FWCP
Fish & Wildlife
COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Annual Report

Peace Region
2025–2026

fwcp.ca

BC Hydro
British Columbia
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada

The FWCP is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations, and public interest holders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

Message from our board co-chairs

Welcome to our Peace Region's 2025–2026 annual report. It includes a summary of annual compensation funding from BC Hydro, and how it was allocated by grant type (i.e., annual or year-round) and delivery mechanism (i.e., grants, directed projects). This report also includes an overview of the 24 fish & wildlife projects approved by our Peace Region board. If you're interested in more details about the projects we fund, read our annual outcomes report when it's available this fall. Be sure to sure to subscribe or follow us on social media so you don't miss it.

Our primary obligation is to compensate for impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitats resulting from construction of BC Hydro dams. We were established in 1988 as the Peace Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program and since then we've been the mechanism by which BC Hydro fulfills its water licence obligations to compensate for dam impacts in our Peace Region.

In 2025–2026 we approved ~$2.1 million for 24 fish & wildlife projects, so it's hard to pick just a few to profile here. But let's start with our First Nations-led moose habitat enhancement projects. By consensus, partner First Nations in our Peace Region are working on projects aimed at enhancing moose habitat to support strengthened harvesting and food sovereignty. The projects will be led individually by each Nation, but there will be shared objectives and information-sharing amongst the Nations to strengthen individual project outcomes. We're really excited about these projects.

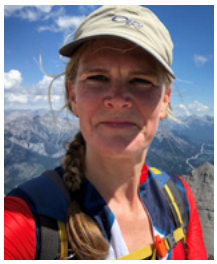
This year we approved funding for and made progress on updating our 2017 Arctic Grayling Synthesis Report and Monitoring Framework, incorporating all the information collected from the Arctic grayling projects we've funded over the last eight years. The updated documents will be available for the 2027-2028 grant intake and will provide updated guidance for future restoration and enhancement projects to support this iconic northern fish.

With board-approved funding we initiated a directed project to model and assess the ecosystem losses from the creation of Williston Reservoir. This information will be important as we work to strengthen alignment of the projects we fund with our primary obligation to compensate for dam impacts, starting with refreshed guidance for grant applicants in 2026.

In 2024 our boards approved a project effectiveness and performance measurement strategy as recommended in our most recent audit. Following this important strategic work to develop a logic model, we embarked on a process to update our approach to project funding in 2025–2026. We will continue this renewal process in 2026–2027 and will engage with First Nations and interest holders about new priorities for compensation funding. We're excited about these changes and look forward to sharing more with you next year.

Let us take a moment to thank George Desjarlais, Corey Erwin, Luke Gleeson, and Daisy Zhao who retired from the board. Let us welcome Brad Barnes and Lora Nield, who joined the board.

Stephanie Killam
Peace Region
Board Co-chair



Margo Sadler
Peace Region
Board Co-chair

Front cover: With FWCP funding, the Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC partnered with McLeod Lake Indian Band to assess and enhance habitat for moose. PEA-F26-W-4334-DCA. Photos: College of New Caledonia

1. Overview

Our Peace Region was established in 1988 to support the conservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and their habitats in watersheds impacted by construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams, and the creation of the Williston and Dinosaur reservoirs.

BC Hydro has water licence obligations in the Columbia and Peace regions and has made voluntary commitments to address the impacts of dams in the Coastal Region. BC Hydro fulfills the applicable obligations through the work of the FWCP. The FWCP does not compensate for John Horgan Dam (Site C) impacts to fish and wildlife. John Horgan Dam water licence obligations require BC Hydro to establish separate environmental monitoring, mitigation, and compensation programs and, under the water licence, BC Hydro will report to the Comptroller of Water Rights on these programs.

The Peace Region has received nearly $50 million from BC Hydro since it started its commitments in 1988 following the construction of its dams. This has enabled the FWCP to fund approximately 20-30 compensation projects each year. Our Peace Region is shown in Figure 1.1.

A local Board made up of BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., First Nations and public stakeholders, guides the work of the FWCP and is responsible for approving all FWCP projects in our Peace Region.

The First Nations' Working Group is actively involved in FWCP's Peace Region, and is responsible for ensuring First Nations considerations and input are included in FWCP planning and projects.

