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Evaluation and Financial Audit of the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program

Final Report

Prepared for:

**BC Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural
Resource Operations and Rural Development**

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Submitted By:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Method of Evaluation

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) is a partnership between BC Hydro (BCH), the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and Public Stakeholders. Annual funding and in-kind support is provided by BC Hydro to the FWCP to support projects that address conservation and enhancement priorities for fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams.

The FWCP Governance Manual requires that an evaluation of the program occur every 5 years. This evaluation examined issues and questions related to the achievement of outcomes, program partnership, program design and delivery, administrative efficiency and the use of funds in order to identify opportunities to improve the FWCP and its impact on fish, wildlife and their supporting habitat. The evaluation relied on multiple lines of evidence including: a document review; analysis of project and financial data; interviews with members of the Regional Boards, Technical Committees, First Nations Working Group, Policy Committee and FWCP staff, as well as with a sample of successful and unsuccessful project proponents; an online survey of the public and other stakeholders; and a comparative analysis of three similar programs.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Key findings and conclusions related to the achievement of outcomes include:

- **FWCP project expenditures towards compensating for footprint impacts in the Coastal, Columbia and Peace regions have totalled \$40.19 million over a five year period from F15-F19.** Expenditures and projects have been directed at target species and habitats and have followed the priorities set out in regional Action Plans; it follows that some progress has been made towards compensating for footprint impacts. However, the scale and scope of footprint impacts is very large relative to the current capacity of the program and some impacts will likely not be compensated for so long as the impacting infrastructure is in place.
- **According to the stakeholders contacted, the FWCP has made progress against all four Strategic Objectives over the past five years.** Projects targeting caribou, sturgeon, arctic grayling, bats and many other species as well as land securement and large-scale nutrient restoration programs have achieved progress against the conservation-based Strategic Objectives of the FWCP. Some progress towards sustainable use objectives have also been made by fisheries projects. Board, Technical Committee and First Nations Working Group members stated that most progress was made towards building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nations communities; however, these relationships require ongoing attention and there is a need to maintain and enhance these relationships.
- **Significant challenges exist to understanding the overall impact and effectiveness of the FWCP in the watersheds and ecosystems in which it operates.** Large scale effectiveness monitoring programs are beyond the current funding capacity of the FWCP but results from targeted evaluations of specific projects could be used to a greater extent to yield findings that could demonstrate the level of success within a specific geographic area or species of focus, and provide future strategic direction for the program. Metrics for habitat restoration and land securement could also be identified and tracked in the Grant Management System.

Key findings and conclusions related to the FWCP partnership model include:

- **Most representatives interviewed have a positive view of the five-way partnership model and each partner is represented to some extent in the operation and delivery of the program.**

Agency representatives are involved in all three regional boards and comprise the Policy Committee. Technical Committees are mostly comprised of BC Government and BCH staff. In the Columbia Region, FLNRORD is extensively involved in delivering projects on behalf of the BC Government.

First Nations representation includes three members on each of the Coastal and Columbia Boards; nine members on the Peace Board, all members of the First Nations Working Group, and some members on Technical Committees. In the Peace Region a Notice of Intent process contributes to an increase in First Nations involvement in projects led by non-First Nation entities. In the Peace and Coastal Regions First Nations governments, organizations or individuals are involved as either the proponent or a partner in over half of all projects.

Regional Boards each include 3 public representatives, and some technical committees also have public members. Members of the public are also involved in the delivery of projects as either non-governmental organizations or private-sector consultants who submit proposals for FWCP funding.

- **Some representatives indicated there are significant problems with the current partnership model, and meaningful involvement in project design and delivery by First Nations partners varies by region.**

Key findings and conclusions related to the design and delivery of the FWCP are as follows:

- **Action Plans successfully drive proposals and directed projects but contain too many actions to address over the lifetime of the plans.** Some actions do not have a clear and direct link to FWCP objectives.
- **The process to select projects viewed positively by most representatives interviewed.**
- **FWCP has strong regional differences among delivery and project funding mechanisms.** Regional Boards have the ability to use program funds in various ways. For example, in the Coastal region, 81% of project funds are distributed through annual grants to proponents. In the Columbia, over 75% of funds are directed to core projects, and in the Peace, about 30% of all project expenditures are through directed studies with the remaining through annual grants.

Key findings of the financial audit are as follows:

- **Of the \$40.19 million spent on projects province wide from F15-F19, 61% has been spent in the Columbia region, 23% in the Coastal region and 15% in the Peace region.** All regions have been spending down surpluses accumulated during previous years when the program was transitioning to the new model.
- **The FWCP is cost efficient as 85% of total expenditures were devoted to project spending from F15 to F19 while the remainder was devoted to the administration and communications.** The Columbia devoted 89% of expenditures to projects, the Coastal spent 83% on projects, and the Peace spent 74%. Annual BC Hydro contributions and fixed administration costs vary between regions and are the underlying reason for regional discrepancies in project funding allocations.

- **Many interviewees indicated that the scope of footprint impacts cannot be addressed with current funding** and the FWCP needs increased funding in order to make meaningful progress against the intended objectives.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the evaluation. The order of the recommendations is not intended to reflect the relative priority or importance of a given recommendation over another.

1. Clarify the scope and intended outcomes of Strategic Objective #3: Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use.

It is important to ensure that Boards and Committees have a clear understanding of how to incorporate this objective into proposal evaluations and to ensure that it is not outside of the scope of responsibilities of the FWCP.

2. Undertake a detailed review of the Columbia core programs to ensure that they reflect the intent and priorities of the partnership, and are aligned with and maximize the achievement of the intended outcomes of the program.

The Columbia Region is unique in allocating the majority of its annual budget to “core” programs as opposed to projects funded through annual grants to proponents. This is a result of a letter of agreement between FLNRORD and FWCP that has not undergone comprehensive review since its inception. This evaluation makes no specific conclusions on the appropriateness or effectiveness of individual core programs, however many respondents indicated that annual project review sessions do not allow sufficient time or independence to adequately assess the value provided by core programs towards achievement of FWCP intended outcomes, and that there is a link between the primacy of core programs and the low levels of First Nations involvement in project delivery in the Columbia region.

3. Increase program funding levels.

Stakeholders in each region described that with current funding capacity the FWCP is unable to achieve its intended outcome of compensating for footprint impacts of BC Hydro generation facilities. All regions have enjoyed surplus funds accumulated in prior years when the focus was on developing the new model and supporting the strength of the partnership (e.g. developing the First Nations Working Group) but will soon be faced with difficult decisions as they are forced to operate within the amounts currently contributed by BC Hydro annually. For the Peace region this problem is most acute because they receive the least annually from BC Hydro but have the highest administration costs as a direct result of the progress achieved through the MOU with First Nations and the First Nations Working Group. In the context of Recommendation #2, above, it might be prudent to conduct the review of core programs before determining the appropriate level of funding increase for the Columbia region given that achieving financial efficiencies or identifying specific funding needs may be among the outcomes of that review.

4. Continue to reduce the total number of actions in Action Plans and ensure that there is a clear causal relationship between actions and overall Program objectives.

The Peace Region is next to update their plans. Information sharing between regions should be encouraged to ensure that the Peace Board learns from the experience of Coastal and Columbia regions who have recently updated their Action Plans.

5. Explore the potential for increased use of directed studies.

The benefits of directed studies are that they allow for a more strategic focus towards habitat and species restoration as compared to the proponent-driven model. The apparent success of the Peace region Arctic Grayling Monitoring Framework could be presented to other Regional Boards as a case study.

6. Explore options for the Columbia region to increase the involvement of First Nations in the operation and delivery of the program.

Actions that support the partnership between First Nations and the FWCP should be supported in all regions, but the relationship in the Columbia requires focused and meaningful attention. The level of participation in FWCP projects by First Nations is significantly lower in the Columbia region than in the Peace or Coastal.

7. Develop a program logic model and performance measurement strategy.

To appropriately measure the performance and impact of a program, the following steps are required:

- a. Determine the objectives of the program.
- b. Prepare a program logic model that indicates the causal links between the program activities and the intended immediate, intermediate and long-term intended outcomes of the program.
- c. Develop key performance measures/indicators to determine whether the intended immediate and intermediate outcomes in the logic model have been achieved.
- d. Develop targets for each of the key performance measures/indicators and monitor the program performance to determine if the targets have been achieved.

The above process is undertaken for most federal government programs, particularly for grants and contributions programs. To date, the FWCP has undertaken the first step above which is the statement of program objectives as well as developed a few key performance measures. The next steps required to appropriately evaluate the performance of the FWCP are to produce a program logic model and develop a performance measurement strategy. This would involve the following:

- a. Review and finalize the objectives for the program – this should include a review of whether existing objectives are relevant and aligned with the ultimate intended outcome of compensating for footprint impacts
- b. Prepare a program logic model that contains the intended immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes of the program and the program activities required to achieve these intended outcomes.
- c. Prepare a performance measurement strategy that contains the key performance measures/indicators and data sources that should be used to measure the extent to which the immediate and intermediate outcomes have been achieved.

8. Review specific sections of the Governance Manual to ensure it is up-to-date and reflects current practices and priorities.

Some specific sections of the Governance Manual that should be reviewed include the following: public member roles and responsibilities; Appendix K – Data and Report Management, Ownership of FWCP Project Information and Intellectual Property to ensure they are consistent with current technology and provincial policy; and “Role of the Chair” description in Appendix F – First Nations Working Group Terms of Reference to ensure it is consistent with the operational culture desired by FNWG members.

9. Seek further direction from BC Government and BC Hydro regarding the nature of FWCP’s

obligations under UNDRIP.

Notwithstanding the focus the Program currently has towards improving the extent of meaningful involvement in the operation and delivery of the FWCP by First Nations partners, the Program cannot on its own address government to government issues.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. FISH & WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), First Nations and public stakeholders. Annual funding and in-kind support is provided by BC Hydro to the FWCP to support projects that address conservation and enhancement priorities for fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams. The FWCP currently operates in three regions of British Columbia: in the Peace and Columbia regions, the FWCP is a mechanism to meet BC Hydro's water licence conditions; in the Coastal region, BC Hydro's contribution is voluntary.

The FWCP has a harmonized governance and delivery framework with a local board in each region. At the Program level, a committee comprised of a BC Hydro Director, an Assistant Deputy Minister of Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), and the Regional Director of DFO Pacific Region devotes a portion of their time to the FWCP and are responsible for policy direction, governance and the overall strategic framework for the program. Independent boards in each region (i.e. Coastal, Columbia and Peace) are comprised of representatives from BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., DFO (Coastal only), First Nations and public stakeholders and are responsible for providing oversight to the planning and implementation of the FWCP and for approving all FWCP projects and budgets. Regional boards are supported in their work by Fish and Wildlife Technical Committees who provide technical advice related to strategic planning and project selection. In the Peace region, a First Nations Working Group provides advice and ensures First Nations' considerations and input are included in strategic planning, annual plans and projects. A Regional Manager in each region reports to the regional board and is responsible for overall program implementation including Board and committee coordination, budget and contract development and management, proponent liaison and strategic planning. At the Program level, the FWCP Program Manager supports operational and strategic planning and activities in each region, and is responsible for communicating FWCP information to the Policy Committee and regional boards.

B. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The FWCP Governance Manual requires that an evaluation of the program occur every five years. This evaluation examined issues and questions related to the achievement of outcomes, program partnership, program design and delivery, administrative efficiency and the use of funds in order to identify opportunities to improve the FWCP and its impact on fish, wildlife and their supporting habitat.

C. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has been informed by multiple lines of evidence. The following is a brief summary of the lines of evidence used while additional detail is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

- **Document Review:** We reviewed program documentation including the governance documents, the program website, action plans, annual reports and other documents.
- **Project and Financial Data Analysis:** We reviewed and analyzed project-level data related to proponents, expenditures, targeted species and other dimensions and reviewed and analyzed financial data from quarterly and annual reports with respect to the level of expenditures related to administration, communications and project spending and other dimensions relevant to the evaluation.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** We conducted interviews with 56 of the total of 90 members of Regional

Boards, Technical Committees and the First Nations Working Group, including 56% of Coastal representatives, 83% of Columbia representatives and 54% of Peace representatives. We also interviewed members of the Policy Committee and FWCP staff. A small number (less than 10) of interviews were conducted with representatives of successful and unsuccessful project proponents and stakeholders.

- **Online Survey:** A total of 129 surveys were completed online by 44 proponents and 85 other survey respondents including natural resource professionals, individuals and organizations concerned with fish and wildlife and their habitat and/or an interest in the operation of the FWCP, and agency employees involved with the FWCP.
- **Comparative Analysis of FWCP with Similar Programs:** Three similar programs were reviewed: the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program; the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF); and, the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

D. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter describes the findings of the evaluation while Chapter III contains the evaluation conclusions and recommendations. Appendix 1 provides a detailed description of the evaluation methodology and Appendix 2 provides a comparative analysis of the FWCP with similar programs.

E. REPORT NOTES

The following notes are provided for clarity:

- The term "Agency" is used throughout the report to refer to one or any collective of the following organizations: BC Hydro, BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), or Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).
- The primary scope of this evaluation and financial audit is a five year period from F14-F19. However, beginning in F17, the FWCP Grant Management System makes available certain project-level data that is not otherwise compiled for years prior to F17. As such, this report also presents project-level data that is based on a four year period from F17-F20 in order to include as much of this comprehensive data source as possible. For continuity, this report uses the following FWCP convention to identify fiscal years:
 - F15: April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015
 - F16: April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016
 - F17: April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017
 - F18: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018
 - F19: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019
 - F20: April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020
- From 2014-2019, the FWCP-Columbia Region partnered with the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) to deliver the Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan (UKEEP). This evaluation report presents some information (such as the target species of projects and the distribution of projects by proponent type) for the Columbia region including UKEEP-funded projects, and are labeled as such. However, since the CBT provided the funding for UKEEP projects, UKEEP expenditures are not reflected in the financial audit section of this report.

- Key informant interview responses form an important component of the evaluation findings. We have excluded some outlier responses in cases where a theme or opinion was expressed by only a single respondent.

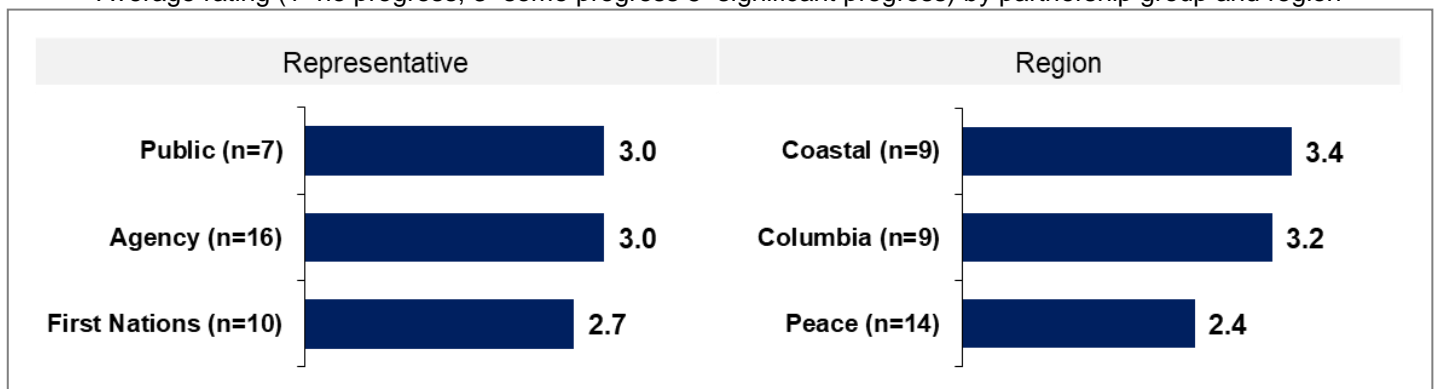
II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES

1. Compensation for Footprint Impacts

The FWCP exists as a response to conditions found in water licences issued to BC Hydro for the construction of hydro-electric generation facilities in the Columbia and Peace regions. The Coastal Program is a voluntary initiative but reflects the same focus of responding to the footprint impact of BC Hydro owned and operated generation facilities. Figure 1 shows the average rating provided by key informants as to the progress made towards compensating for footprint impacts by the FWCP through the projects it has funded over the past 5 years, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is no progress, 3 is some progress and 5 is significant progress. Both public stakeholders and agency representatives indicated that some progress has been achieved (i.e. average rating of 3) while First Nations representatives provided a slightly lower average rating (2.7). On a regional basis, stakeholders in the Coastal region provided the highest average rating (3.4) regarding progress in compensating for footprint impacts while the average rating of stakeholders in the Columbia and Peace region was 3.2 and 2.4, respectively. Approximately one-quarter of all interviewees said that they were unable to assess the extent to which progress had occurred.

Figure 1: Extent to which FWCP projects have contributed towards compensating for footprint impacts
Average rating (1=no progress, 3=some progress 5=significant progress) by partnership group and region



Source: Key Informant Interview data

- **Several key informants who indicated that progress has occurred in compensating for footprint impacts rationalized that since tangible work has occurred within the impacted watersheds and systems, it follows that at least some compensation has been made towards footprint impacts on fish and wildlife and their supporting habitats.** (17 responses)
 - These individuals described examples of efforts made towards specific species and habitats, and the positive impact of land securement that has occurred with FWCP support as evidence of progress and a positive contribution towards compensation.

The most frequent reasons of respondents regarding why the progress of the FWCP in compensating for footprint impacts has been constrained are as follows:

- **The scale and scope of footprint impacts are so large relative to the impact the FWCP can have at current funding levels.** (19 responses)
 - Many of these individuals feel that full compensation is not truly possible because the changes and footprint impacts are so substantial.

