

Vancouver Island Salmon Committee

presentation by

Anita Blakley (LGL Limited) on behalf of Sonora Morin Thompson (IMAWG)

for

FSMC Fraser and Marine Approach
Salmon Visions Forum



Tier 2

28 November 2024



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am calling from traditional lands of the WSÁNEĆ Nations of the Coast Salish Indigenous peoples. I would like to begin by acknowledging the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands that we are on today. While we meet today on a virtual platform, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the importance of the lands, which we each call home.

We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improving our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

Outline of VISIC Presentation

Overview of the VISIC

Project Scope, Goal, and Context

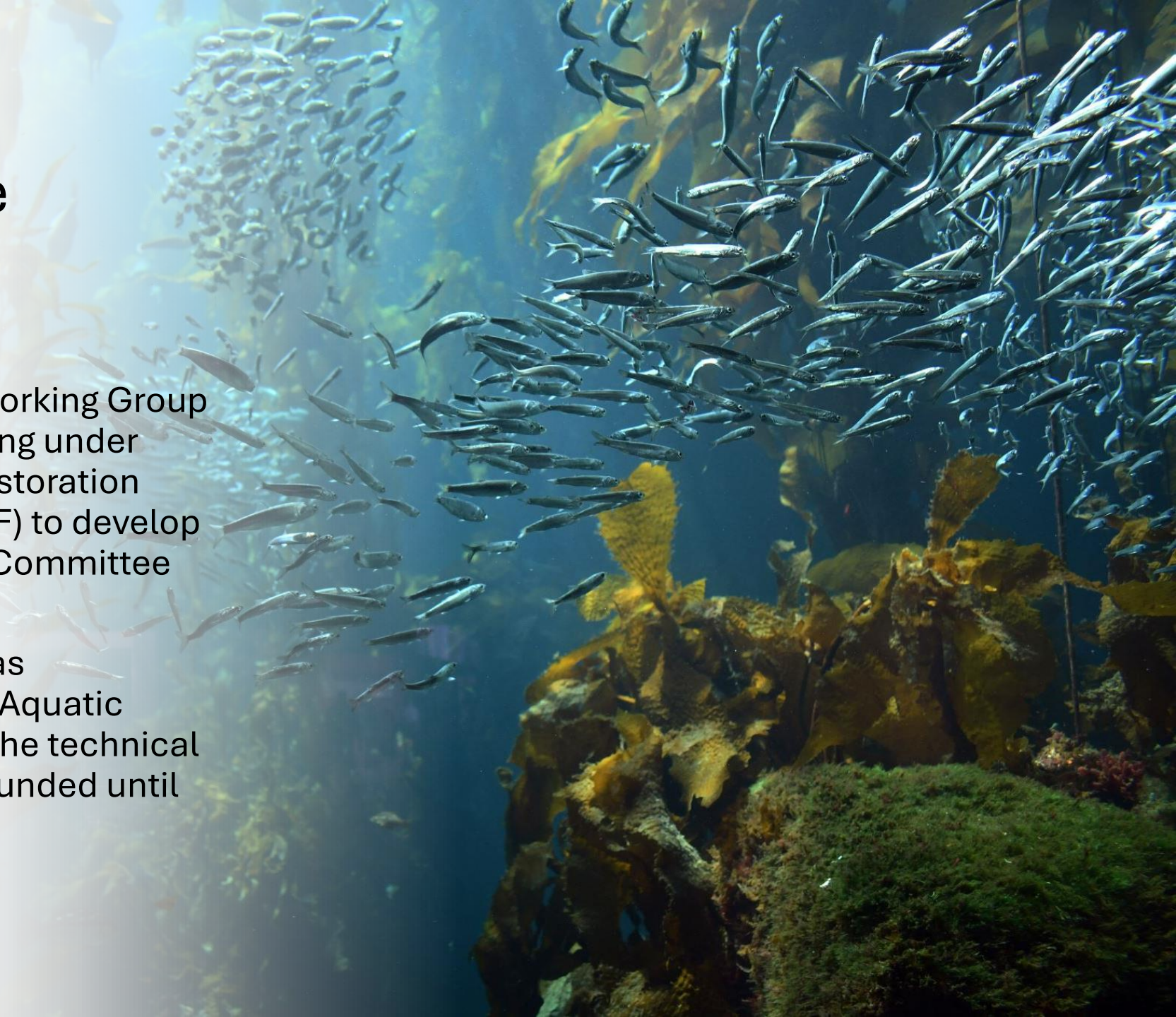
VISIC Workplan and Outcomes

VISIC Long-term Goals

PSSI Communications Coordinator and Communications Table

Vancouver Island Salmon Committee Overview

- The Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) was awarded funding under British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) to develop a Vancouver Island Salmon Committee (VISC).
- In April 2022, LGL Limited was contracted by Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) as the technical lead team. The project was funded until March 2024.



Vancouver Island Salmon Committee

VISC is supported by a technical working group (V-TWG) comprised of the four AAROM groups on Vancouver Island: A-Tlegay Fisheries Society, Uu-a-thluk Fisheries Society, IMAWG, and Q'ul-lhanumutsun Aquatic Resources Society (QARS).



IMAWG	QARS	A-Tlegay	UU-A-THLUK	LGL Limited
Sonora Morin Thompson	Jordan Bromley	Brian Assu	Jim Lane	Bob Bocking
Nick Chowdry	Bernette Laliberte	Sarah Unrau		Anita Blakley
Nicole Frederickson	Damon Nowosad	Derek LeBeouf		Wendell Challenger
	Tim Kulchyski	Zach Everson		Jessica Johnson- Mackinnon
				Chris Burns



Proposed Geographic Scope

We recognize that there may be territorial overlap; however the map is meant to encompass watersheds of interest as identified by AAROMS as within the scope of work.



GOAL

The overall goal for the project is to enable member nations to utilize indigenous knowledge along with western science to rebuild and maintain specific salmon populations of interest.



CONTEXT

- *To support Vancouver Island Nations with the best available information, advice, strategic direction and assistance to formulate action-based plans to protect and re-build local salmon populations. The work will benefit all salmon species (including steelhead and trout) within prioritized populations on Vancouver Island and the mainland inlets. Six major outcomes of the project are:*