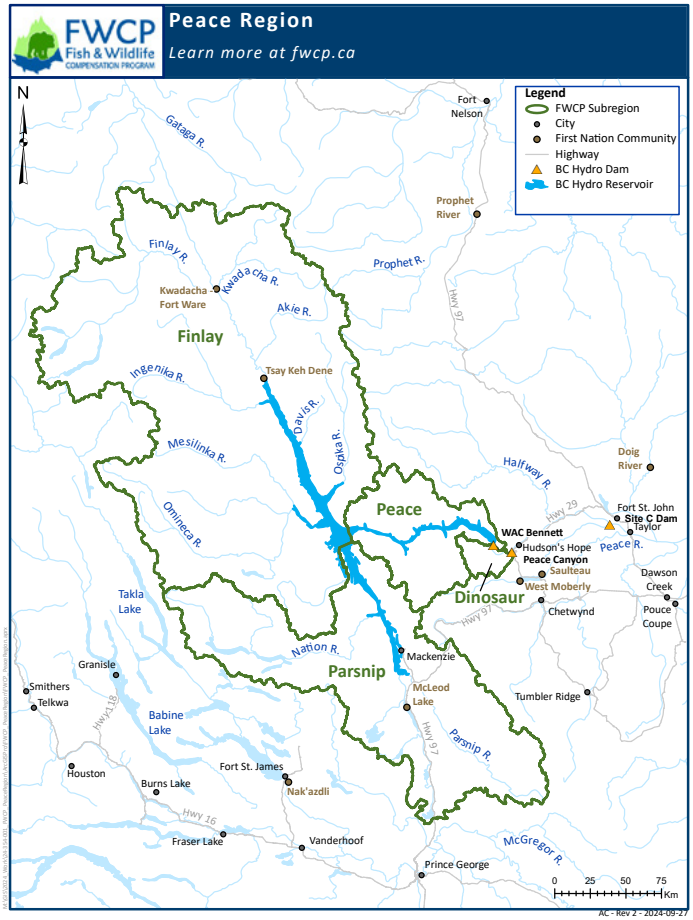


Figure 1.1: Map of the FWCP's Peace Region

As part of the fall 2025 meeting in Mackenzie, members of our Peace Region board had the opportunity to visit the moose habitat enhancement project and Mugaha Marsh Banding Station.

2. Our strategic approach

VISION AND MISSON

While the FWCP operates in watersheds that have been altered by hydroelectric development, our vision recognizes that an effective program can support the maintenance of healthy fish and wildlife populations that will meet its conservation objectives. Actions focused on conserving and, where possible, restoring ecosystem function will help species be more resilient to emerging pressures, such as climate change and the cumulative effects of other overlapping resource developments. We take a forward-looking, ecosystem-based approach that defines the desired outcomes and takes actions to restore, enhance, and conserve priority species and their habitats, in alignment with our strategic framework. More details on our three strategic objectives can be found in our governance manual.

