
It's a Fact (Sheet)



What is the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (UCWSRI)?

In the early 1990s, anglers, and biologists noticed a decline in the White Sturgeon population in the upper Columbia River. As well, there seemed to be no young Sturgeon.

Working proactively, a commitment to a Recovery Program was formalized by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Environment, BC Fisheries, and BC Hydro (BCH) with a Letter of Understanding dated August 17, 2000. Soon an international team including government, industry, First Nations and stewardship groups came together to dedicate effort to Sturgeon Recovery. A Technical Working Group (TWG) of fisheries experts was formed, as was a Community Working Group (CWG). The first Recovery Plan was written in 2002, and updated 2012.

Although White Sturgeon are the main subject of this plan, actions proposed for their stabilization could also benefit other native aquatic species and further contribute to the overall health of the upper Columbia River ecosystem.

Who are the TWG?

Canadian Members

BC Ministry of Environment, BC Hydro, Fortis BC, Columbia Power Corporation, Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, Teck Metals Ltd., and Golder Associates Ltd.

US Members

Bonneville Power Administration, Colville Confederated Tribes, Spokane Tribe, Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey

What are the TWG Responsibilities?

1. Gather baseline data, determine reasons for population decline.
2. Form and revise (as needed) recovery goals and objectives.
3. Develop criteria to evaluate the Recovery Plan and to define its success.
4. Develop strategies, measures, and research programs to accomplish the goals and objectives.
5. Prioritize implementation based on technical criteria and input from the CWG.

What are the TWG Sub-Committees?

1. Water management – river flows, reservoir elevations/water quantity.
2. Habitat restoration – alterations that could impact life stage survival, restoration/long-term habitat management.
3. Contaminants – potential impacts of contaminants.
4. Fish culture – ensure options, capabilities, costs of the conservation fish culture program are consistent with the recovery team goals.
5. Genetics – develop genetic risk assessment/management, data, and other genetics issues; development of a breeding plan.
6. Database – long-term maintenance/access to telemetry, capture, and culture data and records.



Who is the Community Working Group?

CWG Membership

The Salmo Watershed Streamkeepers Society (SWSS), Fortis BC, Revelstoke Rod and Gun Club, Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), Teck Metals Ltd., BC Hydro, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Zellstoff Celgar Ltd.

What are the CWG Responsibilities?

1. Outreach & Education.
2. "Sounding board" for TWG and community ideas and Recovery Plan.
3. Serving as a liaison, i.e. bridging function between TWG and the public.
4. Access education outreach funding.
5. Advisory group to regulators/agencies.
6. Seek local and traditional knowledge.
7. Report to Federal and Provincial gov't's as required.
8. Develop, revise, and maintain a communications plan.
9. Work with other CWGs, perhaps leading to joint provincial strategies.
10. Advise on potential social and economic impacts of proposed recovery actions.
11. Foster long-term sturgeon recovery support.

The Recovery Plan: What is it?

- Assessment
- Goal
- Targets
- Measures

Recovery Plan Assessment

Gather baseline data.

Recovery Plan Goals

To ensure the persistence and viability of natural-reproducing populations of White Sturgeon in the Upper Columbia River and to restore opportunities for beneficial human use, if feasible.

Recovery Plan Targets

- Two Populations, each consisting of 2,500 fish each
- Natural reproduction
- Stable populations
- Genetically diverse populations
- Future human use, if feasible

Recovery Plan Measures

- Harvest/Bycatch
- Entrainment
- Culture/Stocking
- Water Management
- Water Quality
- Contaminants
- Habitat
- Assessments
- Information/Education
- Planning/Coordination/Implementation

For more information about the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative visit www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org