- **Funding of projects and studies that lack a clear connection to footprint impacts.** (9 responses)
 - Some said this was a result of a lack of continuity between studies and subsequent projects while others indicated that it is an inherent characteristic of a proponent-driven model that relies on disparate entities to submit proposals and undertake projects.
- **Efforts are being made in the right direction but external factors such as other impacts on habitat or limited opportunities for compensation have constrained the ability of FWCP to achieve significant results.** (5 responses)

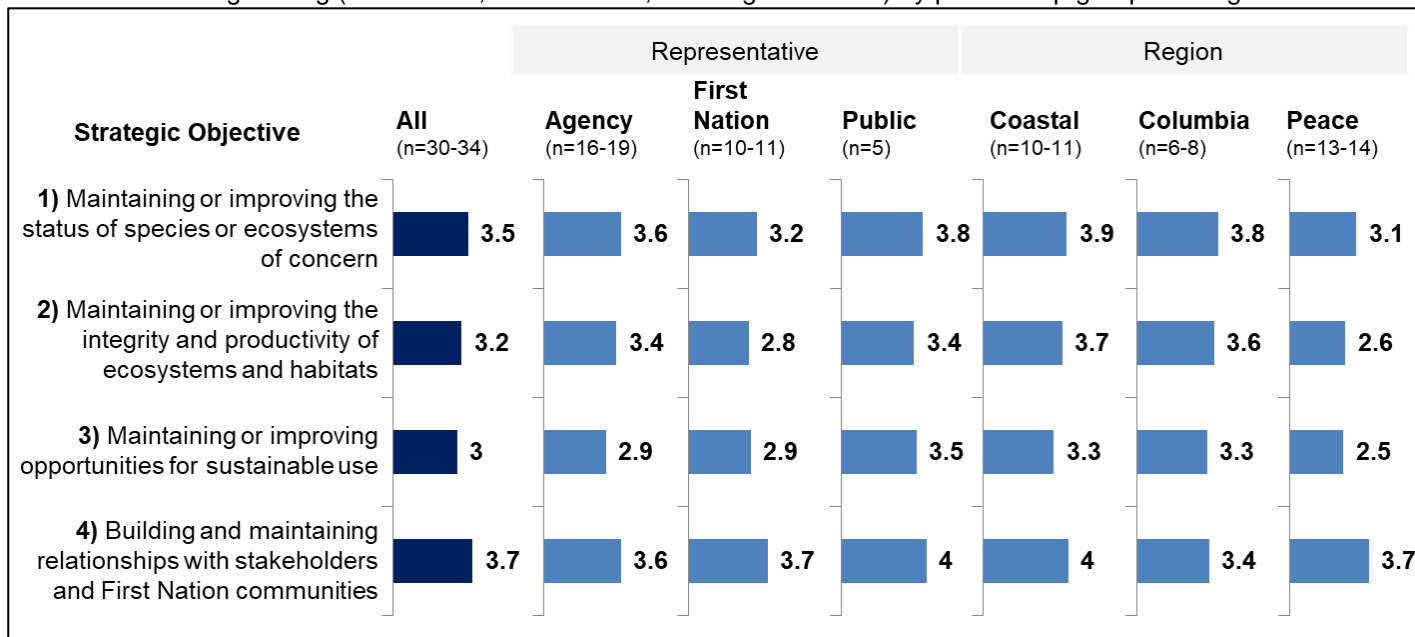
2. Achievement of Strategic Objectives

The Governance Manual indicates the following four Strategic Objectives of the FWCP:

1. Maintaining or improving the status of species or ecosystems of concern
2. Maintaining or improving the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats
3. Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use
4. Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nation communities

Figure 2 presents the average ratings provided by interviewees regarding the extent to which FWCP supported projects have contributed towards achieving the above strategic objectives in the past 5 years, shown by partnership group and region of respondent. Overall, respondents indicated that the FWCP has contributed to the achievement of all four objectives. The highest average rating (3.7) was given for the achievement of Objective #4 (Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nation communities) on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all, 3 is somewhat and 5 is to a great extent.

Figure 2: Extent to which FWCP projects have contributed to achieving Strategic Objectives in the past 5 years
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=to a great extent) by partnership group and region



Source: Key Informant Interviews

In terms of the achievement of the two conservation-focused objectives, the average rating was 3.5 for Objective 1 (Maintaining or improving the status of species or ecosystems of concern) which is slightly higher than the average rating of 3.2 for Objective 2 (Maintaining or improving the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats). These findings indicate that, on average, respondents stated that more progress

has been achieved in maintaining or improving the status of species or ecosystems than improving or maintaining the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats, largely because the latter tends to be more difficult and has fewer opportunities. As indicated in Figure 2, the extent to which the FWCP has contributed to Objective 3 (Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use) received the lowest average rating (3) from interviewees, with some seeing it as a logical extension of 1 & 2, and others questioning its alignment with the intended scope and responsibilities of the FWCP.

Figure 3 shows the average ratings by proponents in each region regarding the extent to which they felt that their projects contributed towards FWCP Strategic Objectives over the last five years. Overall, proponents indicated that their projects made a greater contribution towards FWCP Strategic Objectives than that indicated by the agency, First Nations and public representatives that were involved in FWCP committees as shown in Figure 2. However, there does exist considerable agreement between proponent responses and the responses by agency, First Nations and public representatives with regard to the FWCP making a greater contribution to the achievement of Objective 1 (Maintaining or improving the status of species or ecosystems of concern) than the achievement of Objective 2 (Maintaining or improving the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats). Both groups of respondents indicated that the lowest contribution was made by the FWCP to the achievement of Objective 3 (Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use). Similarly, both groups of respondents indicated that a significant contribution has been made by the FWCP towards the achievement of Objective 4 (Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nation communities).

Figure 3: Proponent ratings of project contribution towards Strategic Objectives in the past 5 years
Average rating among surveyed proponents (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=to a great extent) by region

Category	Coastal (n=8-14)	Columbia (n=13-19)	Peace (n=5-8)
1) Maintaining or improving the status of species or ecosystems of concern	4.3	4.1	4.5
2) Maintaining or improving the integrity and productivity of ecosystems and habitats	4.0	4.3	4.3
3) Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use	2.9	3.8	4.0
4) Building and Maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nations Communities	3.9	3.9	4.4

Source: FWCP Evaluation Survey

Conservation Objectives

Regarding the conservation-focused Strategic Objectives 1 & 2, interviewees had the following specific comments about the extent to which the program has contributed to these objectives:

- **The program has achieved progress against the conservation-focused objectives through a focus on some target species and/or habitats.** (22 responses)
 - Examples included caribou, sturgeon, arctic grayling, bat species and others
 - Others mentioned the effectiveness of land securement efforts (6 responses) and nutrient restoration programs (4 responses).

Figure 4 supports the position expressed above that the program has directed resources towards certain target species and habitats. It shows \$33.73 million in project budgets over a four-year period (F17-F20) by benefitting species, including significant amounts for salmon, resident salmonids, ungulates, bats, birds,

reptiles and amphibians, and other species. Many of the projects recorded as befitting “other birds” and “fish in general” are habitat focused.

Figure 4: Benefitting Species by Project Budget, F17-F20¹

	FWCP Total	Coastal	Columbia	Peace
All Project Expenditures	\$33.73	\$6.47	\$20.35	\$6.90
Any Fish (NET)	\$19.51	\$4.87	\$11.54	\$3.10
Salmon, Steelhead	\$6.95	\$4.68	\$1.71	\$0.57
Resident salmonids	\$7.06	\$2.89	\$2.16	\$2.00
Other specific fish species	\$1.55	\$0.54	\$0.94	\$0.07
Fish in general	\$9.51	\$0.16	\$8.35	\$1.00
Any Wildlife (Net)	\$17.12	\$2.76	\$10.00	\$4.36
Any Mammal (Net)	\$12.38	\$1.53	\$6.80	\$4.05
Ungulates	\$8.14	\$0.39	\$4.67	\$3.08
Canids, ursids, felids	\$3.48	\$0.21	\$2.59	\$0.68
Mustelids, other small mammal	\$3.97	\$0.66	\$2.81	\$0.50
Bats	\$2.81	\$0.73	\$1.43	\$0.65
Any Bird (Net)	\$7.76	\$1.77	\$4.96	\$1.03
Owls and other raptors	\$2.90	\$1.16	\$1.44	\$0.30
Aquatic birds	\$2.38	\$0.52	\$1.86	\$0.00
Other birds	\$6.24	\$1.02	\$4.40	\$0.81
Reptiles and Amphibians	\$3.98	\$1.12	\$2.47	\$0.40

Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

- **Several individuals reasoned that since the conservation objectives form such a large component of project approval decisions, it logically follows that some progress is being made towards meeting the conservation-focused objectives.** (10 responses)

Several limitations to achieving progress against the conservation-focused Strategic Objectives were mentioned by respondents:

- **External impacts and other factors that affect ecosystems significantly limit the ability of the FWCP to maintain and improve certain species or ecosystems on its own.** (12 responses)
- **There are limits to the resources of the FWCP and there are in some cases limits to the opportunities that exist for achieving significant progress.** (5 responses)
- **The program tends to fund research and studies as opposed to “on-the-ground” restoration projects.** (5 responses)
 - Several individuals expressed concern that the feedback loop to allow the findings of research to inform additional work or natural resource management decisions is insufficient.
- **Some respondents said that the proponent-driven model limits the program effectiveness to the**

¹ The data comes from project applicants who indicate which species(s) is targeted and/or will benefit from a project. Many projects impact multiple species so there is some overlap in the values presented and values will not sum to the total for “All Project Expenditures”.

quality of proposals received and projects undertaken. (3 responses)

- Several respondents called for a more strategic focus towards habitat and species restoration.

Sustainable Use

In general, key informants had a difficult time assessing the extent to which FWCP has achieved or contributed towards Strategic Objective 3 (Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use).

- **Progress supporting this objective was reported most in connection to some areas of success on fisheries projects.** (9 responses)
- **Others indicated that it logically follows the conservation-based objectives,** in that in many instances, improving the status of some species or habitats could lead to opportunities for human use of those animals and plants.
- **Many acknowledged that it is difficult to determine a direct connection between most projects and this objective** and said that there were limited opportunities, especially on the wildlife and terrestrial side.
- **Some respondents were unsure of the appropriateness of this focus of the FWCP and the potential overlap with provincial and/or federal government management decisions.**

Build and Maintain Relationships with Stakeholders and First Nations Communities

When reflecting on the progress made towards FWCP Strategic Objective #4 (Build and maintain relationships with stakeholders and First Nation communities), most key informants focused on the relationship between the FWCP and First Nations, but also had public stakeholders in mind.

Key informants described the following ways in which the FWCP has been meeting or contributing to this strategic objective:

- **First Nations and public representation on the Regional Boards, Technical Committees and the Peace Region First Nations Working Group.** (15 responses)
- **Program communications and outreach among potential proponents, community events, and First Nation partners.** (9 responses)
- **Several respondents mentioned that it is a focus of the program and collaboration as well as some form of engagement with First Nations has become an expectation for most projects.** (8 responses)
 - Some noted that this is a clear improvement over the past and that in addition to most projects having some form of First Nations involvement, the extent of First Nations involvement in projects is increasing. (7 responses)

Table 1 presents project data related to project-level partnerships. Among grant projects approved from F17-F20, 90% of Coastal annual grant projects were associated with at least 1 partner, and the average project had 3.9 partners in total. In the Columbia region, 77% of projects had at least 1 partner, and an average project included 1.7 NGO partners and a total of 3.5 partners. In the Peace, 84% of grant projects were associated with at least 1 partner, and the average project included 1 First Nations partner and 3 partners in total.

Table 1: Annual Grant Partnerships by Region F17-F20 Total

Region	Total Number of Annual Grant Projects	% of Projects with at least 1 Partner	Average Number of Partners				
			First Nations	Agency	NGO	Private sector	Total
Coastal	122	90%	0.8	1.2	1.1	0.4	3.9
Columbia (including UKEEP)	128	77%	0.4	1.2	1.7	0.3	3.5
Peace	86	84%	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.6	3.0

Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019. Average values include projects with zero partners.

Some interviewees described limits to the progress made towards Strategic Objective #4:

- **Despite processes such as the Notice of Intent, engagement with First Nations by potential proponents can vary widely in terms of the extent to which it contributes to building meaningful relationships.** (6 responses)
 - A few noted that at the program level, the representation on boards and committees shows progress against the strategic objective but that the project-level relationship-building and involvement of First Nations is an area needing further attention and improvement. (3 responses)
- **Some interviewees expressed concern that some community groups, NGOs, and First Nations have become withdrawn or indifferent to the program.** (3 responses)
 - Some proponents who are unsatisfied with the feedback received on proposals and with the administrative burden of FWCP processes have indicated they are unlikely to pursue FWCP funding in the future.
- **Some interviewees indicated that this objective is outside of the scope of the FWCP in that it is not directly related to footprint impacts on fish and wildlife and their supporting habitat.** (4 responses)

3. Measuring Effectiveness

Many key informants expressed that it is difficult to assess how much progress has been made by the program against the Strategic Objectives or for compensating for footprint impacts because there is limited quantification of outcomes. We asked key informants if and how the FWCP can better evaluate effectiveness and achievement of outcomes, and if it is possible to measure the ecological impact of the program within a given geographic area or ecosystem. In general, there is support for enhanced tracking of program outputs and for incorporating lessons learned and best practices from projects into future project cycles, but there is little interest in the FWCP attempting to evaluate the net impacts of the program on targeted species or ecosystems. The following is a summary of comments provided by key informants:

- **An improvement to the status quo would be to track performance measures or metrics that relate to program outputs (e.g. area of habitat restored).** (18 responses).
 - These individuals noted that Regional Boards would need to first identify the performance measures or metrics that are feasible to track and relate to their priorities and to establish a baseline value to track against.
- **Cumulative impacts make assessing ecological effectiveness beyond the capacity of the FWCP.** (16 responses)
 - The concern expressed was that the cost would not be worth the effort and the information that would result may not reveal meaningful or useful information.

- **Focus on funding technically sound projects that align with intended outcomes and action plan priorities and conduct a sample of site visits and evaluations of certain large projects or project areas.** (10 responses)
- **Compel proponents of projects over a certain dollar value or of a certain type to imbed monitoring and evaluation activates into their projects.** (4 responses)

Over the past 5 years, efforts by the FWCP to gain understanding of project and program effectiveness have included the following projects:

- **Coastal Evaluation Plus 2014-15**
 - Evaluation conducted of eight FWCP projects (4 fisheries and 4 wildlife) implemented in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Documentation reviews or 'On Paper' evaluations found that all projects had partially or fully met the targeted technical and scientific objectives; 6 were completed on schedule; and projects with complete budget information were in compliance with planned budgets.
 - Biological performance, or 'In the field' evaluations of the projects found that while at least some projects are improving habitat quality for wildlife, monitoring is required to verify effectiveness and to ensure that enhanced habitats remain functional.
 - According to the report authors: "Overall, it was apparent that proponents were generally meeting their deliverable obligations and delivering high quality products. Most of the FWCP projects evaluated from 2011, 2012 and 2013 were providing the biological benefits as proposed."
- **Coastal Strategic Project Review 2015-16**
 - Involved a desktop review of available documentation for projects funded between 2010-2016 to evaluate funded projects, gauge progress toward achieving Action Plan objectives, assess requirements for updating Action Plans, and identify priorities for future investment.
 - Details of projects were entered into the FWCP-Coastal Wildlife and Salmonids Action Plan Database based on a review of the project proposal, the final project report and other available project data. Project documents were reviewed to assess alignment with Priority Actions from Action Plans as well as to record details related to the project proponent and funding amounts. Metrics for evaluating project success were then recorded as answers to 26 questions that had been developed in consultation with the FWCP-Coastal Board. Answers to key questions were then used to calculate an Effectiveness Score for each project. Effectiveness scores range from 0-5 to provide a measure of how well an individual FWCP-funded project aligns with the Board's concept of 'effective'. A separate status table was prepared for each watershed to summarize the number of projects and sum of FWCP investment by Priority Action; an assessment of whether the Priority Action had been addressed; and further comments about the rationale for the assessment of the status of each Priority Action.
 - The Review found that project spending was highest among Salmonid Action Plans and in certain watersheds. Research and Information Acquisition and Habitat Based Actions received the most funding, and while all fish projects had at least some alignment with Priority Actions, a majority of wildlife projects did not. Priority 1 actions received the most funding. The majority of funded projects met the strategic objectives of conservation, showed potential to increase opportunities of recreational or sustainable use to some degree, and promoted at least some community involvement, and most projects addressed species/habitats at risk or of top management concern.
- **Columbia Strategic Project Review, 2018**
 - A desktop strategic project review was conducted of all (FWCP) Columbia Region long-term (i.e. CORE) and Grant projects funded from Fiscal Year 2013- 14 (FY14) to Fiscal Year 2016-17 (FY17) to assist in 1) gauging FWCP Columbia's progress towards achieving action plan priorities; 2) identifying knowledge gaps within the review period that will inform updates to action plans; and

3) to identify priorities and recommendations for future investments. The strategic review also took a comprehensive and inclusive look into how action plan priorities were being addressed by breaking down larger funded programs into discrete tasks. The evaluation did not include individual project effectiveness or “biological auditing” of specific projects, but presented a detailed summary of the number of projects, expenditures and alignment with action plans and priority actions.

- The report authors conclude that the FWCP Columbia was successful in meeting its strategic objectives by funding projects that aim to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams. The evaluation found that each of the six action plans was addressed during the review period, but to varying degrees, which resulted in certain actions being met and others going unattained. Specifically, 97 of the 211 actions, from the six action plans, were addressed at least once during the review period, leaving 114 actions that were not addressed by a single project during the review period.

➤ **Peace Strategic Project Review, 2019**

- Underway; similar approach and objectives as Coastal and Columbia Strategic Project Reviews

Comparable fish and wildlife programs are also focused on improving their response to this difficult question of how best to measure effectiveness and drive positive feedback and continuous learning. The following paragraphs summarize the approaches taken by comparable programs.

➤ **Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF)**

- The HCTF has faced many of the same challenges to measuring and tracking program effectiveness as the FWCP, evidenced in some part by the fact that a goal described in 2015 to expand and implement performance management systems has yet to happen because of the difficulty of determining appropriate measures to track that are relevant and cost effective. Like the FWCP, the HCTF continues to seek improvement and an appropriate and feasible path forward regarding effectiveness and impact measurement.
- The HCTF staff currently review all project reports for consistency with the approved proposal for the grant year; multi-year reports are reviewed and provide the background for more detailed evaluations on-site or in workshops. They also conduct annual workshops where project leaders present their results to HCTF staff, board members and other grant recipients for peer review. The stated objectives of the workshops are to: i) review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in projects; and (ii) provide a forum for project leaders, organizations, and scientists to share information and ideas on how to further fish, wildlife and habitat management and activities. The effectiveness these activities have within an evaluative capacity is unknown.
- Other activities occur on an occasional basis, such as Project Site Evaluations. HCTF selects one or two projects per year, and staff and/or members of the Board of Directors meet with the project leaders to discuss project (including financial) performance, and look at on-the-ground accomplishments. Also conducted on an occasional basis are in-depth reviews of selected projects by HCTF staff, external contractors, or a combination of the two. For example, in 2011, an evaluation was conducted of the BC Wetland Partnership Program to determine if the partner, Ducks Unlimited Canada, effectively used HCTF funds for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of on-the-ground wetland conservation projects that are consistent with HCTF strategic objectives and outcomes identified in approved project proposals.