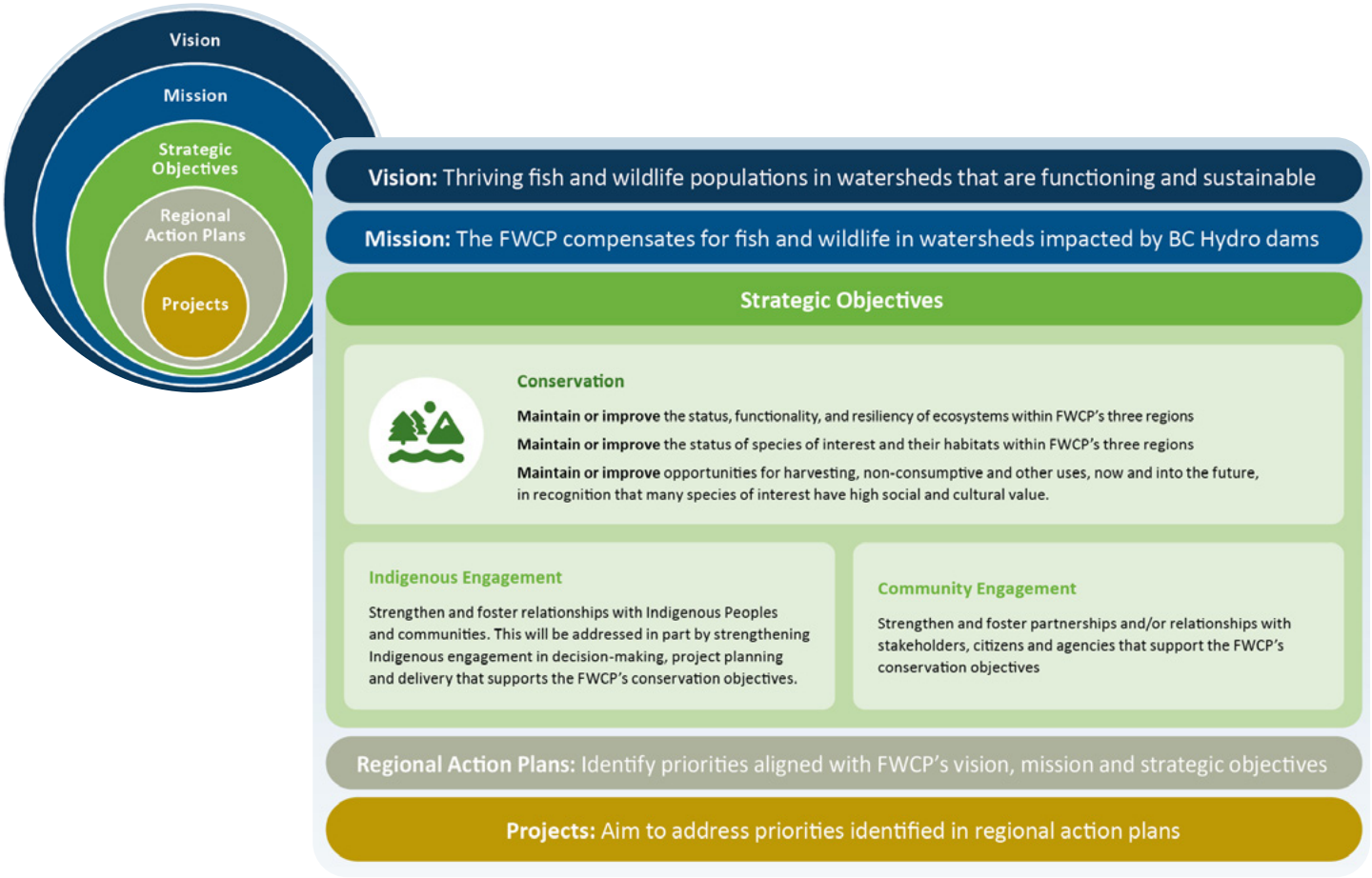


Figure 2.1: Strategic framework. The projects we fund align with our regional action plans, reflect our strategic objectives, and advance our mission and vision.

Our regional action plans guide FWCP investments in fish and wildlife compensation projects. They are referenced annually by our regional boards to track progress toward implementation, set priorities, and guide decision-making in setting out and approving the annual operating plan for each region. Actions in our action plans are eligible for FWCP funding and align with our vision, mission, and geographic scope.

In our Peace Region, we have four action plans, and all F26 projects approved for funding by our Peace Region board align with priority actions identified in the action plans.

UPDATE: EVALUATION AND FINANCIAL AUDIT

In 2019, an independent third-party evaluation and financial audit was completed, as required by our governance manual. The auditor made nine recommendations to refine, support, and strengthen our approach to conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams. The recommendations have been substantially completed and the FWCP has reported to the Comptroller of Water Rights and the steering committee—as per the FWCP's governance manual.

Our Peace Region board funded the development of a tool that can be used by government, non-profits, and First Nations to support better wetland mitigation and protection. PEA-F26-W-4273. Photo: BC Wildlife Federation

3. Financial report

APPROVED BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Our Peace Region board allocates annual funding toward fish and wildlife compensation projects, administration, First Nations engagement, and other activities as outlined below. These allocations form the annual operating plan. Any unallocated funds are carried forward as uncommitted available funds for future spending.

BC Hydro provided $2,868,735 in F26 to the FWCP Peace Region to fulfill BC Hydro's commitment to address the impacts of dam construction. $1,868,735 was notional funding and, in support of the 2019 evaluation and audit recommendations to increase funding levels, BC Hydro provided an additional $1 million to our Peace Region. This amount will be provided each year in addition to the notional funding already provided. Our board approved a budget of $2,997,747 utilizing unspent surplus funds from previous years.

Figure 3.1 shows a total of approximately $4.98 million available to our Peace Region as of April 1, 2025. This includes the approved budget of approximately $3 million, the uncommitted available funds of approximately $665,000, and the remaining prior-year funding commitments from F18 to F25 of just over $1.3 million, as shown below.