 - *Outline criteria to support salmon rebuilding plans;*
 - *Identify data gaps;*
 - *Identify potential impacts on salmon populations and habitats;*
 - *Provide recommendations to develop broader salmon initiatives;*
 - *Build collaborative working relationships; and*
 - *Develop an engagement process to share information.*

Vancouver Island Salmon Committee Workplan

Context: To support Vancouver Island Nations with the best available information, advice, strategic direction and assistance to formulate action-based plans to project and rebuild local salmon populations. The work will benefit all salmon species (including steelhead and trout).

GOAL 1: Technical Meetings (V-TWG)				
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:
Coordinate and facilitate VISC Technical Working Group engagements.	May 2022 - March 2024 (average one meeting per month)	Appointed Member Nation Leads and LGL (Technical Expertise)	LGL to compile meeting summaries, action tables and/or specific advice, next steps and areas of responsibilities to the VISC. Nation leads to review meeting minutes and complete action items.	Hybrid meetings occur at the Coast Hotel in Nanaimo every third Monday of each month starting in May 2022.
GOAL 2: Quarterly Salmon Committee Meetings (VISC)				
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:
Coordinate and facilitate quarterly VISC meetings	May 2022 - March 2024 (at least 4 times per year)	Identified Nation Leads and LGL (Technical Expertise)	LGL to compile meeting summaries, action tables and/or specific advice, next steps and areas of responsibilities to the VISC. Nation leads to review meeting minutes and complete action items.	Hybrid meeting occur at the Coast Hotel in Nanaimo. In 2022, VISC met in August, October and December.
GOAL 3: Identify Priority Watershed or Stocks to Individual AAROM Nations				
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:
Identify key stocks/watersheds/streams that are important to member nations in order to assist in proposal development and rebuilding plans.	May 2022- October 2022	VISC and V-TWG members	Member Nations to identify specific salmon populations of interest. LGL to support by providing best available information and advice. Focus will be QARS and A-Tlegay AAROM Nations.	Augment areas that are currently being studied and/or identify areas that are data deficient. Avoid overlap with existing work.