➤ **Northwest Power and Conservation Council Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program**

- The Council tracks a number of high-level indicators related to the numbers of returning fish at different geographic locations within the Basin, and related to the reach survival of fish as it related to fish-passage survival objectives. They acknowledge that these indicators are affected by many other factors beyond the work carried out by Program projects and are relatively broad in their definition. Future versions of their Strategic Plan (Draft: July 2019) may include refinement of the

- high-level indicators tracked and otherwise embedded into the Program.
- To track what is being accomplished by projects that implement the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, the following metrics are tracked and reported on:
 - Miles of habitat improved;
 - Miles of riparian habitat protected;
 - Miles of water protected and conserved;
 - Acre-feet of water protected by installing diversion screens;
 - Miles of habitat made accessible from fish passage improvements;
 - Wildlife Habitat Units lost and mitigated, by dam; and
 - Acres of Willamette wildlife mitigation.
- The final and interim reports of all projects are reviewed to inform adaptive management.
- The Council's Independent Scientific Review Panel undertakes multiple project-level evaluations by grouping like projects together and conducting an evaluation of all projects undertaken over a given period of time. For example, they would identify all resident fish and sturgeon projects and evaluate the extent to which projects were completed as planned and what lessons were learned. A key strength of the process, according to a Program representative, is the bringing together of project proponents for question and answer sessions with the scientific panel. These meetings allow the panel a deeper understanding of the progress and outcomes of projects, but they also serve as knowledge sharing opportunities for proponents working within similar scopes of species, habitats, etc. The process is said to be useful for informing the focus of future activities.
- The Council's Independent Scientific Advisory Board also conducts studies related to overarching issues, for example, climate change or the use of fish tagging technology.

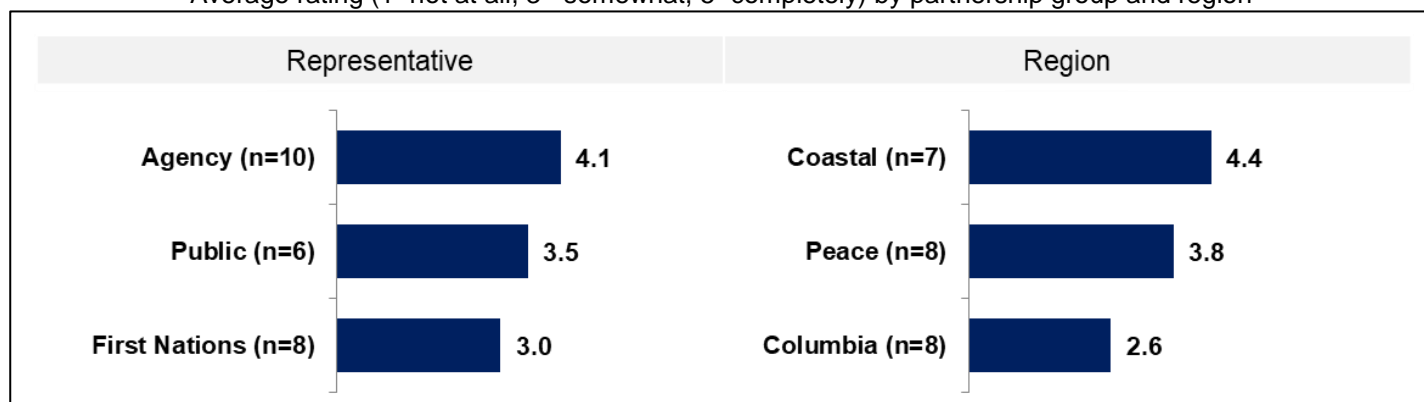
B. FWCP PARTNERSHIP

The evaluation considered aspects of the FWCP governing partnership between BC Hydro, BC Government, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, First Nations, and the public. Specifically, we asked Regional Board members and the Policy Committee their thoughts on the partnership overall, and we asked representatives on the Board, Policy Committee, First Nations Working Group, and Technical Committees the extent to which their own Partner groups are adequately involved in the operation and delivery of the program and how well their priorities and objectives are reflected by the FWCP. The following paragraphs describe the key findings related to these partnership topics.

1. The Five-Way Partnership Model

Most board members have a positive view of the five-way partnership model. As shown in the following figure, the average rating of the extent to which the partnership is adequate and appropriate was higher among Agency representatives (4.1) than it was among either First Nation reps (3.7) or Public representatives (3.5), on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all, 3 is somewhat and 5 is completely adequate and appropriate. Regionally, the average rating provided by members of the Coastal Board (4.4) was higher than either Peace (3.8) or Columbia (3.2).

Figure 5: Extent to which current partnership is considered adequate and appropriate
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by partnership group and region



Source: Key Informant Interviews.

Strengths of the partnership model described by Board members:

- **Involvement of BC Hydro, government, First Nations and public representatives is seen as a unique model that is representative and relatively well functioning, and has generally been improving over time.** (9 responses) The program is inherently strengthened through including representatives with a variety of perspectives, expertise and professional networks.

Weaknesses of the current partnership model according to key informants:

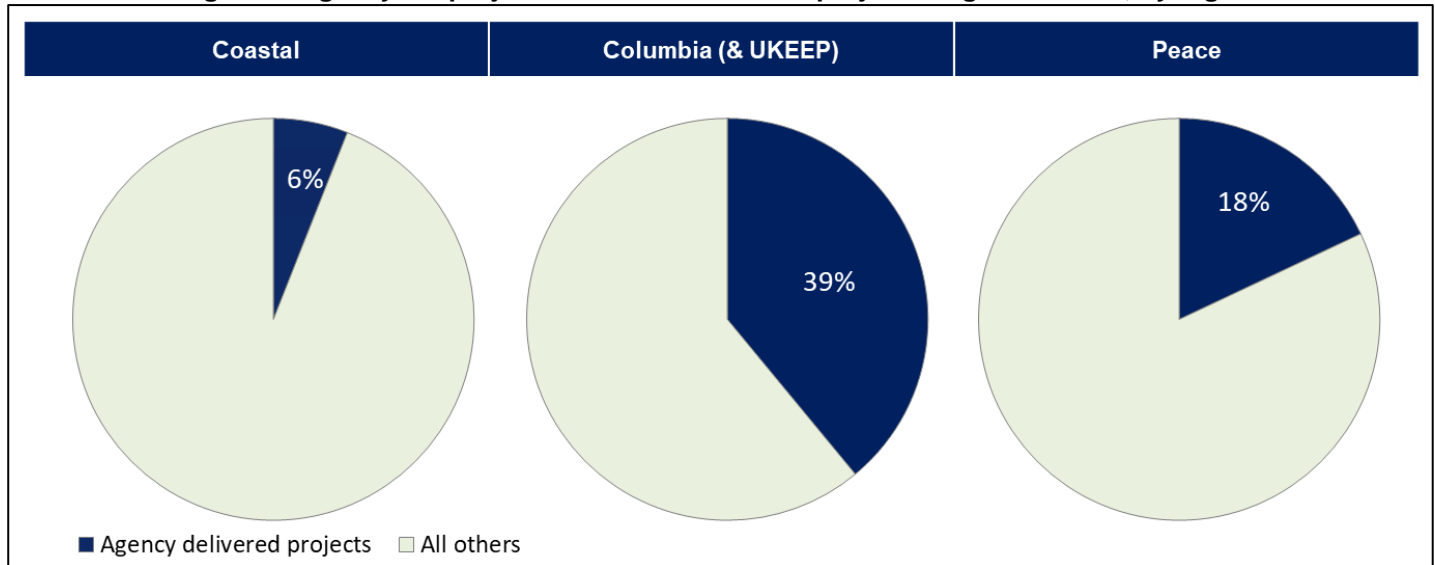
- **Some representatives indicated that there is an opportunity to further define the relationship between the FWCP and First Nations, particularly in the Columbia Region.** (5 responses) There is no First Nations (or Public) representation on the Policy Committee so a few questioned how equal the partnership truly is. Agency representatives indicated that the Policy Committee has responsibilities beyond FWCP and therefore additional membership on the Committee is not appropriate; however, it remains a concern for some FWCP Board members.
- **Some members of the Columbia Board indicated that there is a lack of cohesion among Board members.** (3 responses)

2. Agency Involvement and Representation

BC Hydro, ENV, FLNRORD, and DFO are all involved in the operation and delivery of the FWCP in various degrees. Agency representatives are involved in all 3 boards and comprise totally the Policy Committee; Technical Committees are mostly comprised of FLNRORD and BCH staff. BC Hydro provides the FWCP legal, procurement, and other services as needed without cost.

Partner Agencies are involved in delivering projects through annual grants, directed projects and long term agreements, although the extent and nature of involvement varies considerably by region. As shown in the following figure, among all projects funded by the FWCP from F17-F20, Agency-led projects total 6% of Coastal expenditures, 39% of Columbia expenditures (including Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan - UKEEP) and 18% of all Peace Region expenditures.

Figure 6: Agency led projects as a share of FWCP project budgets F17-F20, by region



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

- **FLNRORD staff interviewed tended to emphasize the importance of Ministry involvement with the FWCP due to the Ministry's roles and regulatory responsibilities with respect to land and wildlife.** (6 responses)
- **BC Hydro representatives indicated that BC Hydro's involvement in the program is necessary because they are responsible for the regulatory obligations within the water licences that are responsible for the program's existence.** (3 responses) Additionally, BC Hydro's involvement ensures continuity over time as priorities and capacity within partner Ministries fluctuate.
- **Some representatives in the Peace and Columbia regions noted that there is no DFO or other federal involvement in their regions.** (4 responses) The absence is not disruptive but may represent a missed opportunity; in the Coastal region DFOs role is valued, and the department provides local NGOs with proposal writing and other technical support that improves their projects and the likelihood of being funded.

3. First Nations Involvement and Representation

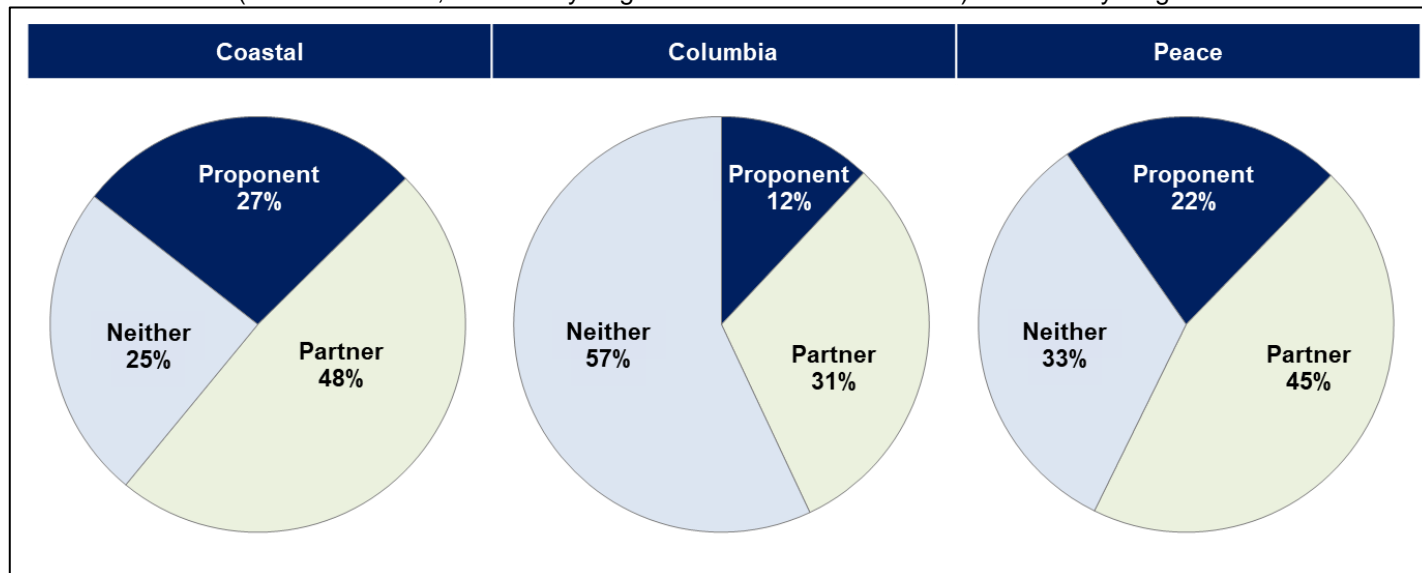
First Nations representatives include 3 members on each of the Coastal and Columbia Boards and 9 members on the Peace Board, members of the First Nations Working Group in the Peace region, and some positions on Technical Committees. First Nations representatives interviewed during this evaluation tended to indicate that the level of First Nations involvement on the Board and, in the Peace Region, through the First Nations Working Group, has been a positive improvement compared to the past. However, they also described the following ongoing challenges and opportunities for improvement:

- **Despite the improved approach of the FWCP towards the relationship with First Nations partners, meaningful involvement in strategic planning, project delivery and knowledge sharing varies considerable among First Nations communities** (9 responses).
 - Some interviewees noted that the capacity to participate fully with the program is limited in some communities as there are many other social and economic priorities for First Nations communities and governments. (4 responses)

The following figure shows the share of annual grant projects that include a First Nations entity as the

proponent or among the project partners. From F17-F20, 27% of all annual grant projects had a First Nations government or organization as the proponent, and an additional 48% of projects were associated with at least 1 First Nations partner. This leaves just 25% of annual grant projects that had neither a First Nations entity as the proponent or involved as a partner.

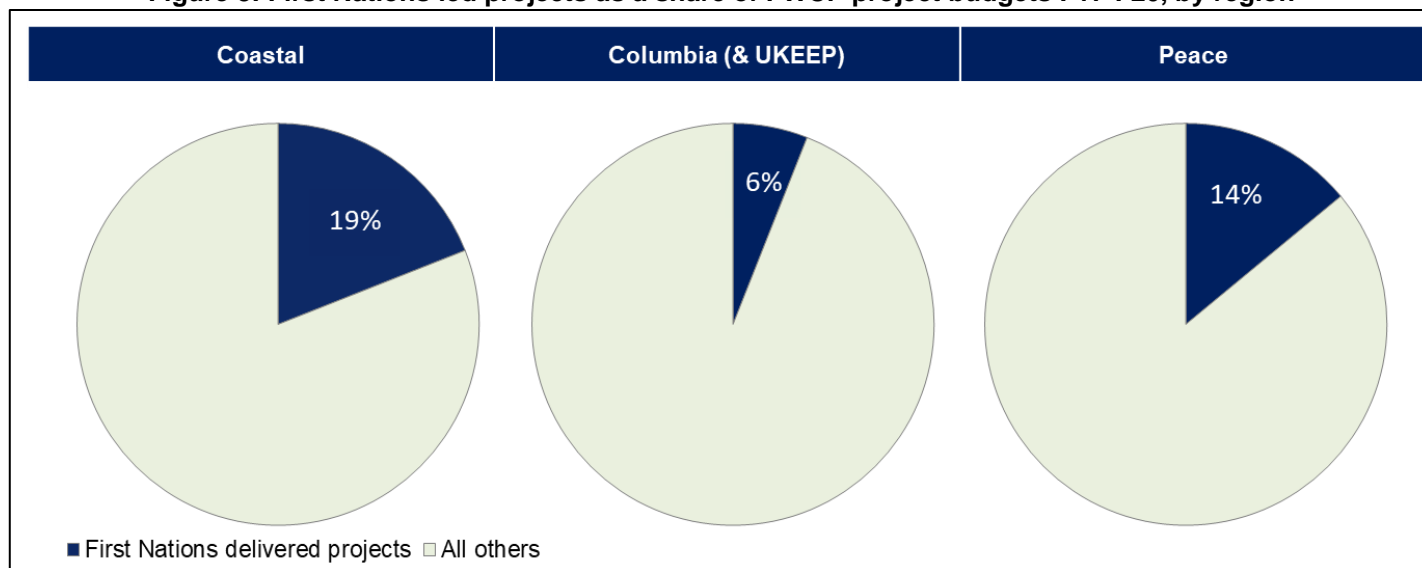
Figure 7: Share of Annual Grant Projects with First Nations proponent or partner
(I.e. Government, community or government-owned business) F17-F20 by Region



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

The following figure shows the share of all budgeted project expenditures (i.e. annual grant, directed, long term agreement) associated with First Nations (government, community or government-owned business) proponents for a four-year period from F17-F20. As indicated, First Nations led projects accounted for 19% of total budgeted project expenditures in the Coastal region, 14% in the Peace region and 6% in the Columbia region.