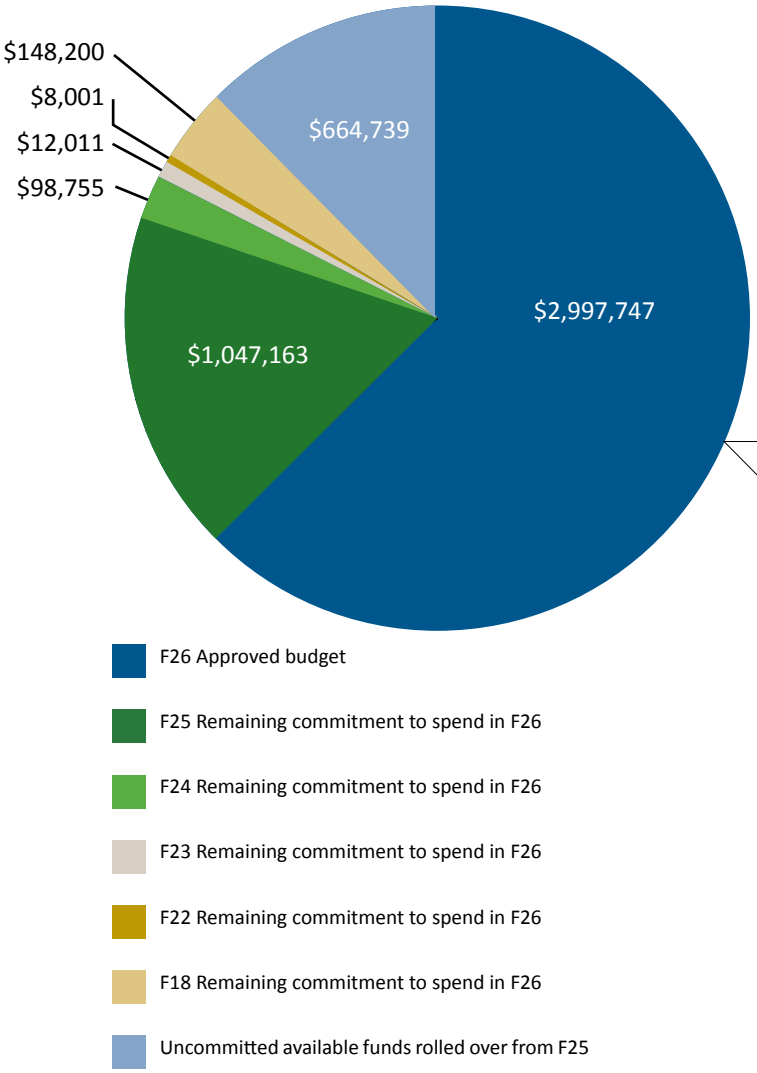


Figure 3.1: FWCP Peace Region financial summary on April 1, 2025

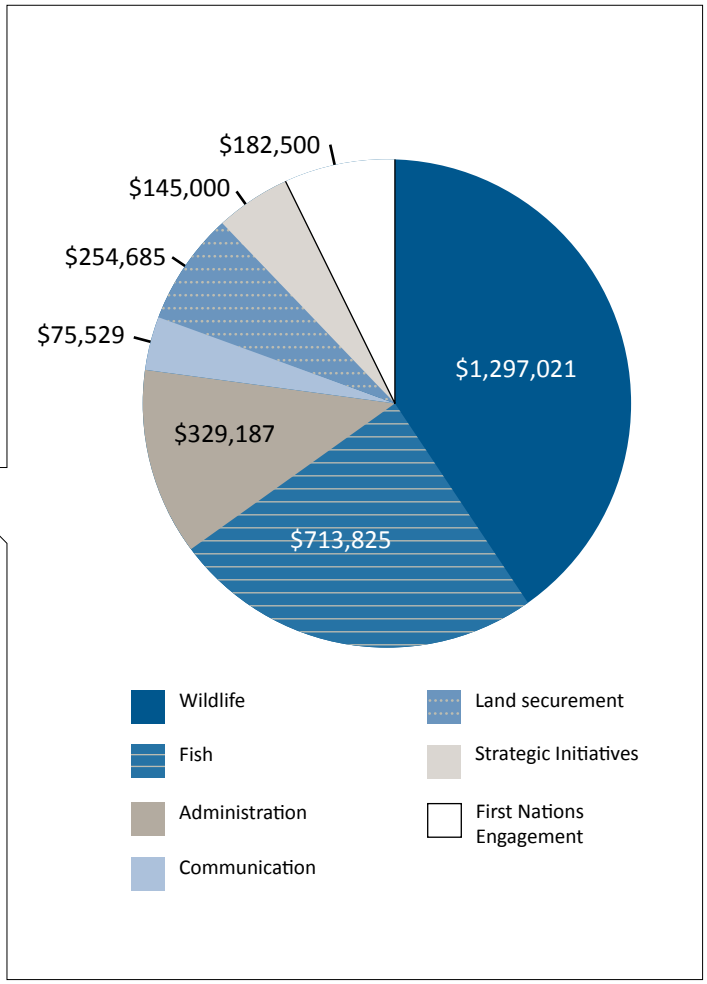


Figure 3.2: Allocation of the approved Peace Region budget of $2,997,747 as of April 1, 2025

Figure 3.2 illustrates the approved budget for F26 as of April 1, 2025. Funding for wildlife projects accounted for more than 43% of the budget, fish projects nearly 24%, and land securement approximately 9%. Administrative costs, including safety and professional development training, accounted for approximately 11% of the budget. Strategic initiatives—which included implementing the logic model and funding to support renewing our project funding approach—accounted for approximately 5%.

Peace Region expenditures up to the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2026) are shown in Table 3.1. This reflects a snapshot of actual and planned payments made related to this year's finances. Funding allocated each year may not be fully expended by year-end, and as shown in Table 3.1, F26 funds not yet expended by March 31, 2026 are labelled as planned payments.

Occasionally, compensation projects come in under budget (variance in Table 3.1). Funds not spent during the fiscal year will be carried forward as unspent surplus budget and made available for new spending in future fiscal years. Funds identified as land securement are approved for a reserve fund that, if they remain unspent, are carried forward and made available for future land securement projects.

Table 3.1: F26 budget status as of March 31, 2026

Fund category	F26 approved budget	Paid up to March 31, 2026	Variance[1]	Planned payments[2]
Fish	$713,825	$458,612	$137,887	$117,326
Wildlife	$1,287,021	$736,471	$10,605	$549,949
Administration	$329,187	$274,484	$28,702	$26,000
Communications	$75,529	$65,156	-	$10,373
Land Securement	$254,685	-	-	$254,685
Strategic Initiatives	$145,000	$45,387	($34,824)	$134,437
First Nations Engagement	$182,500	$34,623	$10,000	$137,878
TOTAL	$2,997,747	$1,614,731	$152,372	$1,230,643

Note 1: Variance funds are carried forward and available for the next fiscal year. In the instance of a negative amount, the money was taken from previously uncommitted funds and added to the line item, making them committed and increasing the expected spend/planned payment. If the number is positive, it means that the money is released from this line item and returned to uncommitted funds.

Note 2: Planned payments represent expected invoices for approved ongoing compensation projects that have not yet submitted final reports by March 31, 2026.

At the end of this reporting period, approximately $1.61 million of the annual budget had been spent, and approximately $1.23 million[1] remained as an F26 commitment to spend in F27.

In addition to the planned payments of $1.23 million, the balance of prior-year funding commitments anticipated to be spent in F27 was just over $232,000 for F23 to F25, with approximately $939,000 available in uncommitted funds (Figure 3.3).