Vancouver Island Salmon Committee Workplan

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GOAL 4: Gap Analysis					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Review of existing data for data deficient Vancouver Island and Mainland Salmon stocks.	May 2022- December 2022	LGL with assistance from V-TWG	LGL Technincal Team to prepare Cowichan Report Card with feedback from QARS. A-Tlegay escapement review for mainland inlets and develop strategy.	A-Tlegay Member Nations - the report focus was to address particular Pacific management concerns by highlighting opportunities for improved escapement montioring. Cowichan Assessment Unit report card assisted in our understanding of the current health of the stocks, addressed potential data gaps and identified threats the may affect the salmon species in the region.	IMAWG website
GOAL 5: Proposal Development/Implementation					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Prepare BSCRIF and AERF proposals for identified areas of interest (rebuilding strategies - early wins)	November 2022 BSCRIF deadline 15 November/AERF deadline 28 November. Implentation would be end of March 2023.	Appointed Member Nation Leads and LGL (Technical Expertise)	The BCSRIF proposal for the Campbell River - fish trap (Chris leading). AERF proposal for the Upper Cowichan tributaries plus early timed Chinook DNA collections (Patricia leading).	Additional proposals may be submitted later in 2023 - see Goal 4. Implementation of proposals would start end of March 2023 if successful. The BCSRIF application was successful but the AERF proposal was not.	Proposals
GOAL 6: Collaboration with DFO, BC, and other Nations					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Meetings with DFO Reps, PSSi, FSMC	November 2022 - March 2023	Meetings	VISC and LGL to meet with PSSi reps; Bob and Anita to join Fraser Salmon Management Council recovery and rebuilding initiative; meet with local DFO reps to help with proposal development.	Hold a workshop and invite BC and DFO reps - keep lines of communication open. VISC met 13 Dec 2022 and workshop 15 March 2024.	Meeting Notes

Vancouver Island Salmon Committee Workplan

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GOAL 7: Salmon Rebuilding How to Guide					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Document describing processes required to rebuild salmon stocks	Feb-Mar 2024	LGL staff - LGL Team	Prepare a "How to Guide" for Nations on basics of salmon building in their territories focusing on VI.	A document to be prepared for VISC Nations and presents an approach for rebuilding sustainable Pacific salmon populations and their freshwater and estuarine habitats.	IMAWG website
GOAL 8: Management Impact Assessments on Chinook and Recommendations					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Review IFMP 2024	Feb-Mar 2024	LGL Staff - lead by Bob and Anita	Prepare high level summary of management impacts on VI Chinook (and other salmon species) based on 2024 IFMP	Assist A-Tlegay with response to 2024 IFMP	IFMP Review
GOAL 9: Summary Report (year 1)					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Year 1 Summary report -summarize what has been done to date	start Dec 2022 - due 2023 March	LGL with assistance from V-TWG	Interim report for the project that describes what was done, meeting records, literature gathered, data sources, and project outcomes. Recommendations for next steps (including draft or initial rebuilding plans). Anita to lead.		Direct progress report to VISC
GOAL 10: Final Report					
OBJECTIVES:	TIMELINE:	RESOURCES:	TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:	STRATEGY:	Outcome
Final Project Report	Due March 2024	LGL with assistance from V-TWG	Final report for the project that describes what was done, meeting records, literature gathered, data sources, and project outcomes. Recommendations for next steps and providing data for IMAWG portal)		Direct progress report to VISC



Vancouver Island Salmon Committee (VISC)


The Vancouver Island Salmon Committee (VISC) aims to develop strategies for rebuilding southern BC stocks, addressing gaps in understanding and improving stock status. This includes Tier One work to inform broader salmon engagement efforts like the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative. Supported by a technical working group, VISC collates data, supports rebuilding plans, and gathers Indigenous knowledge to aid Vancouver Island and Mainland Inlet Nations in protecting and rebuilding salmon stocks. A team technical lead, contracted by the program's administrator, the Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) oversees these efforts.

