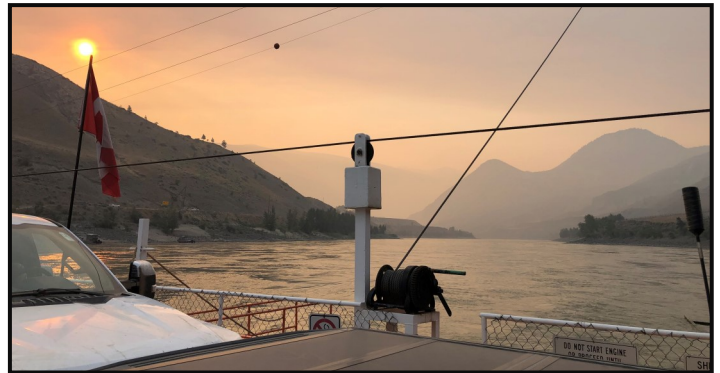
 BC River Forecast

## WILDFIRES CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE CREWS

The area surrounding Big Bar remains under an evacuation alert from nearby wildfires as crews prepare for the demobilization of the job site.

As of August 3, the McKay Creek wildfire grew to the west and north, jumping the West Pavilion Road in multiple locations and severing the only direct land access route to the slide site. As of July 30, the Flat Lake wildfire burning east of the Fraser River shut down the Big Bar Road, leaving crews with only the Jesmond Road to access Clinton.

Peter Kiewit Sons ULC (Kiewit) and DFO are in daily contact with the BC Wildfire Service, ensuring operations are adjusted to safeguard the health and safety of crews. Despite the fires and the ongoing hot weather, crews are continuing to demobilize, readying equipment for shipment and decommissioning the camp.



**LEFT:** McKay Creek wildfire burning close to the West Pavilion Road. Photo by BC Wildfire Service.

**TOP-RIGHT:** Air quality is poor due to heavy smoke at and around the site.

**BOTTOM-RIGHT:** Truck loaded up with materials to be transported to Lillooet as part of demobilization.



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## MONITORING PROGRAM

On July 29, the “trap and transport” operations concluded as water levels continued to drop and fish are migrating past the slide site without assistance. To date, 19 Chinook and 36 sockeye were moved by truck to test the system’s operation. However, this system was not needed this year as salmon were able to pass the slide volitionally.

As of August 7, more than 109,000 fish have been detected upstream of the slide site at the Churn Creek sonar station.

## ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Using fish wheels, First Nations crews have captured 731 Early Stuart sockeye at the slide site and at Lillooet to support the Big Bar emergency conservation enhancement program. Another 33 sockeye were captured in the lower Fraser River at the Matsqui fish wheel in Glen Valley. All 764 sockeye are being held at Cultus Lake Laboratory where spawning will begin next week. At this time the program has achieved 95% of its brood capture target.

On July 30, the natal stream capture of Chinook began with technicians from the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance and the T̓silhqot'in National Government collecting four females and six males from a remote section of the Upper Chilcotin. These fish have been transported to the Quesnel River Research Centre where they will be held until ready for spawning. The team will continue collecting Chinook from other key populations in the coming weeks.

2021 BIG BAR SALMON COUNTS ([Daily counts available online](#))

Date	Salmon radio tagged below the Big Bar landslide site	Salmon transported by truck past the slide site and released upstream		Fish 40 km upstream of Big Bar landslide site (detected via SONAR)
		Chinook	Sockeye	
TOTAL as of Aug 7, 2021	481	19	36	109,145

## LONG-HAUL TRANSPORT PILOT PROVING SUCCESSFUL

Since 2019, the Big Bar team has been continuously reviewing its past operations while simultaneously exploring other opportunities to innovate and improve its approach.

For the past three years, the team has focused on short-haul transport to move fish past Big Bar. This method involves collecting fish at the slide site and moving them to French Bar Creek, where they are then released back into the Fraser River.

This season, the team is trialing a long-haul alternative by moving early arriving salmon much further and much closer to their final destination (or natal stream). The test saw the collection of 60 Early Stuart sockeye using the Big Bar fish

wheel. The fish were then transported north by truck and released back into the Fraser River just south of the Nechako confluence. Technicians tagged these fish and applied accelerometers to 10 salmon to better understand their movement and energy expenditure during the long journey.

As of July 30, early results indicate that eight of the 10 fish with accelerometers and more than 50% of the radio tagged fish were detected at Fort St James, proving that fish can be moved long-distance without disrupting their migration. Monitoring of these fish will continue through to the spawning grounds to fully assess the trial’s success.