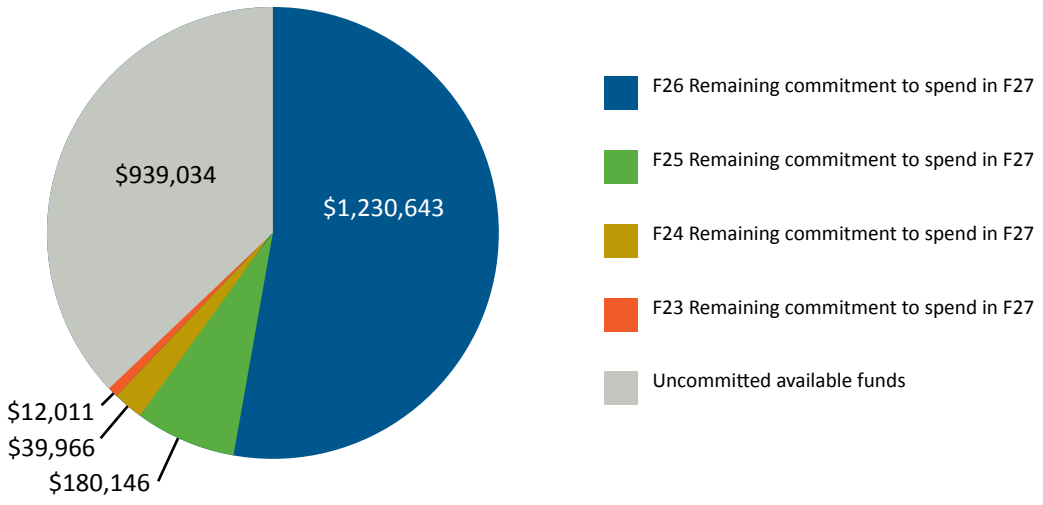


Figure 3.3: Financial summary of our Peace Region, as of March 31, 2026 (end of fiscal year)

1. The end of fiscal F26 and the year-end deadline for project reporting are on the same day. Therefore, reports (and potentially statements of accounts) are not reviewed and accepted until after the March 31 deadline, causing them to be associated with the next fiscal (F27). Many final payments for F26 projects are processed in the first few months of F27, and unspent funds are allocated for future spending..

4. Approved project funding

This fiscal year, our three regional boards approved 91 compensation projects for a total FWCP investment of approximately $10.5 million. The total value of these projects, including leveraged funding from other organizations and in-kind resources, was more than $98 million.

Final project reports for all of the projects we fund are uploaded to Ecocat or SIWE provincial databases, and we maintain searchable spreadsheets of final project reports for each FWCP region at fwcp.ca/results-reports.html

Twenty-four projects were approved this year for more than $2 million in funding from our Peace Region board.

Grant-based projects

The FWCP's annual grant intake opens each July and closes in early November. All grant applications go through a three-stage review process. For more details, visit our FAQs. Grant applicants are required to develop a project idea that aligns with one or more priority actions in any action plan and will achieve the intended outcome.

In our Peace Region, all grant applicants are required to submit a notice of intent (NOI) before submitting a full application. The NOI is an important part of our commitment to strengthen engagement with First Nations. It helps inform First Nations about proposed projects and is the basis for identifying opportunities for First Nations perspectives on and engagement in the projects. It also helps our Peace Region manager provide additional guidance before grant applications are completed.

Of the 24 projects approved for the year, 16 were grant-based (four fish and 12 wildlife), for a total of $1,292,325. The board allocated ~$377,000 to four grant-based fish projects, and ~$915,000 to 12 grant-based wildlife projects. As a result of financial partnerships and in-kind contributions, the total value of the projects was more than $5 million.

Directed projects

Nearly $759,000 was approved for eight directed projects (i.e., a project prioritized by the board)—three fish projects and five wildlife. These included moose habitat enhancement, an Arctic grayling synthesis update, kokanee size at age assessments, Williston school ecology project, the UNBC colloquium presentation series, Williston Watershed impact assessment mapping, improving fish passage, and the Mugaha Marsh bird banding station. See figure 4.1.

For all directed and grant-based projects see Appendix A.

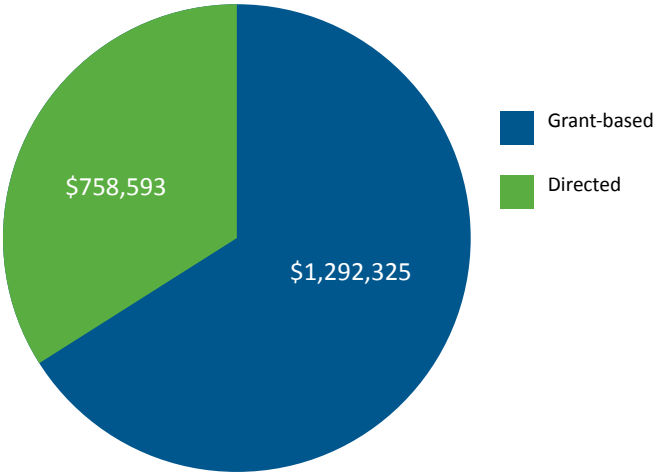


Figure 4.1: F26 directed project funding compared to granted-based project funding.