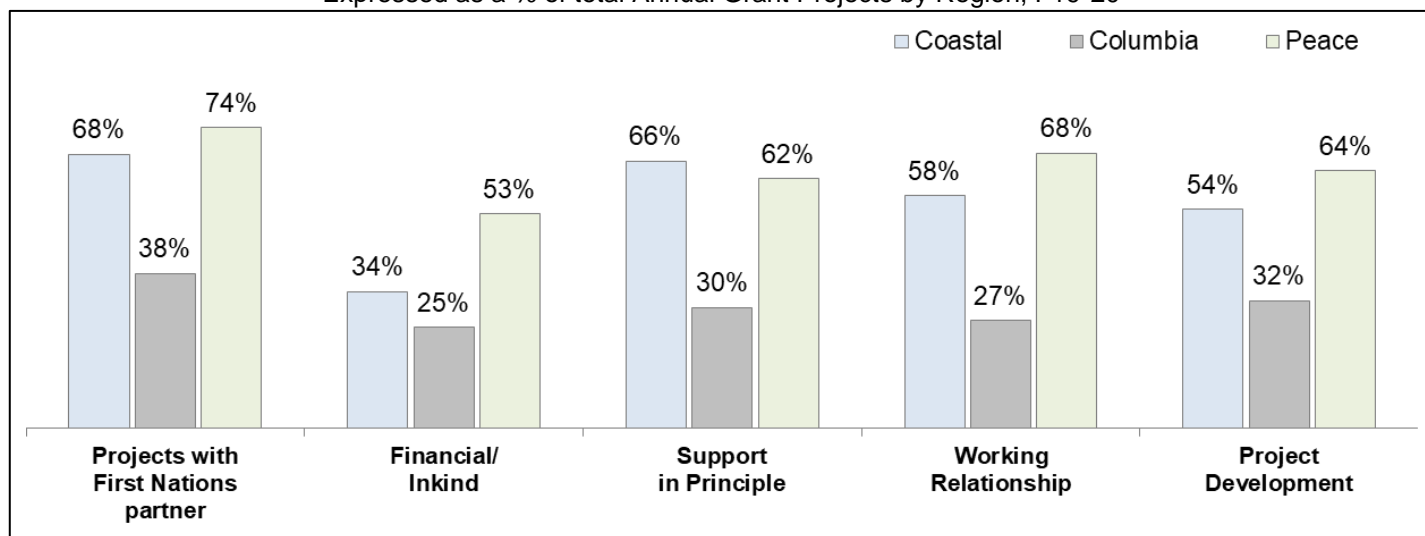
Figure 8: First Nations led projects as a share of FWCP project budgets F17-F20, by region



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

Figure 9 provides two years of data from F19-F20² to show the extent and nature of First Nations partnership involvement in annual grant funded projects. The overall involvement is highest in the Peace region where 74% of all grant funding projects in F19 and F20 included at least 1 First Nations government, organization or business as a project partner; two-thirds of projects involved First Nations partners participating in a working relationship (68%) or project development (64%). The level of involvement was lowest in the Columbia region, where just 32% of annual grant projects had First Nations partners involved in project development.

Figure 9: Extent and nature of First Nations partnership
Expressed as a % of total Annual Grant Projects by Region, F19-20



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

First Nations representatives on the Board, Technical Committees and First Nations working group were asked how well the FWCP (through strategic priorities, action plans, projects supported) reflects the priorities of First Nation partners to the Program. The average rating was 3.1 (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=to a great extent), with the following rationale expressed:

- **There has been some positive alignment of priorities with respect to specific species, habitats or projects.** (6 responses) For example, shared focus on supporting caribou populations.
- **The overarching goal of thriving and sustainable fish and populations is a shared goal with many First Nations partners.** (4 responses)
- **A few interviewees indicated that there had been good community engagement among some Nations and the FWCP during the development of Action Plans,** resulting in a closer alignment of priorities. (3 responses)

The BC Government has included in its Mandate letter to BC Hydro a direction to ensure that, given the specific mandate and context of the organization, BC Hydro incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' (TRC) Calls to Action.

We asked First Nations representatives and Agency representatives on the Regional Boards and the Policy Committee how well the FWCP aligns with TRC and UNDRIP objectives and what opportunities exist for

² Source data available for F19 and F20 only.

improved alignment. The following paragraphs summarize their responses.

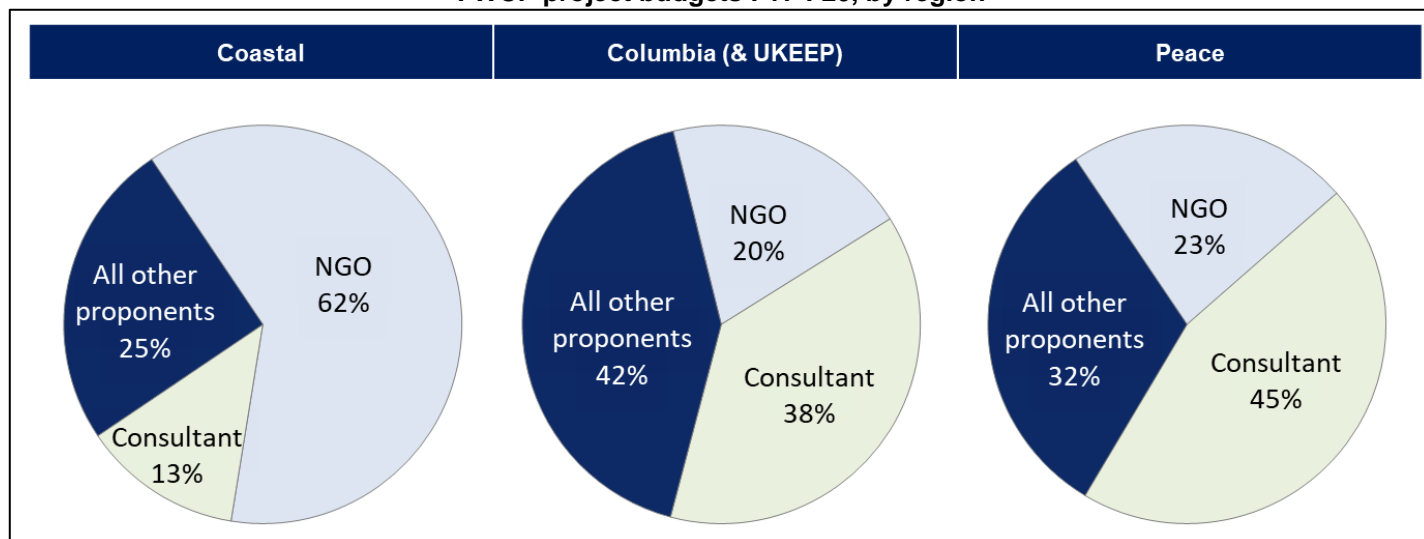
- **The program is actively working on having a meaningful relationship with First Nations partners** (9 responses). This includes the First Nations representation in the program through Boards, Technical Committees and the Notice of Intent process; First Nations Capacity Building funds in the Peace Region.
 - Many First Nations representatives agree that the Program is facing in the right direction and is making certain efforts to improve the strength of the partnership; however, they note that this is a long process and there is a need for improvements in interpersonal cultural awareness and respect among proponents and FWCP members and staff.
- **Uncertain that the FWCP has specific Reconciliation or UNDRIP obligations beyond the involvement of First Nations in the operation and delivery of the program as a full partner.** (8 responses)
 - These respondents include First Nations and Agency representatives who prefer that it remains a government to government focus at a level above the FWCP.
- **Concerns and questions regarding how the FWCP can implement UNDRIP or Reconciliation in a meaningful way.** (3 responses)
 - These individuals indicate that even if FWCP has responsibilities under UNDRIP, the government and BC Hydro must first provide greater definition and support.

4. Public Involvement and Representation

Regional Boards each include 3 public representatives, and some technical committees also have public members. Public members are distinguished from First Nations and Agency representatives in that they serve fixed 3-year terms and are selected through a competitive application and review process rather than being appointed by their employer (i.e. an Agency or First Nation government). Rather than representing a specific entity or constituency, they are individuals with extensive professional networks and subject matter expertise.

Most public representatives interviewed for this evaluation praised the program for having public representatives on the Boards, and described interacting with the public at outreach and communications events as a mechanism for ensuring they are accountable to and reflective of the public. Some expressed a sense of uncertainty in how best to reflect public perspective and priorities. Members of the public are involved in the delivery of projects as either non-governmental organizations or private-sector consultants who submit proposals for FWCP. As shown in Figure 10, public entities including NGOs and consultants have received more than half of all budgeted FWCP project expenditures in each of the three regions from F17-F20.

Figure 10: Public-led (non-government organizations and private-sector consultants) projects as a share of FWCP project budgets F17-F20, by region



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

5. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest is a risk faced by the partnership because of the composition of Boards and Technical Committees and the proponent-driven model.

Key informants provided the following comments regarding the FWCP approach to managing conflict of interest:

- **Most individuals are satisfied with the updated guidelines and feel that the processes in place are sufficient and effective in response to the potential for conflicts of interest, be they real or perceived.** (9 responses)
 - Others added that the information provided by individuals with some knowledge or awareness of proposal context, background and relevance, outweighs the risk of perceived conflict.
 - Some agency representatives found the concept of professional conflict of interest difficult to endorse as they maintain it is not possible for there to be a conflict of interest because they are carrying out their jobs on behalf of British Columbians.
- **A couple of interviewees felt that the FWCP is too risk adverse in terms of defining potential conflicts of interest (i.e. they exclude people who lack a true conflict of interest) and as a consequence it limits the sharing of relevant project information.**

The issue of conflict of interest is not unique to the FWCP. The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) is similar to the FWCP in that it has a Board of Directors comprised of representatives with extensive contacts and experience in the field, and technical committees comprised of BC government employees and other subject matter experts. Their approach has been to develop a Code of Conduct that members of the Board and Technical Committees are required to sign upon commencement of their duties. Operationally, HCTF's approach is similar to the FWCP; a conservative approach and a preference to 'err on the side of caution' with respect to Conflict of Interest and expect declarations when a perceived or actual conflict exists.

C. PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The current design and delivery of the FWCP is a product of the 2008 Evaluation; staffing changes and program delivery changes in 2012; the 2014 Governance Manual; Watershed, Basin and Action Plans; and agreements in place with partners including a MOU with First Nations in the Peace Region and Letter of Agreement with FLNRORD in the Columbia Region. Most interviewees expressed sentiments that the Program is continuously improving; only a few expressed that the changes to program delivery in 2012 were at a detriment to the Program.

1. Governance Manual

Most interviewees either had no specific comments related to the Governance Manual, or expressed support for the document as a helpful, comprehensive and 'living' document that is well aligned to day-to-day operations. Suggestions for improvement included:

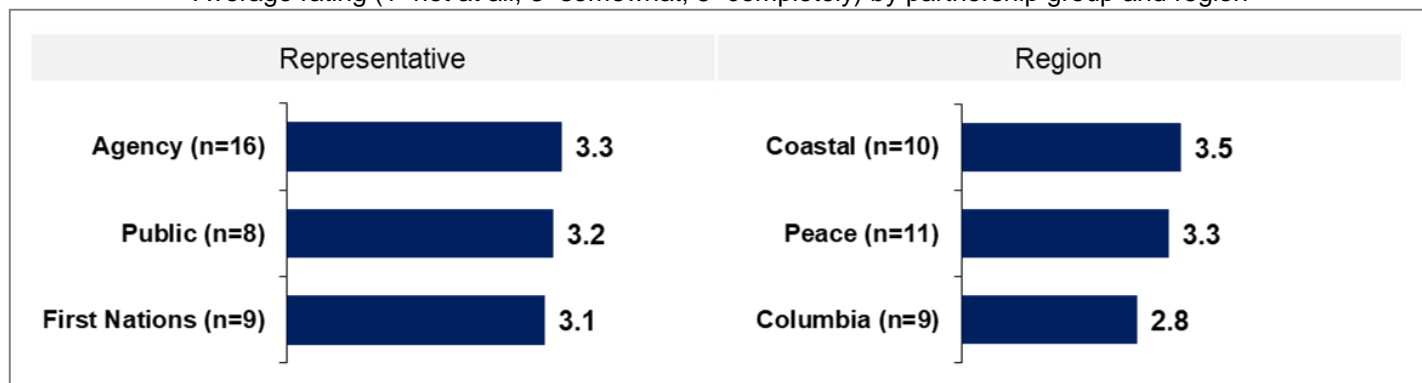
- **Review for consistency of language current usage.** (4 responses) For example, the Regional Manager role is referred to by multiple titles.
- **Review for consistency and clarity of language regarding the nature of the partnership with First Nations.** (4 responses)
- **Review specific sections of the Governance Manual to ensure consistency with current practices.** (3 responses) Some specific sections mentioned are as follows: Update and provide more detail of the public member roles and responsibilities; review Appendix K – Data and Report Management, Ownership of FWCP Project Information and Intellectual Property for consistency with current technology and provincial policy; and ensure that the "Role of the Chair" description of Appendix F – First Nations Working Group Terms of Reference is consistent with the operational culture desired by FNWG members.

2. Action Plans and Priorities

Action plans define project-level priorities for FWCP regions. In the Coastal Region, 14 Watershed Action Plans were last updated in 2017 and include the following watersheds: Alouette River, Ash River, Bridge River & Seton River, Campbell River, Cheakamus River, Clayton Falls, Clowhom, Coquitlam-Buntzen, Falls River, Jones Creek, Jordan River, Puntledge River, Shuswap River, and Stave River. The Columbia Region has an overall Basin Plan as well as plans for large lakes, small lakes, species of interest, streams, upland and dryland, and riparian and wetlands. These plans were completed in 2012 and are currently being updated. The Peace Region also has an overall Basin Plan, as well as plans for lakes, reservoirs, riparian and wetlands, species of interest, streams, and uplands. Peace Region Action Plans were completed in 2014 and will be updated next year.

Figure 11 presents the average rating provided by key informants regarding the extent to which the Action Plan process has resulted in identification of the correct actions for their region on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all, 3 is somewhat and 5 is completely. Overall, respondents indicated that the Action Plan process was fairly effective in identifying the correct priority actions. Agency representatives gave a slightly higher average rating (3.3) on the 5-point scale, followed by public (3.2) and First Nations (3.1) representatives.

Figure 11: Extent to which Action Plan process has resulted in correct identification of priority actions
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by partnership group and region



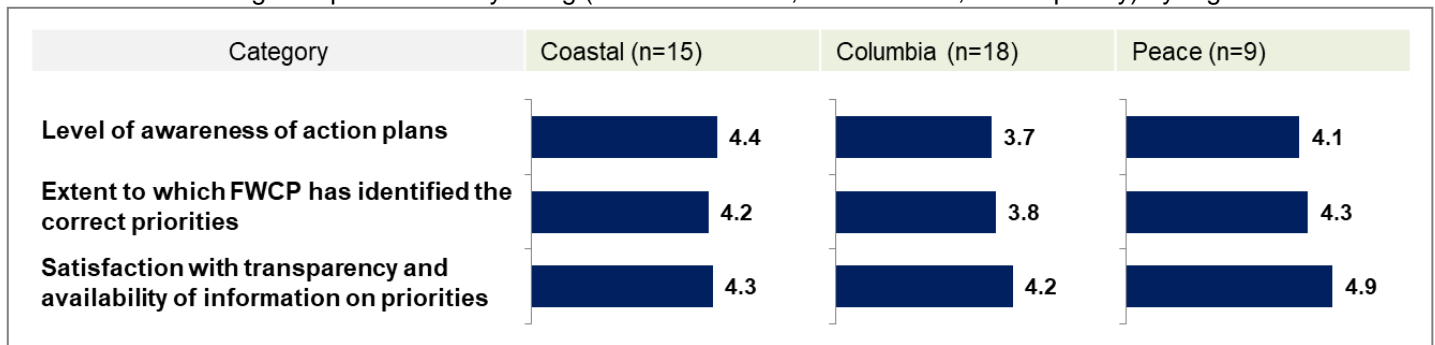
Source: Key Informant Interviews.

Key Informants provided the following feedback regarding Action Plans and the process used to develop Plans:

- **Plans are developed with extensive input from stakeholders, partners and the public. They are a work in progress but are continually improving and generally identify the right priorities. They effectively drive the proposal process.** (18 responses)
 - Several representatives from the Columbia Region expressed optimism towards the new plans currently being developed
 - Proponents are focused on aligning their projects with priority 1 actions
- **Plans include too many actions or the wrong actions because they attempt to address all concerns and priorities identified during the planning process.** (12 responses)
 - These representatives stated a need for an improved causal link between Program objectives and priority actions to ensure progress is made towards the strategic objectives of the Program.
 - A consequence of having a large number of priorities is that potential proponents are not always aware of the relative weighting given to these priorities within Boards and Committees. Plans signal to proponents and the public that certain specific actions are priorities but there are too many actions to address, and so it is inevitable that many 'priorities' go unaddressed or certain proposals are continually declined despite alignment with a priority action.
- **Plans would be improved through greater involvement of Technical Committee members, government representatives and other experts in the process.** (5 responses)
- **The process to engage with First Nations communities during the development of Action Plans could be improved and extended given the capacity constraints facing some Nations.** (4 responses)

Proponents were also asked about Action Plans and priorities. Figure 12 on the following page shows the average rating provided by surveyed proponents regarding their level of awareness of action plans and priorities, the extent to which the FWCP has identified the correct priorities for their region, and their satisfaction with the transparency and availability of information on FWCP priorities. As shown, surveyed proponents had good awareness of action plans and generally support the priorities identified by the FWCP.

Figure 12: Proponent awareness and assessment of FWCP priorities
Average Proponent Survey rating (1=none/not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by region



Source: 2019 Evaluation Survey.

As identified by several key informants, Action Plans are successful at driving proposals because proponents must align their projects with priority actions. However, Action Plans are not fully addressed. As described previously, past Strategic Project Reviews for the Coastal and Columbia Regions found that projects tend to be concentrated among a subset of identified priority actions and that many actions are rarely or ever addressed by FWCP projects. Analysis of projects funded in the Peace region from F17-F20 shows a similar phenomenon. As shown in Table 2, below, approximately half (48%) of all annual grant projects approved aligned primarily with an action from the Species of Interest Action Plan; 3 actions from that plan account for 32% of total annual grant funding. Overall, 10 actions account for 65% of funding and 18 others account for the remaining 35%. Among the 7 plans, 61 priority actions were not primarily aligned with any annual grant projects during the four-year period from F17-F20.

Table 2: Peace Region projects F17-F20 by primary priority action and plan³

Peace Region Action Plan and Region	Total Annual Project funding	Share of Total Annual Project Funding
Species of Interest [Net]	\$3,227,347	48%
• 1b-2: Implement projects identified through approved recovery strategies, action plans and management plans	\$2,021,776	32%
• 1b-3: Implement projects developed for woodland caribou		
• 1b-4: Implement actions recommended by past projects related to woodland caribou		
• 12 other priority actions	\$1,228,514	16%
• 6 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Reservoirs Action Plan [Net]	\$1,406,777	20%
• 1a-1: Support research projects to review existing information, identify data gaps, and undertake additional biodiversity research on lesser known species and populations	\$1,399,098	20%
• 2a-1: Undertake a Kokanee assessment study to summarize status, trends, and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem impacts and potential risks of Kokanee introductions		
• 3a-2: Support and/or carry out Mercury Impacts Assessment study		
• 1 other priority action	\$7,679	<1%
• 13 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Streams Action Plan [Net]	\$1,190,335	17%
• 1b-3: Undertake Arctic Grayling monitoring as per recommendations of the monitoring program and develop specific, prioritized recommendations for habitat based actions which correspond to the monitoring results	\$1,115,114	16%
• 1b-4: Review Arctic Grayling monitoring results, refine and implement specific plans in		

³ This detailed exercise was undertaken for the Peace Region only because comparable undertakings have been conducted in the Coastal and Columbia regions as part of their Strategic Project Reviews. They revealed the same general phenomenon of there being too many actions to address over the lifetime of the plans.

