



For Immediate Release

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A proposed plan to improve fish passage at Wilsey Dam is endorsed by FWCP Plan moves to final steps in fish passage decision framework

(VERNON) The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) has endorsed a proposal to improve fish passage at the Wilsey Dam on the Shuswap River near Vernon. The proposal was developed by the Wilsey Dam Fish Passage Committee with funding from the FWCP for environmental and technical feasibility studies.

Construction of the dam in 1929 blocked the upstream passage of salmon including Chinook, Coho and Sockeye.

“The FWCP has contributed more than \$413,000 towards fish passage studies in the Shuswap River watershed since 2004 and our Board has endorsed this proposal which, if approved, would provide the opportunity for salmon to return upstream of the dam,” says FWCP’s Coastal Region Manager, Julie Fournier. “Local First Nations, stakeholders and community members should be congratulated for their hard work and commitment to develop this fish passage proposal.”

With endorsement of the FWCP’s Coastal Region Board, the Wilsey Dam fish passage proposal moves to step six in BC Hydro’s seven-step fish passage decision framework where further analysis and an assessment of the environmental, financial, and technical elements of the proposal, as well as the social benefits, will be conducted. If the results of this step are positive, BC Hydro’s Board of Directors will review the proposal for acceptance.

“Throughout this process, BC Hydro has been supportive of the impressive efforts of the Wilsey Dam Fish Passage Committee, and we look forward to continuing to work with them on the fish passage proposal at the Wilsey Dam,” said Chris O’Riley, BC Hydro President and Chief Operating Officer. “This project is just one example of how we’re working with various groups across the Province to minimize the environmental impact of our generating facilities.”

The FWCP is also currently funding fish passage feasibility studies in the Alouette and Coquitlam river watersheds. In the Salmon River watershed, the FWCP has also funded environmental and technical feasibility studies. In the end with additional partner contributions, the process helped facilitate First Nations’ engagement, as well as agency and stakeholder input. In 2017, the Salmon River Diversion dam was removed and the river bed was rehabilitated providing migrating Coho, Chinook and Steelhead unimpeded access to about 40 km of upstream good quality habitat.

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations, and Public Stakeholders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams. Learn more about the fish passage decision

framework at <http://fwcp.ca/fish-passage-decision-framework/>. Learn more about the FWCP, its projects and how you can apply for a grant at <http://fwcp.ca>.

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[BC Hydro Fish Passage Decision Framework](#)