Our Peace Region board is funding a multi-year project that identifies hanging culverts that block fish passage. PEA-F26-F-4279-DCA. Photo: SERNbc

Projects by proponent type

The Peace Region board approved funding for a total of 24 projects: eight directed projects and 16 grant-based projects. More than 90% of the approved funding went toward projects led by First Nations and non-government organizations. See Figure 4.2 for a breakdown of approved projects by proponent type.

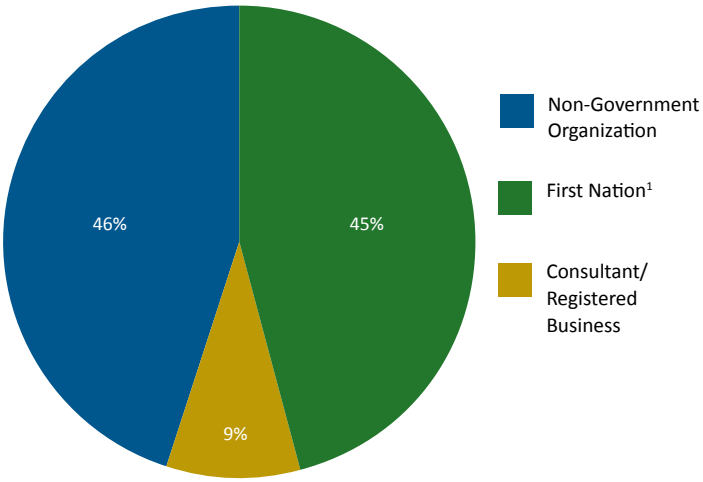


Figure 4.2: Peace Region F26 approved projects by lead proponent type

Projects by action type

Priority actions in our Peace Region action plans are grouped into five action types:

1. research and information acquisition
2. habitat-based
3. species-based
4. monitoring and evaluation
5. land securement

This year, nearly 60% of the approved funding was allocated to research and information acquisition, and 37% to habitat-based projects. Figure 4.3 shows the breakdown of approved funding by action type.

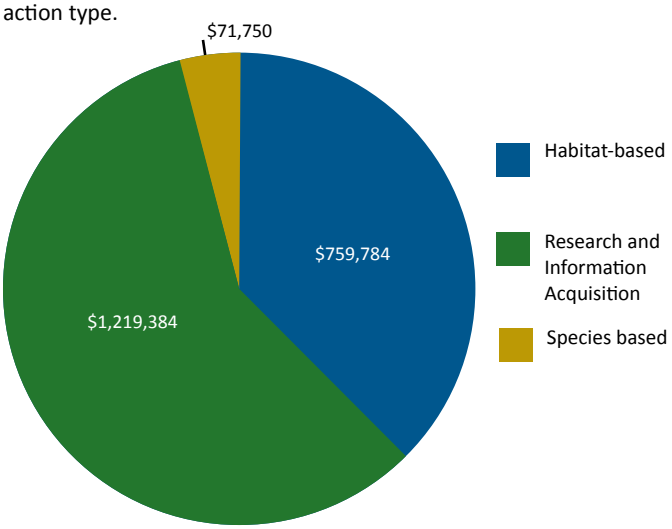


Figure 4.3: Approved funding by action type

Projects delivered by sub-region

Figure 4.4 shows the funding approved for projects this year by sub-region. Funding breakdown was nearly 40% basin-wide, and approximately 31% for the Parsnip sub-region.

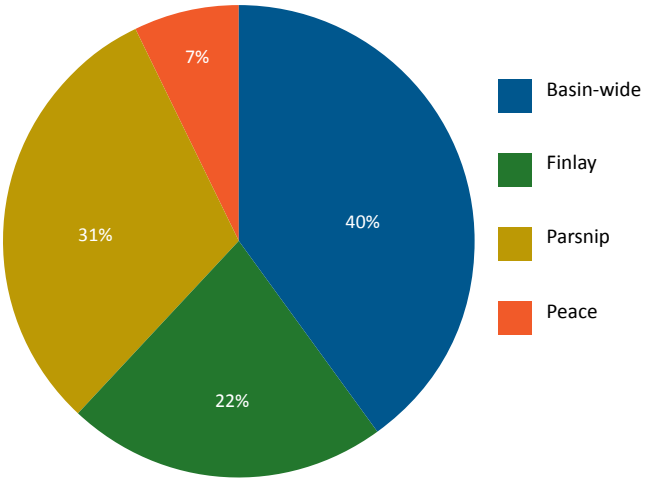
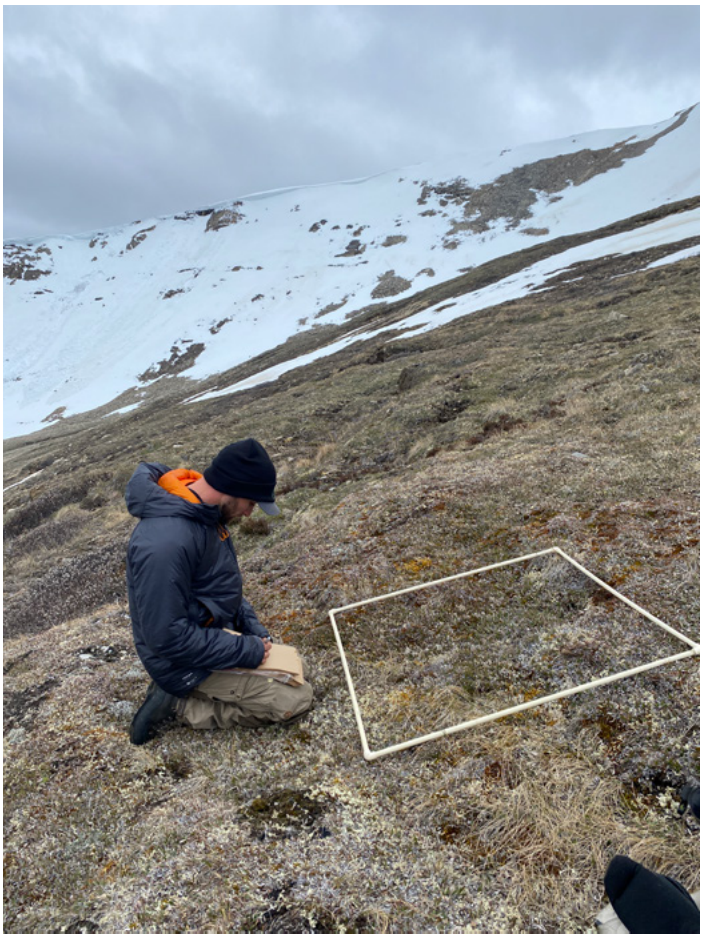