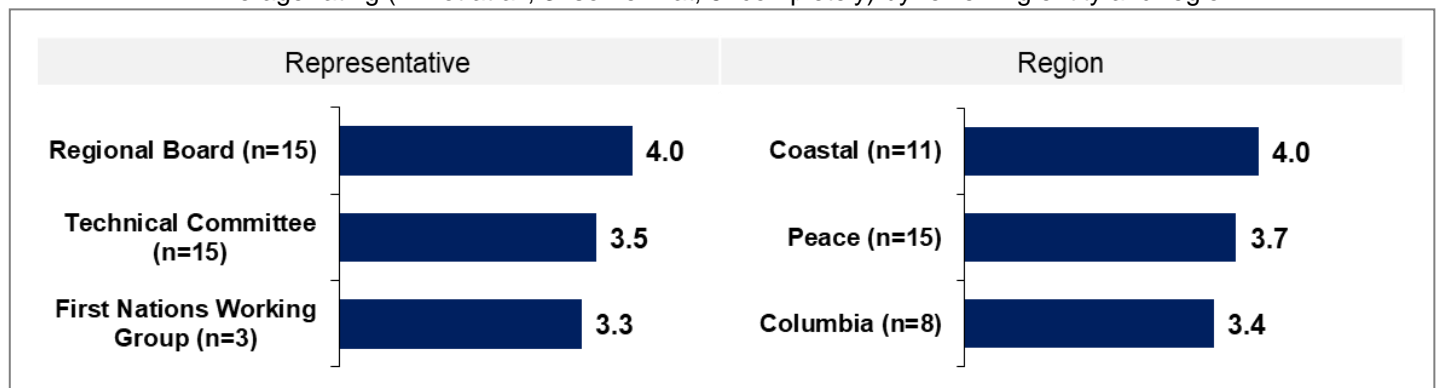
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> response, as needed. Identify limiting factors to direct conservation and enhancement efforts 1c-1: Review existing information, summarize status and trends of Bull Trout and its habitats, undertake actions that are within the FWCP Score and lead directly to the development of conservation and enhancement actions, and develop a cost-effective monitoring program to assess status and trends 1c-3: Undertake Bull Trout monitoring as per recommendations of the monitoring program and develop specific, prioritized recommendations for habitat-based actions which correspond to the monitoring results. 		
• 3 other priority actions	\$75,221	1%
• 14 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Uplands Action Plan [Net]	\$563,750	8%
• 3c-2: Partner with organizations to purchase land or establish covenants	\$551,000	8%
• 1 other priority action	\$12,750	<1%
• 8 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Peace Basin Plan Section 4.3	\$225,315	3%
Riparian and Wetlands Plan [Net]	\$197,585	3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a-1: Inventory the distribution, abundance, current function and connectivity of remaining riparian ecosystems 3b-2: Provide extension materials/activities (e.g. BMPs, workshops) to industries, developments, communities and organizations 3c-1: Provide extension materials/activities (e.g. BMPs, workshops) to private landowners 	\$192,665	3%
• 1 other priority action	\$4,920	<1%
• 7 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Lakes Action Plan [Net]	0	0
• 13 with zero projects	N/A	N/A
Total	\$6,904,941	100%

Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019. Peace Region Basin and Action Plans.

3. Project Application and Selection Process

Most FWCP interviewees consider the project selection process to be fairly effective. As shown in the following figure, Regional Board members provided a higher average rating (4.0) than members of Technical Committees (3.5) and the First Nations Working Group (3.3). Representatives in the Coastal region (4.0) provided a higher average rating than those in the Peace (3.7) or Columbia (3.4).

Figure 13: Extent to which the project selection process is considered effective
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by reviewing entity and region



Source: Key Informant Interviews

The following is a summary of interviewee comments regarding the selection of projects:

- The process used to review, discuss and select projects is effective and has improved over time.

(24 responses)

- These representatives noted that the key strength of the process is the diversity of knowledge and various points of view held by members of the various reviewing entities which allows for an appropriate balancing of objectives to be reflected in the selection of projects.
- **Some factors are outside of the immediate control of the program that has the potential to reduce effectiveness of project selection process.** (10 responses) These include:
 - Proponent-driven process means that the quality of projects approved is dependent on the quality of proposals received. These respondents indicated that it is necessary to ensure that the program communicates priorities clearly and supports proponents to develop strong proposals as well as provides unsuccessful proponents with meaningful and constructive feedback. (5 responses)
 - The strength of the process depends on having the right skill sets represented on Boards and Committees. Some suggested that more reliance on academic experts would be appropriate. (3 responses)
- **Boards spend too much time discussing technical or financial aspects of projects rather than deferring to the judgement of Technical Committees.** (9 responses)
 - This opinion was expressed primarily by members of Technical Committees but also by a few Board members.
- **The scoring process is subjective and it is not clear why certain projects are approved while others are not.** (8 responses)
 - These representatives identified a need to improve the scoring criteria and instructions and to look for opportunities to improve communication between Boards and Committees.
- **The process would be improved by a greater use of directed projects.** (5 responses)
 - Directed projects can be effective at addressing priorities that are not being addressed by proposals.

Overall, the numeric rating of proposals against evaluation criteria is only partially associated with ultimate project approval. That alone does not necessarily indicate a problem as the discussions that occur among FWCP entities during proposal evaluation are an important and integral part of ensuring that the best projects are funded. However, it could also indicate that criteria may need review and/or existing criteria need to be further defined or calibrated.

Table 3 shows the Board approval rate for annual grant projects by quartile of average scores provided by reviewing entity. In the Coastal Region, 93% of the highest scoring quartile, by Board rating, annual grant projects were approved; similarly, 89% of the highest scoring quartile among Technical Committee ratings were approved by the board. However, while the Board only approved 2% of projects that they rated in the lowest quartile, they approved 15% of projects that the Technical committee rated in the lowest quartile. A similar phenomenon is present in the Columbia data. In the Peace, there is close alignment between the Board and Technical committee, but less between First Nation Working Group scores and project approval. The Peace board has approved 46% of all projects from F17-F20 that were scored in the lowest quartile by the First Nations Working Group.

Table 3: Annual Grant Approval Rates by Average Score Quartile, Reviewing Entity and Region F17-F20

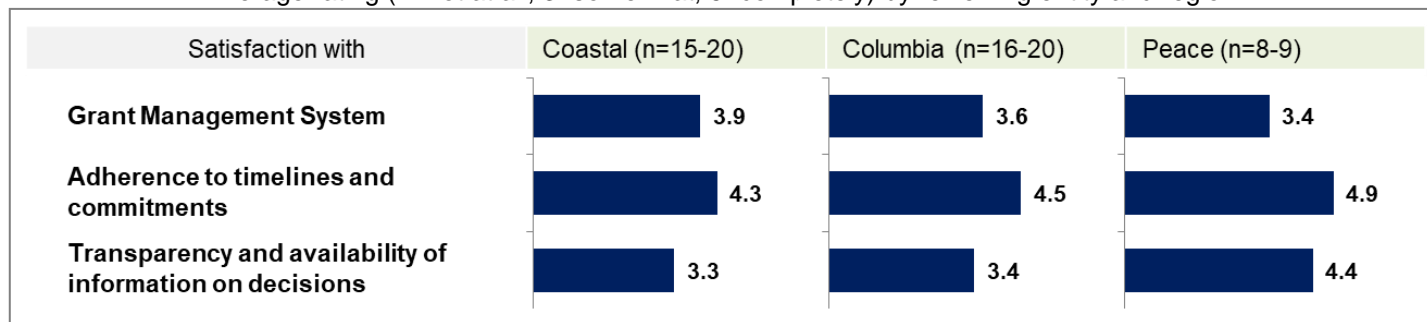
Reviewing Entity and Region	Top Quartile		2 nd Quartile		3 rd Quartile		4 th Quartile	
	Score Range	% Approved by Board	Score Range	% Approved by Board	Score Range	% Approved by Board	Score Range	% Approved by Board
Coastal								
Board	75.9 – 88.9	93%	67.3 – 75.8	76%	58.6 – 67.3	43%	31.2 – 58.5	2%
Technical Committees	82.4 – 92.8	89%	74.8 – 82.3	67%	66.9 – 74.7	42%	19.7 – 66.8	15%
Columbia								
Board	70.7 – 97.1	95%	61.6 – 70.6	59%	51.3 – 61.5	41%	22.9 – 51.2	7%
Technical Committees	82.0 – 89.3	80%	77.0 – 82.0	59%	68.0 – 76.9	40%	24.6 – 68.1	19%
Peace								
Board	68.9 – 88.0	97%	63.8 – 68.8	73%	56.8 – 63.7	44%	36.1 – 56.7	9%
Technical Committees	78.8 – 92.5	100%	72.3 – 78.7	77%	65.6 – 72.2	39%	48.5 – 65.5	8%
First Nations Working Group	79.9 – 95.8	70%	75.3 – 79.8	53%	67.0 – 75.2	56%	46.6 – 69.9	46%

Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

Proponents were surveyed with respect to their interaction with the FWCP through project proposal and implementation. Figure 14 on the following page shows the average satisfaction of surveyed proponents with respect to their use of the Grant Management System, FWCP's adherence to timelines and commitments, and the transparency and availability of information on decisions. Overall, there exists considerable satisfaction with all three aspects of project proposal review and administration processes in all three regions.

Figure 14: Proponent Satisfaction with Grant Management System, FWCP adherence to timelines and commitments, and transparency and availability of information on FWCP Board decisions

Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by reviewing entity and region

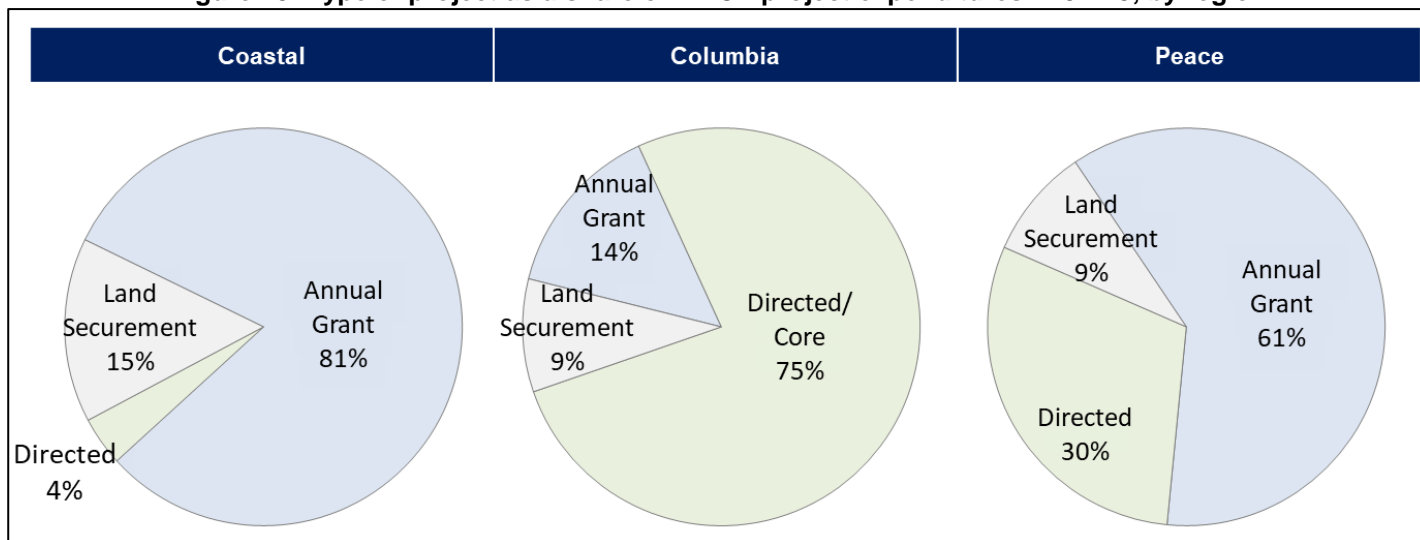


Source: 2019 Evaluation Survey.

4. Type of Projects Funded

As shown in Figure 15 on the following page, the relative use of annual grant, directed and core projects varied significantly between FWCP regions from F16-F19. Whereas the Coastal Region spends the majority of its project funds on annual grants to proponents, the majority of Columbia funds are devoted to ongoing core projects. The Peace region spent 30% of its project funds on directed projects.

Figure 15: Type of project as a share of FWCP project expenditures F15-F19, by region



Source: FWCP Quarterly and Annual Financial Reports F15-F19.

Annual Grants

Annual Grants include Large, Small and Seed projects. The distribution among the 3 categories is similar across all regions in terms of project approval rates and the distribution of applications, approvals, and approved contributions by grant size. As shown in the following table, 64%-68% of all annual grant applications and 74%-84% of all annual grant approvals from F17-F20 were for 'Large' grants. These account for 93%-97% of all annual grant expenditures. Small and Seed level projects have lower approval rates than large projects; small projects make up 15%-25% of all applications, they are only 10%-20% of approved grants and represent 3%-6% of total grant funding. Seed projects have accounted for 8%-11% of applications, 6%-8% of approvals and 0.5%-1% of total grant funding.

Table 4: Annual Grant Applications and Approvals by Grant Size and Region, F17-F20 Total

Project type and Region	Total Applications	# Approved	% Approved	Total \$ of approved	% of all region applications	% of all approved grant projects within region	% of all grant project funding
Coastal							
Coastal – Large	158	90	57%	\$5,808,060	68%	74%	94%
Coastal – Small	56	24	43%	\$310,440	24%	20%	5%
Coastal – Seed	19	8	42%	\$39,480	8%	6%	0.6%
Columbia							
Columbia – Large	122	70	57%	\$2,889,950	64%	75%	93%
Columbia – Small	48	13	33%	\$172,272	25%	17%	6%
Columbia – Seed	21	7	33%	\$34,867	11%	8%	1%
Peace							
Peace – Large	119	72	61%	\$4,496,328	68%	84%	97%
Peace – Small	25	9	36%	\$126,423	15%	10%	3%
Peace – Seed	12	5	42%	\$24,900	8%	6%	0.5%

Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

Core Projects

As shown in Figure 15, above, the Columbia region devotes most of its project funds to long term projects that are funded year to year, and are referred to as "core" projects. The following table shows annual budget

allocations to core projects from F15-F19, and the share of total planned project budgets over the five-year period accounted for by core projects.

Table 5: Annual Budgeted Amounts for Core Projects, FWCP Columbia F15-F19⁴

Project	F15	F16	F17	F18	F19	Total	% of Total Project Budgets
Core Fisheries							
Arrow Lake Reservoir Nutrient Restoration	\$790,023	\$834,634	\$856,790	\$806,740	\$821,386	\$4,109,573	16%
Kootenay Lake Nutrient Restoration	\$748,048	\$808,970	\$873,053	\$878,664	\$835,177	\$4,143,912	16%
Hill Creek Spawning Channel	\$152,646	\$171,577	\$167,206	\$183,826	\$161,326	\$836,581	3%
Meadow Creek Spawning Channel	\$179,769	\$178,212	\$190,083	\$193,216	\$197,274	\$938,554	4%
Upper Columbia Sturgeon	\$230,000	\$230,000	\$150,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$850,000	3%
Fisheries Program Support/Capacity	\$14,530	\$7,494	\$12,295	\$8,521	\$8,521	\$51,361	<1%
Core Fisheries Total	\$2,115,016	\$2,230,887	\$2,249,427	\$2,190,967	\$2,143,684	\$10,929,981	43%
Core Wildlife							
West Kootenay Enhancement	\$253,604	\$240,262	\$225,661	\$204,263	\$209,263	\$1,133,053	4%
East Kootenay Enhancement	\$337,278	\$425,408	\$451,258	\$388,399	\$398,944	\$2,001,287	8%
Non Game Enhancement	\$174,840	\$172,930	\$180,189	\$173,715	\$182,014	\$883,688	3%
FWCP Land Mgmt Operations	\$332,008	\$345,079	\$294,313	\$314,128	\$283,719	\$1,569,247	6%
Caribou Recovery	\$78,144	\$99,994	\$106,868	\$105,199	\$105,199	\$495,404	2%
Northern Leopard Frog Recovery	\$187,410	\$182,795	\$195,053	\$195,384	\$195,384	\$956,026	4%
Wildlife Project Support	\$23,656	\$7,366	\$8,603	\$8,173	\$8,173	\$55,971	<1%
Wetland	\$34,170	\$132,464	\$225,036	\$221,069	\$231,642	\$844,381	3%
Core Wildlife Total	\$1,421,110	\$1,606,298	\$1,686,981	\$1,610,330	\$1,614,338	\$7,939,057	31%
Core Projects Total	\$3,536,126	\$3,837,185	\$3,936,408	\$3,801,297	\$3,758,022	\$18,869,038	74%
All Other Project Funding	\$1,349,313	\$1,506,506	\$1,472,682	\$1,175,894	\$1,296,817	\$6,801,212	26%

Source: FWCP Quarterly and Annual Financial Reports F15-F19.

Key informants had the following comments regarding the core projects in the Columbia:

- **Lake fertilization increases primary productivity and directly addresses footprint impacts.** (8 responses)
- **Some respondents indicate that there is insufficient time and independence provided for adequate review of core projects.** (6 responses)
- **While work has been done to demonstrate the effectiveness of some core projects, there is a need to conduct an in-depth review of all core projects.** (5 responses)
 - Respondents indicated the need for a review of core projects that not only includes effectiveness, but also reflects on alternative delivery methods, alternative ways to achieve desired outcomes, the appropriateness of project components and objectives given the roles and responsibilities of the FWCP, opportunities to involve additional parties, and other aspects of prudent review.

