



Chinook Recovery & Rebuilding Initiative (CRRI)

Project Overview

Fraser Salmon Management Council | October 2022

CRRI: Overview

The Chinook Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative (CRRI) is a First Nations-led collaborative project of the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC), funded by the BC Salmon Restoration & Innovation Fund (BC SRIF), to support the urgent restoration of depressed Fraser chinook salmon populations.

FSMC is the Tier 1 body representing 76 signatory First Nations from the Fraser and approach areas, who committed to collaboratively managing Fraser salmon with DFO in the historic 2019 Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement. That agreement also established the joint (Tier 2) Fraser Salmon Management Board (FSMB), which has identified Fraser chinook rebuilding as a top priority for action.

A foundational premise of CRRI is that more technical collaboration and inclusion of Indigenous interests is required to reverse the current declines and to protect and enhance salmon biodiversity going forward.

The CRRI project will promote and support a strong First Nations leadership role at levels — provincial, regional, watershed and local — in shaping and delivering the work of rebuilding depressed Fraser chinook stocks and driving on-the-ground and policy reforms to ensure their long-term health through sustainable and collaborative management. This will include supporting FSMB's work as well as new or existing projects led by signatory First Nations and others at the local, regional and provincial levels.

CRRI's strengths-based approach will bring together and build on the substantial existing body of science research, indigenous knowledge and capacity, while supporting knowledge exchange and promoting new partnerships, innovation and collaboration opportunities.

CRRI will serve as a convener and intermediary to support and leverage existing efforts, bringing people together to explore new opportunities and solutions, and harness the power of collective action to tackle the complex challenges facing these populations and the fishing communities whose lives, culture and welfare have been so intimately connected to them for generations.

Longer term, CRRI's intended legacy is to provide the foundation of new and lasting collaborative structures that will persist once the project is complete, ensuring a strong future leadership role for First Nations in supporting and coordinating the work of many parties at many levels to ensure strong, healthy fish populations and sustainable management.

AT A GLANCE

- **Project Term:** January 1, 2022 - March 31, 2024
- **Resources:** Funding: BC SRIF; In-Kind Support: FSMC and indigenous partners.
- **Host agency/delivery:** Fraser Salmon Management Council.
- **Project guidance/oversight:** Steering Committee led by Project Coordinator Marcel Shepert, lead Biologist Michael Staley, FSMC ED Greg Witzky, Gord Sterritt & FSMB rep Pat Matthew, with technical reps from the Upper Fraser (Shamus Curtis), Mid Fraser (Marc Labelle), Lower Fraser (Aidan Fisher) and Approach (Nicole Frederickson).

CRRRI Overview: Objectives, Role, Tasks & Deliverables

Overarching CRRRI Objective:

1. To advance Fraser chinook rebuilding.
2. Provide resources and supports that promote a stronger technical role for indigenous groups in all aspects of planning, delivery and evaluation of such work.

CRRRI Role

Building on earlier/current work, CRRRI will serve as a convenor, facilitator, coordinator and technical resource to support indigenous efforts and aspirations to lead chinook rebuilding.

- Positioned within FSMC (with its mandate to work with FSMB and JTC to manage at the migratory route scale), CRRRI will integrate, complement and support other work at the local, sub-regional and provincial levels, including Chinook Rebuilding work proposed under the FSMB work plan.
- CRRRI will serve as a bridge between indigenous groups (FSMC signatories/non-signatories) and between indigenous and other interests and initiatives for chinook rebuilding (JTWG, IRMAs, DFO, SEP, PSF, PSSI, Province of BC).
- CRRRI will lay the groundwork for a new model that advances a strong ongoing First Nations leadership role in chinook rebuilding after the project ends in March 2024.

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- CRRI IS NOT:
 - Directly delivering rebuilding projects or competing with those working on such.
 - Developing an overall rebuilding framework or indigenous plan for such, but rather supporting others to do so.

CRRI Tasks

1. Engagement: Building technical collaboration via project guidance/delivery:

- Directly engage individuals and groups to more fully understand and document indigenous priorities, technical capacity and needs relative to development of a Fraser chinook recovery program, and use that insight to guide CRRI implementation.
- Plan and host activities that bring indigenous technical staff from IRMAs, AAROMs, JTC, JTWG together with DFO and others working on chinook rebuilding (e.g. from academia, volunteer/NGO, government and private sectors) to build relationships and establish a foundation for ongoing collaboration.

2. Dialogue: Act as a convener facilitating cross learning, networking, problem solving:

- Host CRRI dialogue sessions & present/seek feedback at other venues:
 - Provide opportunities for indigenous groups to learn more about each others' work, explore common ground, priorities, challenges, gaps and solutions.
 - Connect indigenous and non-indigenous interests to strengthen collaboration
 - Showcase indigenous aspirations, capacity and needs to promote a leading role for indigenous groups in broader work and frameworks for chinook rebuilding.

3. Focussed technical work/exploration: advancing solutions to priority questions:

- Undertake preliminary technical work through individual assignments and focussed task groups to explore priority technical questions and prepare background materials to inform development of an indigenous-led collaborative chinook rebuilding agenda.

4. Information sharing: technical resource centre for chinook rebuilding work:

- Share CRRI findings to raise understanding of indigenous priorities, capacity, needs and opportunities.
- Develop tools to gather and facilitate sharing of resources to support chinook rebuilding. *NOTE: Scope will depend on remaining capacity after priority Tasks 1-3 are covered.*

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- Final report with recommendations laying out the groundwork for a new model to support a strong ongoing leadership role for indigenous groups in Southern BC/ Fraser chinook rebuilding after CRRRI concludes in March 2024.

2022/23 Work Plan: Aug 2022 - March 2023

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. Engagement & outreach/relationship building

- Individual debriefs with IRMA reps:
- Questionnaire/launch announcement to help ID priorities (IRMA aspirations, needs and priorities & how best can we help within our mandate).
- Invite IRMA technical staff to partner in collaborative technical work.

2. Dialogue: Focus on networking, cross learning and brainstorming solutions

- Dialogue series, starting in Fall 2022.
- CRRRI guest presentations, e.g. 2023 Forum & other venues.

3. Focussed technical investigations: addressing priority questions

- Technical task groups to help address priority questions.
- Research assignments to address specific technical questions, prepare discussion documents and backgrounders.
 - Initial topics: Project protocols to access, use and protect indigenous knowledge; Summarize existing chinook rebuilding work & how best to build on it.

4. Information sharing: technical resource centre

- Technical reports, findings, updates sharing results of the above work.
- FSMC Main Table, FSMB & JTC Briefings
- Explore options for a CRRRI database, online resource library.
- Explore CRRRI networking/interactive tools: contact lists, chat forums

Outline: 2023/24 Work Plan

- Wrap up & report on technical work assigned to individuals & task groups.
- Continue outreach, information sharing, building collaboration.
- Explore Web portal/virtual resource centre & interactive tools.

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- Final wrap up Forum to share findings & seek advice to shape final report.
- Draft final report & recommendations; formal BC SRIF project reporting.