Figure 4.4: F26 project funding by sub-region



Vegetation plots, like this one in our Peace Region's Russel Range, were established to learn more about the nutrition and habitat needs of Stone's sheep. PEA-F26-W-4219. Photo: L. Birch

[1] Includes First Nations societies and businesses

Community Engagement Grant projects

The goal of the Community Engagement Grant is to provide small grants of up to $1,500 to support activities that align with our strategic objectives. Groups can apply for a Community Engagement Grant at any time during the year, while funds are available.

A total annual budget of $7,500 was set aside for Community Engagement Grant funding for F26. Six applications were approved as shown in Table 4.1. The number of Community Engagement Grants has risen three-fold over the past three years.

Table 4.1: Community Engagement Grants approved for F26

Organization	Project	FWCP $s
BC Wildlife Federation	2025 AGM, Dawson Creek	$250
Hope for Health Society	Jamieson Woods Study Area	$1,500
Nak'azdli Whut'en	Ndi yun k'ut khusna 2025 ("On this living land")	$1,500
Timberline Trail and Nature Club	Bat Friendly Libraries - "Bat Packs"	$1,500
Chu Cho Environmental	Tsay Keh Dene Science Week	$1,500
University of Northern BC	Northern BC Stream Temperature Symposium	$1,250
		TOTAL $7,500

Chelsea Regina, our Peace Region manager, had the opportunity to attend the Ndi yun k'ut khusna (On this living land) event, hosted by the Nak'azdli Whut'en, that was supported by an FWCP Community Engagement Grant. Photo: FWCP

APPENDIX A: Peace Region 2025-2026 projects

The table below provides a listing of 2025-2026 Peace Region fish and wildlife projects approved for funding. The funding identified may vary from the approved budget as of April 1, 2025, due to project budget increases or decreases as they progressed throughout the fiscal year. Final reports for all projects are posted to the appropriate provincial databases once available. Visit fwcp.ca/results.html for an updated list of all available final reports. Learn more about the 2025-2026 project outcomes at fwcp.ca.

FWCP Project ID	Project Title	Proponent	FWCP $s
Fish: Grant-based			
PEA-F26-F-4210	Williston Bull Trout Population Structure and Life History	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$45,389
PEA-F26-F-4225	Bull Trout Spawner Abundance and Critical Habitats	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$78,142
PEA-F26-F-4235	West Shore Arctic Grayling Abundance and Critical Habitats	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$130,741
PEA-F26-F-4236	Modeling Thermal Regimes of the Upper Peace River Basin	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$123,223
Wildlife: Grant-based			
PEA-F26-W-4202	Wolverine Density and Abundance in the Chase Range	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$68,804
PEA-F26-W-4198	Tsay Keh Dene Herbarium for Plant and Knowledge Conservation	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$55,324
PEA-F26-W-4207	Motus Wildlife Tracking System: Peace Basin Expansion	Birds Canada	$131,656
PEA-F26-W-4215	Chase Caribou Road Restoration Program	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$48,605
PEA-F26-W-4216	Restoring caribou habitat in the Klinse-Za herd	Nikanese Wah tzee Stewardship Society	$114,470
PEA-F26-W-4219	Stone's sheep range condition in northern BC	Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia	$84,599
PEA-F26-W-4221	Enhancing caribou survival in the Klinse-Za/ScottE herd area	Nikanese Wah tzee Stewardship Society	$71,750
PEA-F26-W-4251	North American Bat Monitoring Program - Williston - Year 3	Zonal Ecosystem and Wildlife Consultants Ltd.	$71,658
PEA-F26-W-4259	Post-operation restoration of the Bickford maternity pen	Nikanese Wah tzee Stewardship Society	$34,527
PEA-F26-W-4264	Wolf Density and Distribution - Wolverine Herd (Year 3)	Nak'azdli Whut'en	$55,950
PEA-F26-W-4266	Elk Distribution and Expansion on the Nation River (Year 2)	Nak'azdli Whut'en	$59,012
PEA-F26-W-4273	Wetland Conservation in Peace Country	British Columbia Wildlife Federation	$118,475
Fish: Directed			
PEA-F26-F-4333-DCA	Kokanee size at age assessments - Yr 1	Chu Cho Environmental LLP	$41,900
PEA-F26-F-4279-DCA	Improving fish passage in our Peace Region	Society For Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC	$225,383
PEA-F26-F-4354-DCA	Arctic Grayling information synthesis and framework update	John Hagen and Associates	$46,799
Wildlife: Directed			
PEA-F26-W-4334-DCA	Moose Habitat Enhancement Project Yr 3	Society For Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC	$290,000
PEA-F26-W-4291-DCA	Mugaha Marsh Bird Banding Station 2025-26	Mackenzie Nature Observatory	$26,550
PEA-F26-W-4331-DCA	2025-26 Colloquium Presentation Series	University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)	$15,001
PEA-F26-W-4368-DCA	Williston Watershed Impact Assessment Mapping	Madrone Environmental Services Ltd.	$72,720
PEA-F26-W-4292-DCA	Williston School Ecology Project	Mackenzie Community Arts Council	$40,240
		TOTAL	$2,050,918