LEARN MORE

OVERVIEW

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

VISC REPORTS

 **First Nations-led Approach to Salmon Rebuilding**


This document was prepared for the First Nations of the Vancouver Island Salmon Committee and presents an approach for rebuilding sustainable Pacific salmon populations and their freshwater and estuarine habitats.

DOWNLOAD PDF

 **A-Tlegay Member Nations Mainland Inlet Territory Escapement Report**

Pacific salmon are foundational to the practices of Indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific coastal region of BC and maintaining these important salmon populations is crucial for the continued health of the ecosystems that support them and for A-Tlegay Member Nations culture and well-being.

DOWNLOAD PDF


 **Cowichan Assessment Unit Report Card**

The Cowichan Assessment Unit has been impacted by increasing threats from climate and associated hydrological changes, forestry, agriculture, water withdrawals and development. As a result, the streams were identified as a priority to understand the current health of the stocks and identify threats that may affect the multiple

DATA SOURCES

As part of the Vancouver Island Salmon Committee project work, two gap analysis reports were prepared by LGL Limited (www.lgl.com).

A-Tlegay Member Nations Mainland Inlet Territory Escapement Report and Cowichan Assessment Unit Report card. The sections below outline the publicly available data sources that were used to create the reports.

 [DOWNLOAD DATA SOURCES](#)

Publicly Available Data Sources

(how to access)

- NUSEDS Escapement Data*
- Conservation Units*
- Conservation Units Biological Status*
- Hatchery Releases*
- Harvest Data (FSC, EO, Recreational, Commercial)*
- Smolt Data*
- River Hydrology and Weather Data*
- Anadromous Length Data*
- GIS Data*



LONG TERM GOALS – PAST 2024



Funding

Continual funds that align with the goals of the Nations. Current funds focus on specific objectives not always supporting Nation objectives.

Evaluation/Review

Building in a system of periodic review and evaluation as it relates to salmon rebuilding on Vancouver Island and DFO programs (e.g. impact of MSF fisheries). This may require structural change to existing programs (opportunity to dual fish).

Capacity

Build capacity within the Nations. Currently, reliant on partnerships with consultants. Including successional steps to allow Nations to take over management.

Implementation

Support implementing projects based on successful proposal submissions. Implementation should also include engagement and consultation in the boarder sense, not specifically project based.

Reconciliation/Inclusion

Criteria that should be built into fisheries management.

PSSI Communications Coordinator and Communications Table



Since the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) introduction in 2021, IMAWG members have been providing feedback to DFO that conservation and rebuilding of salmon is the greatest priority. To improve communication and collaboration further, IMAWG was awarded PSSI funding to create a new 'PSSI Communications Coordinator and Communications Table' through VISC.

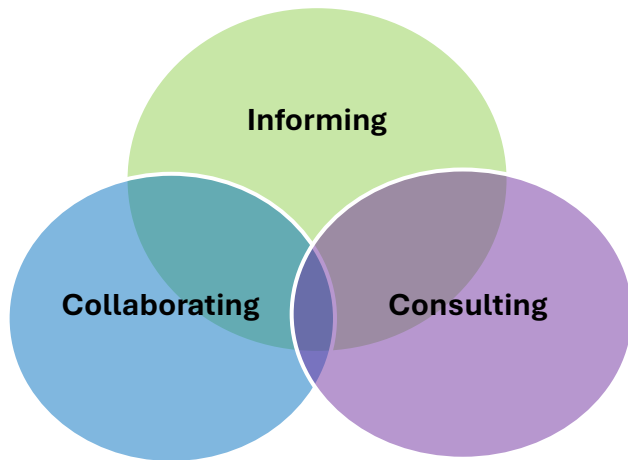
Engagement Strategy for PSSI Communications Coordinator and Communications Table



GOAL

Build a collaborative network of AAROM and relevant DFO PSSI staff that will share information related to Vancouver Island salmon rebuilding initiatives.

OBJECTIVES



Share information related to salmon rebuilding on Vancouver Island, focusing on:

- **Informing** - showcasing current salmon rebuilding activities, both locally and regionally;
- **Collaborating** - increasing engagement; and
- **Consulting** - seeking advice on potential projects.