⁴ Table 5 shows budgeted rather than actual project expenditures. Actual expenditures tend to be somewhat lower than initial budgeted amounts.

Directed Projects

Regional Boards can choose to fund directed projects using a variety of procurement mechanisms. They are most often used to address priority areas that are not being addressed through annual grant proposals and to advance strategic progress in a given priority area by identifying knowledge gaps. Respondents from the Peace region were more likely than others to express that the current balance of annual grant versus other projects is well balanced; several Columbia representatives said they would prefer to see an increase in the use of directed projects. Representatives from the Coastal region tended to agree that directed projects can serve important purposes but indicated that the general approach of the Regional Board is to support the annual grant process; they are cautious about diverting too much away from the annual grants because of a feeling of obligation towards the proponent community at large. Board and Technical committee capacity was also cited by respondents in each region as a limit to the use of directed projects because their time and expertise is required to develop the projects.

Several interviewees cited the same directed project as an example of how best to use the mechanism. The project was undertaken in the Peace Region to identify Arctic Grayling monitoring needs. While the Streams Action Plan identified high-priority actions related to Arctic Grayling research and monitoring needs, there was insufficient uptake from the proponent community. To fulfil the action, a direct project was undertaken to compile a synthesis report and to prepare a monitoring framework that identifies high priority information gaps and monitoring needs related to Arctic Grayling. Now, project proposals that align with the monitoring needs are eligible to apply for an FWCP grant. The directed project was a relatively inexpensive endeavour that has led to improved project proposals for a specific high-priority species.

III. FINANCIAL AUDIT

A. Program Funds and Expenditures

In the five-year period from F15-F19, the three FWCP Regions made expenditures totalling approximately \$47.47 million. Administration, communications and other non-project expenditures totalled \$7.27 million, or 15% of total expenditures over the same period. Of the \$40.19 million spent on projects province wide, 61% has been in the Columbia, 23% in the Coastal and 16% in the Peace region. BC Hydro annual contributions to the FWCP have totalled \$41.44 million, or 87% of total expenditures, as all regions have been spending down surpluses accumulated during previous years when the program was transitioning to the new model and undertaking administratively intensive activities (e.g. establishing the First Nations Working Group, developing Action Plans).

In the Coastal Region, the annual contribution from BC Hydro has increased from \$1.99 million in F15 to \$2.12 million in F19 for a five-year total of \$10.26 million. Expenditures have totaled 107% of new dollars over the five-year period, leaving approximately \$86,000 in unspent funds at the end of F19. Program Office expenditures have ranged from a low of \$139,000 in F16 to a high of \$222,000 in F19, and the cost of Board and Technical Committees has ranged from \$30,000 in F16 to a high of \$67,000 in F19. Administration and communication costs together have averaged 15% of total expenditures between F15-F19, with allocations to x-plan accounting for an additional 2%. Project spending has accounted for 83% of the total five-year expenditures. Expenditures on fish projects has remained relatively stable over the past 3-4 years, but wildlife focused projects have declined from a high of \$760,000 in F17 to \$381,000 in F19. Approximately 15% of total expenditures, or \$1.620 million, has been directed to properties acquisition and management (i.e. land securement) over the five-year period.

In the Columbia Region, the annual contribution from BC Hydro has increased from \$4.61 million in F15 to \$4.91 million in F19 for a five-year total of \$23.84 million. Expenditures have totaled 116% of new dollars over the five-year period, leaving approximately \$1.07 million in unspent funds at the end of F19. Program Office expenditures have ranged from a low of \$170,000 in F15 to a high of \$223,000 for F19, and the cost of Board and Technical Committees have ranged from a low of \$34,000 in F16 to a high of \$67,000 in F19. Administration and communication costs together have averaged 8% of total expenditures between F15-F19, with allocations to the contingency fund totalling 4% or \$1 million. Project spending has accounted for 89% of the total five-year expenditures, with core fish and wildlife projects accounting for the majority of that spending. Annual grant project expenditures for wildlife projects have been increasing over the five year period while annual grant fish project expenditures have been decreasing. Approximately 9%, or \$2.52 million, has been directed to land acquisition over the five-year period.

In the Peace Region, the annual contribution from BC Hydro to the Peace Region has increased from \$1.42 million in F15 to \$1.52 million in F19 for a total of \$7.34 million over the five-year period F15-F19. Expenditures have totaled 120% of new dollars over the five-year period, including 168% in F18 and 188% in F19, leaving approximately \$1.15 million in unspent funds at the end of F19. Program Office expenditures have ranged from a low of \$186,000 in F15 to \$241,000 in F19, and the cost of Board, Technical Committees, First Nations Working Group and First Nations Capacity Development have ranged from a low of \$272,000 in F15 to \$412,000 in F19. The Peace region has a larger Board than the other regions and also has in place the First Nations Working Group and as a result expends a greater share of funds on administration than the other regions: 21% of all expenditures from F15-F19 plus an additional 5% towards x-plan. Project spending accounted for 74% of the total five-year expenditures, with annual grant, or open call, projects accounting for 53% of total expenditures, directed projects accounting for 22%, and land acquisition accounting for 7%.

The following table shows FWCP-Coastal funds and expenditures for F15-F19.

Table 6: Coastal Region Funds and Expenditures F15-F19⁵

FWCP - Coastal	F15		F16		F17		F18		F19		Total F15-F19	
	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of Total
Funds												
Unspent at end of Previous FY	\$1,455		\$1,423		\$1,205		\$1,412		\$1,521			
BC Hydro annual contribution	\$1,990		\$2,019		\$2,051		\$2,082		\$2,121		\$10,263	
Commitments carried over April 1	-\$720		-\$906		-\$1,059		-\$1,353		-\$1,412			
Total Uncommitted Available Funds	\$2,725		\$2,536		\$2,197		\$2,142		\$2,231			
Expenditures												
Program Office	\$187	8%	\$139	6%	\$144	7%	\$214	10%	\$222	10%	\$906	8%
Board and Technical Committees	\$54	2%	\$30	1%	\$34	2%	\$46	2%	\$67	3%	\$230	2%
Updates to Action Plans/Evaluations	\$135	6%	\$176	7%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$311	3%
Communication	\$40	2%	\$41	2%	\$50	2%	\$50	2%	\$66	3%	\$247	2%
Total Admin/Communication	\$416	18%	\$386	16%	\$228	11%	\$310	15%	\$355	17%	\$1,694	15%
Properties Acquisition and Management (Land Securement)	\$324	14%	\$304	13%	\$311	15%	\$362	18%	\$318	15%	\$1,620	15%
Total Fish Projects	\$940	41%	\$987	42%	\$690	33%	\$1,039	50%	\$1,046	49%	\$4,702	43%
Total Wildlife Projects	\$564	25%	\$699	29%	\$760	36%	\$352	17%	\$381	18%	\$2,756	25%
Total Project Expenditures	\$1,828	80%	\$1,991	84%	\$1,762	83%	\$1,753	85%	\$1,745	81%	\$9,078	83%
X-Plan	\$44	2%	\$0	0%	\$125	6%	\$0	0%	\$45	2%	\$214	2%
Total FY Commitments	\$2,288	100%	\$2,377	100%	\$2,121	100%	\$2,063	100%	\$2,144	100%	\$10,992	100%
Remaining Funds												
Total Remaining Uncommitted Funds	\$437		\$159		\$77		\$79		\$86			
FY Commitments % of FY Annual Funding	115%		118%		103%		99%		101%		107%	

Source: FWCP Quarterly and Annual Financial Reports F15-F19

⁵ Amounts shown are actual expenditures obtained by adding or subtracting variances from initial budgeted commitments. Some totals for F18 and F19 are not finalized because some budgeted project activities have yet to occur. In these cases the numbers presented represent a snapshot in time of actual and expected expenditures.

The following table shows FWCP-Columbia funds and expenditures for F15-F19.

Table 7: Columbia Region Funds and Expenditures F15-F19⁶

FWCP - Columbia	F15		F16		F17		F18		F19		Total F15-F19	
	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of Total
Funds												
Unspent at end of Previous FY	\$3,591		\$3,523		\$2,929		\$3,880		\$3,512			
BC Hydro contribution	\$4,609		\$4,717		\$4,766		\$4,837		\$4,905		\$23,835	
Commitments carried over April 1	(\$1,234)		(\$1,354)		(\$1,006)		(\$1,400)		(\$1,116)			
Total Available Funds	\$6,966		\$6,887		\$6,689		\$7,317		\$7,302			
Expenditures												
Program Office	\$170	4%	\$187	4%	\$173	3%	\$176	3%	\$223	4%	\$928	3%
Board and Technical Committees	\$47	1%	\$34	1%	\$46	1%	\$44	1%	\$67	1%	\$238	1%
Project Support Development and Delivery	\$18	<1%	\$18	<1%	\$13	<1%	\$83	1%	\$37	1%	\$169	1%
Updates to Action Plans									\$178	3%	\$178	1%
Columbia Region Communications	\$69	1%	\$76	1%	\$63	1%	\$84	1%	\$85	1%	\$377	1%
Provincial Region Communications	\$46	1%	\$44	1%	\$40	1%	\$35	1%	\$62	1%	\$228	1%
Total Admin/Communication	\$349	7%	\$359	7%	\$335	6%	\$422	7%	\$652	10%	\$2,118	8%
Core Fish Projects	\$1,881	39%	\$1,973	39%	\$2,011	35%	\$2,163	38%	\$2,250	36%	\$10,279	37%
Other Fish	\$397	8%	\$376	7%	\$386	7%	\$159	3%	\$134	2%	\$1,452	5%
Core Wildlife - Land Acquisition	\$456	9%	\$437	9%	\$536	9%	\$545	10%	\$546	9%	\$2,520	9%
Other Core Wildlife	\$1,285	27%	\$1,606	31%	\$1,687	29%	\$1,610	28%	\$1,714	27%	\$7,903	29%
Other Wildlife	\$450	9%	\$373	7%	\$511	9%	\$455	8%	\$616	10%	\$2,405	9%
Total Project Expenditures	\$4,469	93%	\$4,765	93%	\$5,132	88%	\$4,933	87%	\$5,261	84%	\$24,559	89%
Contingency Fund					\$334		\$339		\$323		\$996	4%
Total FY Expenditures	\$4,818	100%	\$5,124	100%	\$5,800	100%	\$5,694	100%	\$6,236	100%	\$27,672	100%
Remaining Funds												
Total Remaining Uncommitted	\$2,148		\$1,763		\$888		\$1,623		1,066			
FY Expenditures % of BC Hydro Annual Contribution	105%		109%		122%		118%		127%		116%	

Source: FWCP Quarterly and Annual Financial Reports F15-F19.

⁶ Amounts shown are actual expenditures obtained by adding or subtracting variances from initial budgeted commitments. Some totals for F18 and F19 are not finalized because some budgeted project activities have yet to occur. In these cases the numbers presented represent a snapshot in time of actual and expected expenditures.

The following table shows FWCP-Peace funds and expenditures for F15-F19.

Table 8: Peace Region Funds and Expenditures F15-F19⁷

FWCP - Peace	F15		F16		F17		F18		F19		Total F15-F19	
	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of FY Total	\$(‘000)	% of Total
Funds												
Unspent at end of Previous FY	\$2,659		\$3,635		\$4,194		\$4,086		\$3,763			
BC Hydro annual contribution	\$1,422		\$1,443		\$1,466		\$1,488		\$1,516		\$7,337	
Commitments carried over April 1	(\$35)		(\$434)		(\$1,037)		(\$606)		(\$1,286)			
Total Available Funds	\$4,046		\$4,644		\$4,624		\$4,968		\$3,993			
Expenditures												
Program Office	\$186	23%	\$202	14%	\$197	16%	\$218	9%	\$241	8%	\$1,044	12%
Board, Technical Committees, First Nations Working Group	\$86	10%	\$75	5%	\$101	8%	\$59	2%	\$146	5%	\$466	5%
First Nations Capacity Development							\$22	1%	\$25	1%	\$47	1%
Communications	\$44	5%	\$46	3%	\$42	4%	\$49	2%	\$71	2%	\$252	3%
Total Admin and Communication	\$316	38%	\$322	22%	\$340	28%	\$349	14%	\$482	17%	\$1,809	21%
Land Acquisition							\$589	24%			\$589	7%
Total Directed Projects			\$590	41%	\$1	0%	\$523	21%	\$859	30%	\$1,973	22%
Total Open Call Fish	\$9	1%	\$112	8%	\$232	19%	\$284	11%	\$589	21%	\$1,226	14%
Total Open Call Wildlife	\$234	28%	\$409	28%	\$624	52%	\$645	26%	\$849	30%	\$2,761	31%
Total Project Expenditures	\$243	30%	\$1,111	77%	\$857	72%	\$2,042	82%	\$2,297	81%	\$6,549	74%
X-Plan	\$264	32%	\$5	0%	\$0	0%	\$109	4%	\$65	2%	\$443	5%
Total Fiscal Year Expenditures	\$824	100%	\$1,439	100%	\$1,196	100%	\$2,499	100%	\$2,844	100%	\$8,802	100%
Remaining Funds												
Total Remaining Uncommitted Funds	\$3,222		\$3,206		\$3,427		\$2,499		\$1,148			
FY Expenditures % of BC Hydro Annual Contribution	58%		100%		82%		168%		188%		Average 120%	

Source: FWCP Quarterly and Annual Financial Reports F15-F19.

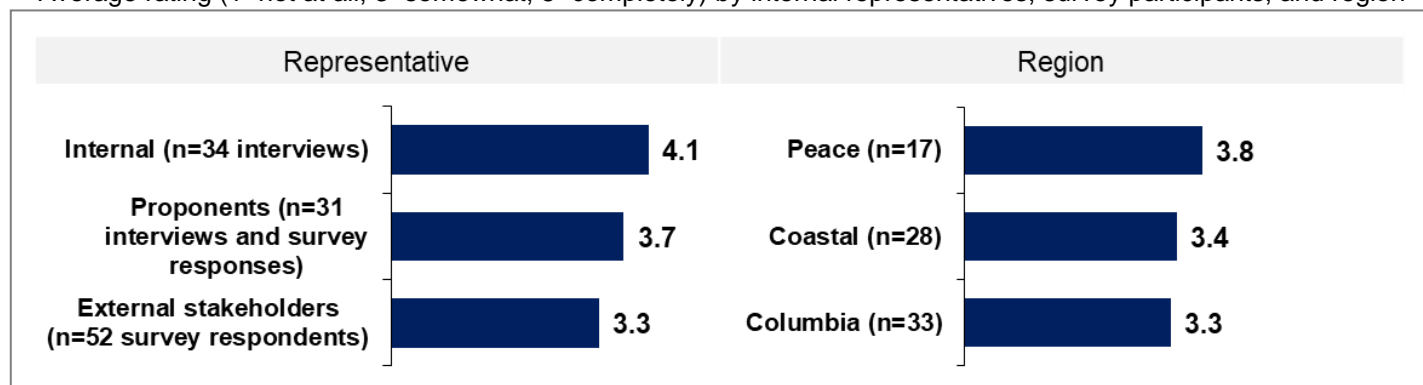
⁷ Amounts shown are actual expenditures obtained by adding or subtracting variances from initial budgeted commitments. Some totals for F18 and F19 are not finalized because some budgeted project activities have yet to occur. In these cases the numbers presented represent a snapshot in time of actual and expected expenditures.

B. Program Efficiency and Use of Funds

The program is perceived as operating in a fairly cost-effective and efficient manner. The following figure shows that internal representatives assessed the efficiency and cost-effectiveness slightly higher than proponents and stakeholders who responded to the survey.

Figure 16: Extent to which FWCP operates in an efficient and cost-effective manner

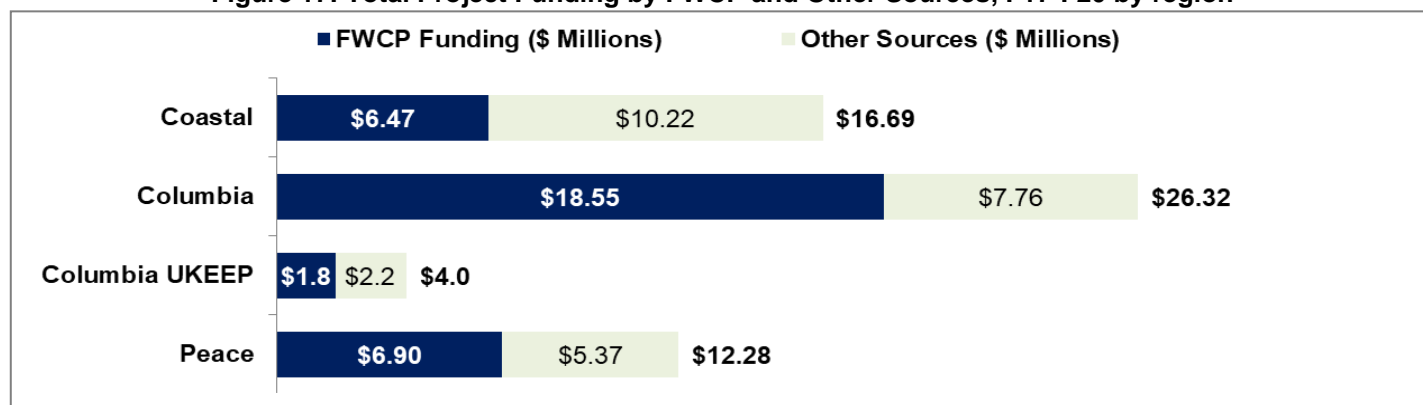
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by internal representatives, survey participants, and region



Source: Key Informant Interviews; 2019 Evaluation Survey.

- Most interviewees who perceive the program as efficient and cost-effective point to the small number of core staff who administer the program and credit the proponent-driven model as a contributing factor towards program efficiency.
- Some credited the Grant Management System for increasing administrative and efficiency.
- Other respondents see the leveraging of funds or being involved with projects that have multiple funders to be an indicator of cost-effectiveness because proponents can achieve greater impacts by securing funding for larger projects.
 - The following figure shows the total project funding by FWCP and other sources for projects supported by the FWCP for the four-year period F17-F20. Overall, FWCP contributed \$33.74 million for projects with a total value of \$59.25 million; for every \$1 of FWCP funding there was \$0.76 provided by another source or entity. The leveraging of FWCP funding is the lowest in the Columbia region (\$0.42 for every \$1 FWCP) than Coastal (\$1.60 for \$1 FWCP) or Peace (\$0.78 for \$1 FWCP) regions largely because of the nature of delivery for the 'core' programs.