APPENDIX B: Board and committee lists for 2025-2026

FWCP PEACE REGION BOARD

The board guides our work and is responsible for approving our projects and budget in the Peace Region. In addition to funding projects through our annual grants, the board may choose to direct projects and approve funding to address regional priorities.

Margo Sadler, Co-chair	BC Hydro
Stephanie Bellehumeur	BC Hydro
Vacant	Doig River First Nation
Cary McCook	Kwadacha First Nation
Anita Vallee	McLeod Lake Indian Band
Alyssa Lepka	Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation
Andy Johnson	Public
Stephanie Killam, Co-chair	Public
Al Mottishaw	Public
Vacant	Prophet River First Nation
Corey Erwin/Lora Nield	Province of B.C.
James Jacklin	Province of B.C.
Naomi Owens-Beek	Saulteau First Nations
Vacant	Treaty 8 Tribal Association
Luke Gleeson/Daisy Zhao/Brad Barnes	Tsay Keh Dene First Nation
George Desjarlais/Vacant	West Moberly First Nations

FIRST NATIONS WORKING GROUP

The purpose of the First Nations Working Group is to provide First Nations advice at the regional level. It works to facilitate the collaborative planning and implementation of the FWCP, support the development and implementation of the action plans, and ensures that decision-making incorporates First Nations knowledge, cultural, and heritage values.

Vacant	Doig River First Nation
Marty McCook	Kwadacha First Nation
Emmy Hazelrigg	McLeod Lake Indian Band
Fred Sam	Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation
Vacant	Prophet River First Nation
Fernie Garbitt, Co-Chair	Saulteau First Nations
Vacant	Treaty 8 Tribal Association
Sean Rapai	Tsay Keh Dene First Nation
Christina Ciesielski/Noah Branigan	Tsay Keh Dene First Nation
George Desjarlais/Vacant	West Moberly First Nations

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

The board is supported by fish and wildlife technical committees that act in an advisory role by providing technical review, evaluation, and ranking of fish and wildlife grant applications; supporting the development of strategic plans; assisting in the development and oversight of directed projects; and providing advice on the effective implementation of action plans.

Fish technical committee

Michael McArthur/Joe Bottoms	BC Hydro
Randy Zemlak/Peter Merth	BC Hydro
Reece Legault	Province of B.C.
Nikolaus Gantner, Chair	Province of B.C.
Jason Lee	Saulteau First Nations

Wildlife technical committee

Brent Matsuda	BC Hydro
Stephanie Bellehumeur/Arshad Khan	BC Hydro
Vacant	Province of B.C.
Matthew Scheideman, Chair	Province of B.C.
Krista Sittler	Nak'azdli Whut'en
Jessica Eastman	Saulteau First Nation

STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee sets our overall direction, including the governance structure and strategic framework. It also oversees periodic evaluations, approves significant changes to the FWCP, and addresses dispute resolution, when necessary, among other responsibilities beyond the FWCP. For more details, refer to our governance manual.

Rian Hill, Chair
Acting Director, Environment, BC Hydro

Jasmine Pouce Coupe
Doig River First Nation (Peace Region)

Alice Cheung
Director, PSSI Secretariat, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Mark Peters
Peters First Nations (Coastal Region)

James Mack
Assistant Deputy Minister for Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Mark Thomas
Shuswap Band (Columbia Region)

FWCP TEAM

Peace Region management and operations are implemented by our Peace Region Manager, Chelsea Regina. During this fiscal year, Chelsea was supported by Program Manager Margo Sadler, Indigenous and Environmental Initiatives Coordinator Shesley Callison-Hanna, and Environmental Project Coordinators Sharon Johnson and Soo Lee. Communications and community engagement for all three FWCP regions were led by Lynne Betts and Angus Glass.