Collaborative hybrid one-day Workshop was held 15 March 2024 Tigh-na-mara Resort in Parksville, BC.

The workshop was facilitated by Nick Chowdhury (member of the Da'naxda'xw and President of IMAWG) and Anita Blakley (Senior Fisheries Biologist from LGL Limited and VISC technical lead).

- Participants (50+) that attended were from:
- A-Tlegay Fisheries Society
- Q'ul-Ihanumtsun Aquatic Resources Society (QARS)
- Cowichan Tribes
- Malahat Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Ha'oom Fisheries Society
- Nuchatlaht
- Ahoushat
- Da'naxda'xw
- Stz'uminus
- Namgis
- IMAWG
- FSMC
- DFO (PSSI staff)
- Province of BC staff (Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship)
- LGL Limited (VISC technical team)



Workshop Agenda and Objectives:

- **Workshop Focus:** to provide an opportunity for PSSI staff and local Vancouver Island AAROM members to network and exchange information on regional activities. This would be achieved by the following objectives:
 - Provide updates on local activities and regional initiatives by DFO PSSI area implementation staff to increase knowledge on PSSI programs, opportunities, and capacity for their local systems.
 - Provide updates on Vancouver Island Salmon Committee (VISC) activities.
 - Create a collaborative two-way information sharing process between Island Nations and DFO PSSI area implementation staff.

9:00 – 9:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Welcome/Opening Prayer o Introductions o Review Agenda and Meeting Guidelines o High-level VISC Overview 	Anita Blakley (LGL)/Nick Chowdhury (IMAWG)
9:30 – 9:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Overview of PSSI (Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative) 	Andrea Goruk (DFO)
9:45 – 10:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Restoration Planning – introduction to 11 April engagement 	Jennifer Harding/Scott Northrup (DFO)
10:15-10:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BREAK 	
10:30-11:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o BCSRIF – program update 	Shane Petersen (DFO)/Stephen Hextall (Province)
11:00-11:20am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Watershed Security Strategy 	Carys Pinches (Province)
11:20-11:40am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o South Coast – Restoration Centre of Expertise – Program Update 	Jenna Sutherst (DFO)
11:40am-12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Nanaimo River Chinook Rebuilding Pilot 	John White (Snuneymuxw), Sunny Mizushima and Andrea Goruk (DFO)
12:00–1:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LUNCH 	
1:00-1:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Hatchery Modernization - The Pacific Hatchery Adaptation Strategy 	Dave Willis/Gabrielle Soucy (DFO)
1:30–2:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o STAD – Stock Assessment and Rebuilding 	Steve Baillie (DFO)
2:00-2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Community Advisors – High Level overview of South Coast Area 	Jacob Melville (DFO) [No Title]
2:30–2:45pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BREAK 	
2:45–3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How can Island Nations be involved in PSSI rebuilding. o What we heard/Mentimeter o Wrap up. 	Anita Blakley (LGL)/Sonora Morin Thompson and Nick Chowdhury (IMAWG)



OVERALL WORKSHOP TAKEWAYS from the Nation members:

- Offered clear insights into the current initiatives of PSSI;
- Provided an understanding of how Nations could benefit from PSSI efforts;
- Identified datasets with potential for further expansion; and
- Suggested that this type of collaboration continue.

Engagement Strategy for PSSl Communications Coordinator and Communications Table – Phase 2



GOAL OF PHASE 2

Maintain a collaborative network of AAROM and key DFO PSSl staff that facilitate information sharing on Vancouver Island salmon restoration initiatives, incorporating feedback from the Phase 1 workshop.

DRAFT WORKPLAN – Phase 2

Organize a series of monthly virtual engagements (Dec-Mar) between Vancouver Island AAROMs and relevant DFO PSSl staff. Engagement topics are still to be determined, but in general will include:

- Updates to DFO PSSl staff on VISC stewardship and rebuilding activities;
- Updates on local and regional activities by DFO PSSl staff to help VISC Nations increase their knowledge of PSSl programs;
- Updates from local governments and resource-based industries to increase collaboration and understanding.

Outcome:
To report key findings
and recommendations
for further salmon
engagements with DFO.

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU



Anita Blakley

LGL Limited

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