Figure 17: Total Project Funding by FWCP and Other Sources, F17-F20 by region



Source: FWCP Grant Management System Data, Accessed February 2019.

The following table shows the total expenditures and proportion of total program expenditures on administration and communications from F16-F19 for each region as well as the proportion of total expenditures budgeted for administration and communications. As a comparison, Figure 12 also includes the same information for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation over the same time period. The size of the two programs is very close, as is the share of total expenditures devoted to projects. The FWCP has lower administration costs but higher costs for communications and for remuneration of the Regional Boards, Technical Committees and First Nations Working Group.

Table 9: Average Annual Expenditures, FWCP and Comparable Programs

Program and Region	Administration		Board, Technical Committees, FNWG		Communications		Project Funding	
	Annual Expenditure	% of Total	Annual Expenditure	% of Total	Annual Expenditure	% of Total	Annual Expenditure	% of Total
FWCP								
Coastal	\$292,208	12.8%	\$43,625	1.9%	\$51,355	2.2%	\$1,895,968	83.0%
Columbia	\$269,945	4.7%	\$43,625	0.8%	\$131,740	2.3%	\$5,246,208	92.2%
Peace	\$218,708	11.5%	\$113,965	6.0%	\$54,556	2.9%	\$1,519,298	79.7%
Total FWCP	\$780,861	7.9%	\$201,215	2.0%	\$237,651	2.4%	\$8,661,474	87.7%
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund								
Total - BC	\$1,187,962	12.3%	\$17,625	0.2%	\$28,401	0.3%	\$8,442,175	87.2%
Northwest Power and Conservation Council								
2018	\$23 million	8.2%	\$3 million	1.1%			\$255 million	90.7%

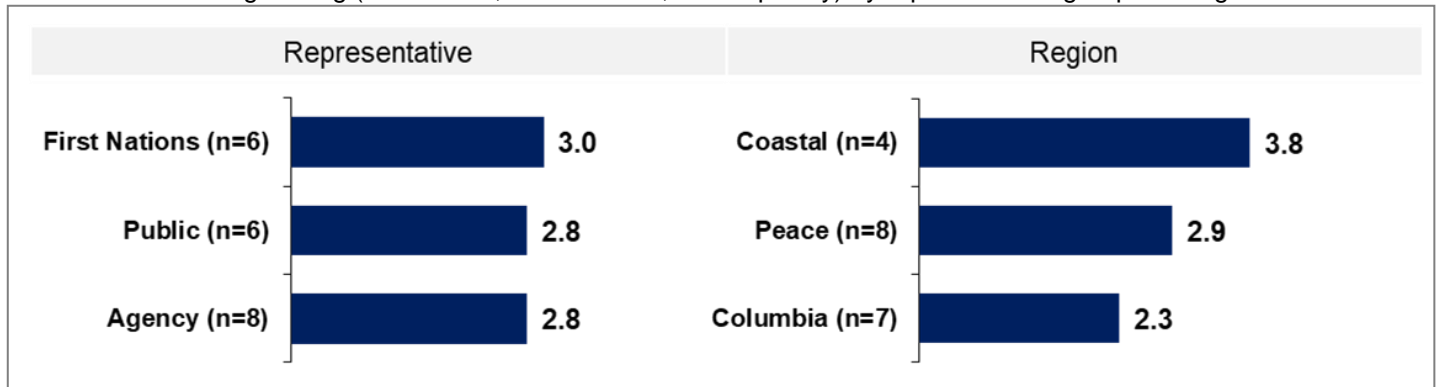
Source: FWCP Quarterly Financial Reports F15-F19; HCTF Financial Statements March 31, 2018; NWCC 2018 Report to Northwest Governors. FWCP averages include F16-F19; HCTF averages include 2017 and 2018.

C. Adequacy of Program Funding

The initial funding that BC Hydro provided the FWCP was through a notional fund created specifically for each region. There is no evidence of a clear rationale for the original amounts or regional differences in funding. The funds are notional in that no actual pool of capital has, or will be, set aside. The first year of funding for each region was established by applying a deemed interest rate of 4.54% against the value of the notional fund. Subsequent to the first year of funding, the annual funding for each region is indexed to the Canadian Consumer Price Index (CPI) to maintain purchasing power. Funds are not transferable across regions but unspent funding can be carried over year to year. In addition to annual funding, BC Hydro provides the FWCP with in-kind and financial resources including FWCP Manager's salary and expenses, office space, legal, software, and design services, wages, administrative expenses, and funding for special projects such as the development of the Grant Management System and website. FWCP also receives some in-kind services from FLNRORD.

Board members were asked the extent to which overall program and regional funding levels are adequate and appropriate. Overall, respondents stated that the overall program and regional funding levels are somewhat adequate and appropriate. As shown in Figure 18 on the following page, the average rating was similar across First Nations, Public and Agency representatives but ranged from a high of 3.8 on a 5 point scale in the Coastal Region to a low of 2.3 in the Columbia, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all, 3 is somewhat and 5 is completely.

Figure 8: Extent to which overall program and regional funding levels are considered adequate and appropriate
Average rating (1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=completely) by representative group and region



Source: Key Informant Interviews.

Key informant comments regarding the adequacy of funding included:

- **The scope of the impacts cannot be addressed with current funding levels.** (9 responses)
 - More funding would result in more positive impacts and fulfilment of FWCP Strategic Objectives.
- **More funding is always an attractive proposition, but current levels are adequate because they allow for most good proposals to be approved.** (9 responses).
 - These respondents did not tend to indicate they were aware that all regions have been operating on surplus funds when they made this comment.
- **The cost of conducting projects is increasing faster than CPI.** (3 responses)
 - Day rates have gone up considerable according to some interviewees, and as projects begin to carry out on the ground activities informed by the research, the cost of individual projects will increase. Restoration is more expensive than inventorying.

Some respondents indicated that the FWCP should base its funding level on the amounts spent by Bonneville Power Administration in their fulfilment of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's (NPCC) Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. The reasons for comparison are clear: it is a program that seeks to compensate for hydroelectric power generation impacts. However, we found that such a comparison is not directly relevant because the NPCC includes several high-cost elements that are excluded from the scope of the FWCP, namely fish passage, salmon and steelhead hatchery operation and operational impacts.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Key findings and conclusions related to the achievement of outcomes include:

- **FWCP project expenditures towards compensating for footprint impacts in the Coastal, Columbia and Peace regions totalled \$40.19 million over a five-year period from F15 -F19.** Expenditures and projects have been directed at target species and habitats and have followed the priorities set out in regional Action Plans; it follows that some progress has been made towards compensating for footprint impacts. However, the scale and scope of footprint impacts is very large relative to the current capacity of the program and some impacts will likely not be compensated for so long as the impacting infrastructure is in place.
- **According to the stakeholders contacted, the FWCP has made progress against all four Strategic Objectives over the past five years.** Projects targeting caribou, sturgeon, arctic grayling, bats and many other species as well as land securement and large-scale nutrient restoration programs have achieved progress against the conservation-based Strategic Objectives of the FWCP. Some progress towards sustainable use objectives have also been made by fisheries projects. Board, Technical Committee and First Nations Working Group members stated that most progress was made towards building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and First Nations communities; however, relationships require ongoing attention and there is a need to maintain and enhance these relationships.
- **Significant challenges exist to understanding the overall impact and effectiveness of the FWCP in the watersheds and ecosystems in which it operates.** Large scale effectiveness monitoring programs are beyond the scope and capacity of the FWCP but results from targeted evaluations of specific projects could be used to a greater extent to yield findings that could demonstrate the level of success within a specific geographic area or species of focus, and provide future strategic direction for the program. Metrics for habitat restoration and land securement could also be identified and tracked in the Grant Management System.

Key findings and conclusions related to the FWCP partnership model include:

- **Most representatives interviewed have a positive view of the five-way partnership model and each partner is represented to some extent in the operation and delivery of the program.**

Agency representatives are involved in all three regional boards and comprise the Policy Committee. Technical Committees are mostly comprised of BC Government and BCH staff. In the Columbia Region, FLNRORD is extensively involved in delivering projects on behalf of the BC Government.

First Nations representation includes three members on each of the Coastal and Columbia Boards; nine members on the Peace Board, all members of the First Nations Working Group, and some members on Technical Committees. In the Peace Region a Notice of Intent process contributes to an increase in First Nations involvement in projects led by non-First Nation entities. In the Peace and Coastal Regions First Nations governments, organizations or individuals are involved as either the proponent or a partner in over half of all projects.

Regional Boards each include 3 public representatives, and some technical committees also have public members. Members of the public are also involved in the delivery of projects as either non-governmental organizations or private-sector consultants who submit proposals for FWCP funding.

- **Some representatives indicated there are significant problems with the current partnership model, and meaningful involvement in project design and delivery by First Nations partners varies by region.**

Key findings and conclusions related to the design and delivery of the FWCP are as follows:

- **Action Plans successfully drive proposals and directed projects but contain too many actions to address over the lifetime of the plans.** Some actions do not have a clear and direct link to FWCP objectives.
- **The process to select projects is supported by most stakeholders.**
- **FWCP has strong regional differences among delivery and project funding mechanisms.** Regional Boards have the ability to use program funds in various ways. For example, in the Coastal region, 81% of project funds are distributed through annual grants to proponents. In the Columbia, over 75% of funds are directed to core projects, and in the Peace, about 30% of all project expenditures are through directed studies with the remaining through annual grants.

Key findings of the financial audit are as follows:

- **Of the \$40.19 million spent on projects province wide from F15-F19, 61% has been spent in the Columbia region, 23% in the Coastal region and 16% in the Peace region.** All regions have been spending down surpluses accumulated during previous years when the program was transitioning to the new model.
- **The FWCP is cost efficient as 85% of total expenditures were devoted to project spending from F15 to F19 while the remainder was devoted to the administration and communications.** The Columbia devoted 89% of expenditures to projects, the Coastal spent 83% on projects, and the Peace spent 74%. Annual BC Hydro contributions and fixed administration costs vary between regions and are the underlying reason for regional discrepancies in project funding allocations.
- **Many interviewees indicated that the scope of footprint impacts cannot be addressed with current funding** and the FWCP needs increased funding in order to make meaningful progress against the intended objectives.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the evaluation. The order of the recommendations is not intended to reflect the relative priority or importance of a given recommendation over another.

1. Clarify the scope and intended outcomes of Strategic Objective #3: Maintaining or improving opportunities for sustainable use.

It is important to ensure that Boards and Committees have a clear understanding of how to incorporate this objective into proposal evaluations and to ensure that it is not outside of the scope of responsibilities of the FWCP.

2. Undertake a detailed review of the Columbia core programs to ensure that they reflect the intent and priorities of the partnership, and are aligned with and maximize the achievement of the

intended outcomes of the program.

The Columbia Region is unique in allocating the majority of its annual budget to “core” programs as opposed to projects funded through annual grants to proponents. This is a result of a letter of agreement between FLNRORD and FWCP that has not undergone comprehensive review since its inception. This evaluation makes no specific conclusions on the appropriateness or effectiveness of individual core programs, however many respondents indicated that annual project review sessions do not allow sufficient time or independence to adequately assess the value provided by core programs towards achievement of FWCP intended outcomes, and that there is a link between the primacy of core programs and the low levels of First Nations involvement in project delivery in the Columbia region.

3. Increase program funding levels.

Stakeholders in each region described that with current funding capacity the FWCP is unable to achieve its intended outcome of compensating for footprint impacts of BC Hydro generation facilities. All regions have enjoyed surplus funds accumulated in prior years when the focus was on developing the new model and supporting the strength of the partnership (e.g. developing the First Nations Working Group) but will soon be faced with difficult decisions as they are forced to operate within the amounts currently contributed by BC Hydro annually. For the Peace region this problem is most acute because they receive the least annually from BC Hydro but have the highest administration costs as a direct result of the progress achieved through the MOU with First Nations and the First Nations Working Group. In the context of Recommendation #2, above, it might be prudent to conduct the review of core programs before determining the appropriate level of funding increase for the Columbia region given that achieving financial efficiencies or identifying specific funding needs may be among the outcomes of that review.

4. Continue to reduce the total number of actions in Action Plans and ensure that there is a clear causal relationship between actions and overall Program objectives.

The Peace Region is next to update their plans. Information sharing between regions should be encouraged to ensure that the Peace Board learns from the experience of Coastal and Columbia regions who have recently updated their Action Plans.

5. Explore the potential for increased use of directed studies.

The benefits of directed studies are that they allow for a more strategic focus towards habitat and species restoration as compared to the proponent-driven model. The apparent success of the Peace region Arctic Grayling Monitoring Framework could be presented to other Regional Boards as a case study.

6. Explore options for the Columbia region to increase the involvement of First Nations in the operation and delivery of the program.

Actions that support the partnership between First Nations and the FWCP should be supported in all regions, but the relationship in the Columbia requires focused and meaningful attention. The level of participation in FWCP projects by First Nations is significantly lower in the Columbia region than in the Peace or Coastal.

7. Develop a program logic model and performance measurement strategy.

To appropriately measure the performance and impact of a program, the following steps are required:

- a. Determine the objectives of the program.
- b. Prepare a program logic model that indicates the causal links between the program activities and the intended immediate, intermediate and long-term intended outcomes of the program.
- c. Develop key performance measures/indicators to determine whether the intended immediate and intermediate outcomes in the logic model have been achieved.
- d. Develop targets for each of the key performance measures/indicators and monitor the program performance to determine if the targets have been achieved.

The above process is undertaken for most federal government programs, particularly for grants and contributions programs. To date, the FWCP has undertaken the first step above which is the statement of program objectives as well as developed a few key performance measures. The next steps required to appropriately evaluate the performance of the FWCP are to produce a program logic model and develop a performance measurement strategy. This would involve the following:

- d. Review and finalize the objectives for the program – this should include a review of whether existing objectives are relevant and aligned with the ultimate intended outcome of compensating for footprint impacts
- e. Prepare a program logic model that contains the intended immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes of the program and the program activities required to achieve these intended outcomes.
- f. Prepare a performance measurement strategy that contains the key performance measures/indicators and data sources that should be used to measure the extent to which the immediate and intermediate outcomes have been achieved.

8. Review specific sections of the Governance Manual to ensure it is up-to-date and reflects current practices and priorities.

Some specific sections of the Governance Manual that should be reviewed include the following: public member roles and responsibilities; Appendix K – Data and Report Management, Ownership of FWCP Project Information and Intellectual Property to ensure they are consistent with current technology and provincial policy; and “Role of the Chair” description in Appendix F – First Nations Working Group Terms of Reference to ensure it is consistent with the operational culture desired by FNWG members.

9. Seek further direction from BC Government and BC Hydro regarding the nature of FWCP’s obligations under UNDRIP.

Notwithstanding the focus the Program currently has towards improving the extent of meaningful involvement in the operation and delivery of the FWCP by First Nations partners, the Program cannot on its own address government to government issues.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

A. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

To ensure a comprehensive assessment of the FWCP, the evaluation relied on multiple lines of evidence obtained from primary and secondary sources. The following is a description of each line of evidence.

1. Document Review

The document review was primarily focused on the following documents:

- Governance and operational documents (e.g. FWCP Governance Manual, Peace Region MOU with First Nations, Letter of Agreement between FWCP-Columbia and FLNRORD)
- Strategic Planning documents (Coastal Plan overview and 14 Watershed Action Plans; Columbia Basin Plan and 6 Action Plans; Peace Basin Plan and 6 Action Plans)
- Program Evaluations and Strategic Project Reviews (Evaluation of Compensation and Restoration Programs for BC Hydro, 2008; FWCP Review: a Survey of Perceptions and Improvement Opportunities, 2016; FWCP – Coastal Strategic Project Review and Memos, 2015-2016; FWCP – Columbia Strategic Project Review, 2018; Coastal Evaluation Plus, 2014)
- Communications and Guidance Documents
- Project Information, lists and reports

2. Project Data and Financial Analysis

FWCP Project data was extracted from the Grant Management System for available years (F17-F20) and analyzed with respect to year, region, type of project, type of proponent, level of partnership, project costs, targeted species, alignment to action plans, average proposal evaluation scores and other dimensions relevant to the evaluation.

Program financial data was obtained through Regional Quarterly Reports and Regional Annual reports and analyzed with respect to the level of expenditures related to administration, communications and project spending and other dimensions relevant to the evaluation.

3. Key Informant Interviews

Members of the Regional Boards, Technical Committees and First Nation Working Group were invited to participate in a telephone interview with Ference & Company. The following table shows the share of representatives interviewed by region.

Table 10: Key Informant Interviews Completed

Region and partnership group	Total Number of Representatives	Participated in Evaluation Interview	
		Number	% of Group
FWCP			
FWCP Staff	5	4	80%
Policy Committee	3	2	67%
Coastal			
Board - Agency	3	3	100%
Board - First Nations	3	2	67%
Board - Public	3	2	67%
Technical Committee - Agency	11	4	36%
Technical Committee - First Nations	4	2	50%

Technical Committee - Public	3	2	67%
Total	27	15	56%
Columbia			
Board - Agency	4	4	100%
Board - First Nations	2	2	100%
Board - Public	3	3	100%
Technical Committee - Agency	6	4	67%
Technical Committee - First Nations	3	2	66%
Technical Committee - Public	0	N/A	N/A
Total	18	15	83%
Peace			
Board - Agency	4	4	100%
Board - First Nations	9	3	33%
Board - Public	3	1	33%
Technical Committee - Agency	7	4	57%
Technical Committee - First Nations	1	1	100%
Technical Committee - Public	1	1	100%
First Nations Working Group	12	6	50%
Total	37	20	54%
Total	90	56	62%
Total Agency	43	29	67%
Total First Nations	34	18	53%
Total Public	13	9	69%

A small sample (less than 10) of successful and unsuccessful proponents and stakeholder groups were also interviewed to provide additional context.

4. Electronic Survey

An online survey obtained feedback from project proponents, project partners, stakeholders and wildlife professionals using the survey platform Interceptum. Interceptum servers are located in a secure data centre in Montreal, Canada. All Interceptum user and participant data is stored exclusively in a Canadian data centre and use of this platform complies with the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The survey was available online from March 7, 2019 to April 19, 2019. A total of 129 surveys were completed.

FWCP Communications distributed information about the evaluation and a link to the survey to existing e-Letter contact lists in the Peace, Columbia and Coastal Regions. The link was also included on the FWCP website. Ference & Company distributed the survey link to 96 email addresses associated with project proponents from F17 to F20, provided by FWCP to Ference & Company. Initial emails were sent on March 14, 2019, with follow up emails on April 10, 2019. A total of 44 proponents completed the survey. The survey link was also shared with the College of Applied Biology, the BC Institute of Agrologists and the Association of BC Forest Professionals to share with their membership. A total of 21 natural resource professionals completed the survey.

The following table shows the number of completed surveys by respondent group and region.

Table 11: Surveys Completed

Respondent Group	Region			
	Coastal	Columbia	Peace	Total
Individual or organization that has received FWCP funding and/or has been directly involved with implementing a FWCP supported project	14	16	8	38
Agency employee with direct involvement implementing FWCP projects	1	4	1	6
Total Proponent	15	20	9	44
Natural resource professional	6	9	6	21
Individual or organization concerned with fish and wildlife and their habitat and/or with an interest in the operation of the FWCP	13	32	7	52
Agency employee involved with the FWCP	4	2	3	9
Other	0	2	1	3
Total Other Survey Respondents	23	45	17	85
Total Completed Surveys	38	66	26	129

5. Comparative Program Analysis

The following three similar programs were selected for review and comparison with the FWCP:

➤ Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

- A program to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River Basin that have been affected by the construction and operation of hydroelectric dams. The Program was developed to restore habitat, protect land and water, improve passage at dams and operate salmon and steelhead hatcheries. It is funded by electricity ratepayers, spans across a four-state region and is considered the largest environmental program of its kind in the world.
- The program was selected for comparison because it is a program with a similar mandate to FWCP in that part of its responsibilities are compensating for footprint impacts.

➤ Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF)

- Works in partnership with individuals and groups across BC to restore, enhance and expand critically important habitat for fish and wildlife. Originally created through an amendment to the *Wildlife Act*, HCTF was subsequently set up as a trust within government to provide grants to enhancement, restoration, and land acquisition projects that benefited fish and wildlife.
- The program was selected for comparison because it is focused on many of the same geographic and biological areas as the FWCP and is of a similar size in terms of annual project funding.

➤ Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program

- Provide funding for projects submitted by Canadians that contribute directly to the recovery objectives and population goals of species at risk and preventing others from becoming a conservation concern. ECCC administers HSP projects that support terrestrial stewardship projects while Fisheries and Oceans Canada is responsible for administering HSP aquatic stewardship projects.
- The program was selected for comparison because it resembles a partnership in that it is administered by both ECCC and DFO and like the FWCP includes involvement of Indigenous people and communities as an intended outcome.

The comparative analysis of similar programs included a desk review of publicly available program material and a telephone interview with a knowledgeable program representative.⁸ Appendix 2 of this report summarizes the information obtained on each program.

⁸ Habitat Stewardship Program representatives were unwilling or unable to participate in an interview.

APPENDIX 2: COMPARATIVE PROGRAMS

Background, Purpose and Vision of the Programs

Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program	<p>The <i>Northwest Power Act</i>, 1980, directs the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) to prepare a program, funded by Bonneville Power Administration, to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River Basin that have been affected by the construction and operation of hydroelectric dams. The Program was developed to restore habitat, protect land and water, improve passage at dams and operate salmon and steelhead hatcheries. It is funded by electricity ratepayers, spans across a four-state region and is considered the largest environmental program of its kind in the world.</p> <p>The Program envisions a Columbia River ecosystem that sustains an abundant, productive, and diverse community of fish and wildlife, supported by mitigation across the basin for the adverse effects to fish and wildlife caused by the development and operation of the hydrosystem. This envisioned ecosystem provides abundant opportunities for tribal trust and treaty-right harvest, non-tribal harvest, and the conditions that allow for restoration of the fish and wildlife affected by the construction and operation of the hydrosystem.</p>
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund	<p>The Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) works in partnership with individuals and groups across BC to restore, enhance and expand critically important habitat for fish and wildlife. Originally created through an amendment to the <i>Wildlife Act</i>, HCTF was subsequently set up as a trust within government to provide grants to enhancement, restoration, and land acquisition projects that benefited fish and wildlife. The HCTF vision is: A future where freshwater fish, wildlife and their habitats are healthy and valued by all British Columbians.</p> <p>For the first 25 years of HCTF history, the government was trustee and made all final funding decisions. In 2008, governance was changed to a new independent not-for-profit society as trustee – the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. Governance and funding decisions are made by the HCTF Board, comprised of representatives of the BC Wildlife Federation, Guide Outfitters Association of BC, BC Trappers Association, the Province of BC, and up to 5 additional individuals appointed by the board for their expertise.</p>
Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program	<p>The Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) was established in 2000 to provide funding for projects submitted by Canadians that contribute directly to the recovery objectives and population goals of species at risk and preventing others from becoming a conservation concern. Environment and Climate Change Canada administers HSP projects that support terrestrial stewardship projects while Fisheries and Oceans Canada is responsible for administering HSP aquatic stewardship projects.</p>

Strategic Planning and Funding Priorities

Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program	<p>The Program is developed by NPCC, funded by BPA, and implemented by fish and wildlife agencies, Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, scientists, and others. These partners of the Council periodically submit project proposals to implement the Program. Project proposals are based on needs identified in 58 sub-basin plans. The plans were developed collaboratively by citizens, government agencies, and tribes in each watershed.</p>
Habitat Conservation	<p>HCTF has three main goals supported by 6 strategic initiatives; these highlight important areas of focus for HCTF as they provide</p>

<p>Trust Fund</p>	<p>specific direction for HCTF's core operations. Goal 1: Increased conservation outcomes for fish, wildlife and their habitats Goal 2: Increase British Columbians' participation in environmental stewardship, education and responsible use Goal 3: Expand HCTF's role as a Trusted Partner in managing and administering conservation funding.</p> <p>Strategic Initiatives for 2015-2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a project level prioritization strategy 2. Expand and implement our performance management system 3. Expand strategic partnerships to enhance HCTF's impact 4. Develop and implement a coordinated funding strategy 5. Develop and implement a communications and outreach strategy 6. Continual improvement of HCTF business practices <p>HCTF Priority Guiding Principles: HCTF give priority to activities and investments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are scientifically rigorous and relevant to HCTF's mission • Provide clear and measurable outcomes • Demonstrate multiple partners or other expressions of meaningful or measurable support <p>HCTF Priority Statements: Priority statement 1: Native Species and Habitats. Priority to activities and investments: which benefit native species and their habitats; provide compelling evidence that the work or activity will result in enduring conservation benefits for native species and habitats; benefit multiple native species and habitats. Priority statement 2: Connection to Nature. Priority to activities and investments that directly connect British Columbians to conservation and nature. Priority statement 3: Climate Change. Priority to activities and investments that promote resiliency and persistence of species and habitats in the face of climate change. Priority Statement 4: Habitat Acquisitions. HCTF gives priority to proposed acquisitions that connect important habitats, and are informed and guided by conservation plans at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales</p> <p>HCTF will consider investments in: inventory and stock assessments that lead to conservation of habitat and/or inform sustainable use; conserving populations of at-risk species where underlying threats are being addressed through meaningful policies, strategies and management; applied research having a direct application in conservation and management.</p>
<p>Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program</p>	<p>The overall objectives of the Habitat Stewardship Program are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support habitat projects that benefit species at risk and prevent other from becoming a conservation concern 2. Enable Canadians to become actively involved in stewardship projects for species at risk which will result in tangible and measureable conservation benefits 3. Improve the scientific, sociological and economic understanding of stewardship as a conservation tool <p>The expected results of the HSP are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canada's wildlife and habitat is conserved and protected

	<p>2. Canada's species at risk are recovered</p> <p>3. Indigenous Peoples are engaged in conservation</p> <p>In order to be eligible for funding proposed projects must target species listed as Endangered, Threatened and of Special Concern on Schedule 1 of SARA. Activities eligible for funding include: habitat protection and securement; habitat improvement; species and habitat threat abatement; conservation planning; surveys, inventories and monitoring; project evaluation; outreach and education.</p>
Project/Proposal Review	
Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program	Project proposals are reviewed by the Council's Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP), a group of 11 scientists whose role is to ensure the projects are scientifically sound and consistent with the goals and objectives of the Program. The Council reviews the ISRP reports and makes funding recommendations to Bonneville.
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund	Grant applications are subject to a three-step Technical Review before approval for funding. First, applications are sent to a primary reviewer, who scores the project on areas such as its proposed objectives, methodology and cost/benefit. Second, applications are evaluated on their technical merit by a committee of experts in their field. The technical committees assign a score to each project and records comments. These comments are taken into account during the third stage of review when the HCTF Board of Directors examines each application and decides which will receive funding.
Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program	Proposals undergo evaluation by regional and national staff to verify eligibility requirements and to prioritize projects based on technical merit and alignment with program priorities and expected results as well as capacity and past performance to execute stewardship projects.
Program Budget and Funding	
Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program	<p>Budget:</p> <p>\$259 million in direct (expense) costs for the direct-funded program, which pays for projects such as habitat improvements, research, and some fish hatchery costs.</p> <p>Projects:</p> <p>Columbia Basin Fish Accords signed with States and Tribes include approximately 50% of projects undertaken, and other projects undertaken by State and Federal Agencies, Tribes, private sector organizations, and non-governmental organizations account for the remaining. Unlike the other programs compared in this evaluation, the NPCC Program does not rely on a call for proposals for identifying projects except for under special circumstances. In general, the project requirements are known and defined based on Federal Biological Opinions and projects identified by fish and wildlife experts in within States and Tribes.</p>
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund	<p>Budget and Sources of Funds:</p> <p>\$8 million annually; 70%: Surcharge on Licences</p> <p>18%: Investment Income</p> <p>7%: Restricted Contributions & Court Awards</p> <p>Project Types:</p> <p>Seed grants: for proponents who have an idea for a new enhancement and restoration project but need to do some initial planning before submitting a full new proposal. \$5000, meant to result in a full HCTF proposal submitted within two years. Receive and approve between 2-10 per annual funding cycle (application deadline Nov 2).</p>

	<p>Enhancement & Restoration Grants: Projects rarely exceed \$100,000. Receive 250-350 and approve 100-150 per annual funding cycle. New projects: have not been funded by HCTF before. HCTF funds multiyear projects one year at a time so applications for new projects are either for a single year, or for year 1 of a multi-year project.</p> <p>Continuing projects: a project is continuing if it is a multi-year project in its second or subsequent year: for the purchase of land to protect important fish or wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Acquisition Grants: \$500k limit annually and for a single project (application deadline March 31).</p> <p>Public Conservation Assistance Fund: Up to \$10,000 (per project) for projects that focus on on-the-ground, grassroots fish/wildlife/habitat projects with at least 50% volunteer component. 20-50 proposals and 10-30 approved per year. Deadline May 16. Lower technical rigour on review, single state review by committee of experts and user group reps.</p> <p>Caribou Habitat Restoration Fund: Made possible by \$2 million grant from the Province of BC to the HCTF for high and medium priority herd ranges for caribou habitat restoration proposals.</p> <p>Invasive Mussels Lake Monitoring Grants: Made possible by \$450,000 contribution from BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p>North Island Conservation Fund: \$350,000 fund specifically for fish and wildlife projects specifically for fish and wildlife projects on the North Island. Comes from surcharge revenue and a court-awarded fund from a polluting entity in the region.</p>
Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program	<p>Budget: Funding usually ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 per project.</p> <p>Eligible applicants include: Canadian non-governmental organizations; community groups; indigenous organizations and communities; individuals; private corporations and businesses; educational institutions; provincial, territorial and municipal governments; provincial Crown corporations.</p> <p>A minimum of 50% matching contributions (from non-federal sources) is required.</p>
Effectiveness and Performance Measurement	
Northwest Power and Conservation Council: Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program	<p>High Level Indicators</p> <p>The Council adopted high level indicators to track the progress of fish and wildlife efforts in the Columbia Basin. The collective efforts of many entities, including the Council, contribute to improving habitat and fish migration while protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife. These measures cannot be interpreted as a performance measure for any single entity but instead provide a high-level overview of outcomes that reflect regional headway. Currently, the Council is tracking progress using 3 high-level indicators, posed as questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are Columbia River Basin fish species abundant, diverse, productive, spatially distributed and sustainable? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Salmon and Steelhead returning to the Columbia River and Counted at Bonneville Dam b. Adult Sockeye Returning to Sawtooth Basin Lakes and counted at Lower Granite Dam c. Adult returns of Snake River Naturally Produced Fall Chinook counted at Lower Granite Dam d. Adult returns of snake river naturally produced spring/summer Chinook counts to Lower Granite Dam and the Tucannon River e. Adult returns of Upper Columbia Naturally Produced spring Chinook and Steelhead counted at Rock Island Dam f. Percentage of Naturally Produced Smolts returning as adult fish g. Percent of total naturally produced snake river fall Chinook harvested h. Percent of total snake river sockeye harvested

- i. Status and trends of sturgeon; lamprey; bull trout; redband trout; cutthroat trout
2. Are operations of the mainstem Columbia and Snake River hydropower dams meeting the fish-passage survival objectives of the Program?
 - a. Reach of juvenile Snake River Salmon and Steelhead through the Hydrosystem, Lower Granite to Bonneville Dams
 - b. Reach survival of juvenile Upper Columbia River Hatchery Chinook and Steelhead, McNary to Bonneville dams
 - c. Reach survival of Adult Snake River and Upper Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead
3. What is being accomplished by projects that implement the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program?
 - a. Habitat Improved, in miles
 - b. Riparian Habitat Protected, in miles
 - c. Water Protected and Conserved, in miles
 - d. Water Protected by Installing Diversion Screens, in acre-feet
 - e. Habitat Made Accessible from Fish Passage Improvements, in miles
 - f. Wildlife Habitat Units Lost and Mitigated, by dam
 - g. Willamette Wildlife Mitigation, in acres

Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP)

HEP is a species/habitat approach to impact assessment. Under HEP, "target" wildlife species are identified, along with the optimal habitat conditions for that species. Habitat quality for each target species is documented with an index, the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). HSI values range from 0.0 to 1.0, with 1.0 representing optimal habitat conditions. When a parcel of land is evaluated under HEP, the HSI values are determined, and then the HSI values are multiplied by area of available habitat to obtain Habitat Units (HUs) for each target species. BPA funded regional wildlife agencies and tribes to quantify construction and inundation impacts. The Council incorporated the completed loss assessments for each dam into the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. Through the use of the Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP), the loss assessments identify the "habitat units" (HUs) that were lost due to dam construction and the resulting habitat inundation. Issues regarding the inconsistent and subjective use of HEP for the loss assessments prevent BPA from using them to legally define its wildlife mitigation responsibilities. Nevertheless, BPA does use the loss assessments to guide its wildlife mitigation efforts and help inform its mitigation duty. The Council's program recommends that BPA and wildlife managers in the region use the Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP), and its metric the HU, to track mitigation progress.

Evaluation and Studies

The final and interim reports of all projects are reviewed to inform adaptive management. The Council's Independent Scientific Review Panel undertakes multiple project-level evaluations by grouping like projects together and conducting an evaluation of all projects undertaken over a given period of time. For example, they would identify all resident fish and sturgeon projects and evaluate the extent to which projects were completed as planned and what lessons were learned. A key strength of the process, according to a Program representative, is the bringing together of project proponents for question and answer sessions with the scientific panel. These meetings allow the panel a deeper understanding of the progress and outcomes of projects, but they also serve as knowledge sharing opportunities for proponents working within similar scopes of species, habitats, etc. The process is said to be useful for informing the focus of future activities. The Council's Independent Scientific Advisory Board conducts studies related to overarching issues, for example, climate change or the use of fish tagging technology.

A work in progress

	<p>Tracking and evaluating performance is a work in progress for the Council. The initial indicators are based on available data and do not include a comprehensive set of indicators or species. Over time, it is expected that the Council will augment and refine these indicators to provide a more comprehensive picture of fish and wildlife in the Columbia Basin. For example, at this point all of the indicators for Council Actions are related to habitat work.</p>
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund	<p>Report Review Grant reports are evaluated for consistency with the approved proposal for the grant year; Multi-Year reports are reviewed and provide the background for more detailed evaluations on-site or in workshops.</p> <p>Project Evaluation Workshops: Annual workshops where project leaders present their results to HCTF staff, board members and other grant recipients for peer review. The stated objectives of the workshops are to: i) review and evaluate the results of HCTF investments in projects, and (ii) provide a forum for project leaders, organizations, and scientists to share information and ideas on how to further fish, wildlife and habitat management and activities.</p> <p>Project Site Evaluations: HCTF selects one or two projects per year, and staff and/or members of the Board of Directors meet with the project leaders to discuss project (including financial) performance, and look at on-the-ground accomplishments.</p> <p>Conservation Land Management Program Evaluation: HCTF regularly undertakes an in-depth financial and field review of a selected region within the BC/TNT Joint Conservation Land Management Program to ensure the program operates within the guiding principles of the program and provides conservation benefits on the ground. The goal is to ensure that money invested in the program resulted in tangible outcomes on conservation lands consistent with the approved plan, and was used in accordance with the program's administrative guidelines.</p> <p>Detailed project evaluations: Occasional in-depth reviews are undertaken of selected projects by HCTF staff, external contractors, or a combination of the two. For example, in 2011 an evaluation was conducted of the BC Wetland Partnership Program to determine if the partner, Ducks Unlimited Canada, effectively used HCTF funds for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of on-the-ground wetland conservation projects that are consistent with HCTF strategic objectives and outcomes identified in approved project proposals. The evaluation included as Part 1 a desk review of general ledger reports, a verification of costs and revenues for a sample of specific O&M activities and conservation projects for verifications of the costs and revenues; Part 2 was conducted in the field to determine whether the specified actions occurred, the quality of the completed work and the reasonableness of costs.</p>
Government of Canada: Habitat Stewardship Program	<p>Information was not available through public sources.</p>