

# Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



Fraser Basin Council



## 2009/10 FINAL REPORT

<b>FSWP File Number*</b>	09 LR 63 PG
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\* Please use the FSWP File Number provided in previous FSWP project correspondence.

### 1. Project Information

#### 1.1. Project Title

Xeni Gwet'in Chilko Roundtable Watershed Plan

#### 1.2. Proponent's Legal Name

Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government

#### 1.3. Project Location

Chilko River Watershed including Taseko River within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker area of the Traditional Tsilhqot'in Territory

#### 1.4. Contact for this report

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#### 1.5 Funding Amount

Original Approved Grant Amount:	Total FSWP Expenditures:	Final Invoice Amount:	Final Non-FSWP leveraging, including cash and in-kind:
45,000	45,000	27,000	17,750

### 2. Project Summary

Please provide a single paragraph describing your project, its objectives, and the results. As this summary may be used in program communications, clearly state the issue(s) that were addressed and avoid overly technical descriptions. Maximum 300 words.

The Xeni Gwet'in Chilko River Watershed Roundtable brings together leadership and residents of the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area with government representatives to discuss watershed issues that affect salmon runs in their area. In September 2009 the Roundtable prioritized concerns, reviewed their Mission and Vision drafted in 2008. In October 2009 guest speaker, Jamie Doyle a PhD Candidate, Environmental & Chemical Toxicology Program was invited to present information on "Assessing Soil Ingestion in People following Traditional Lifestyles". In November 2009 the Roundtable met to define fishing policy and study glacier and water issues. During December 2009 at the Roundtable, Rick Holmes, RPBio presented an update on H2O Sampling underway within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker area as well as a comparative policy review among other jurisdictions regarding Ecosystem-based planning and it's potential benefits to Fish. The forums are a useful tool in providing a venue hosted by First Nation leadership and attended by government and citizens to discuss options that will maintain, protect and enhance important salmon runs in the Caretaker Area.

Roundtable provided the participants a final report on meeting outcomes and provided some analysis on what an ecosystem based management plan may mean to the fishery resource in the Xeni Gwet'in

Caretaker Area (XGCA), and to provide a summary of the Chilko River Roundtable meetings in 2009 and the group's intent to be actively managing the XGCA for fishery values. We're looking forward to continuing the work of the Roundtable in 2010/2011.

**OPTIONAL** Please give a short statement (up to 100 words) of the most compelling activity or outcome from your project.

Draft Mission Statement: "The Chilko Watershed within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area is a self-sustaining, wild environment and will remain a source of clean water, clean air and abundant fish and wildlife forever, providing an example of how people use and live respectfully with the land". There is a recognition from the group that healthy watersheds can mean healthy economies and healthy social structures all of which are key to sustainable development. This is not a new concept to the Xeni Gwet'in community as they have lived since time immemorial with sustainable development as their very goal for existence.

### 3. Final Project Results and Effectiveness

3.1 Copy EXPECTED OUTCOMES from your detailed proposal and insert into this section. Add additional rows as needed. Then please list the FINAL OUTCOMES (the tangible end products resulting from this work) associated with expected outcome.

If FINAL OUTCOMES differ from the original EXPECTED OUTCOMES please describe why, and the implications for the project.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

#### FINAL OUTCOMES

1. Citizens and groups from Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area will be provided a forum to discuss watershed issues that impact on salmon stocks in this area. This will result in a management structure and project management plan

Four Roundtable meetings were held, 3 of which were conducted within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area. Watershed issues were discussed, prioritized and agenda's set for Roundtable discussions. Recommendations were discussed and provided for future watershed management.

2. Project scope designed, information gathered and community consultation process underway.

Project scope and information identified to undertake community consultation process.

3. Watershed concerns will be presented for discussion and remedial action will be recommended to protect and enhance salmon stocks in the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area.

Watershed concerns were discussed and remedial action recommended to protect and enhance Salmon Stocks within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area.

4. A State of the Watershed report will be prepared as part of the Watershed Based Fish Sustainability Plan.

Report on meeting outcomes and recommendations made for application to 2010-2011 funding activities. Report submitted by March 31, 2010.

3.2 Please evaluate the EFFECTIVENESS of your project in achieving Project Objectives. Please identify the indicators you have used to measure the effectiveness of your project. Please include any notable successes or challenges.

Many streams and lakes remain unassessed in the Xenigwet'in Caretaker area and this is a major concern expressed during Roundtable sessions. Sockeye, Chinook and Coho salmon, rainbow trout, bull trout, dolly varden, steelhead, kokanee and rocky mountain whitefish are species that are considered very important for food consumption by the Xenigwet'in. Unfortunately many of these stocks are in decline and their status is of concern to the Roundtable and to the community at large and local sport fishery including the local wilderness tourism businesses.

The BC Pacific Salmon Forum was established by the BC Provincial government on April 1, 2005 and provides some insight on Ecosystem-based management when asked the question "What is ecosystem-based management and how does it differ from the present approach of government regulation?". The forum's response provides a strong case for the need to implement ecosystem-based management planning throughout British Columbia. They state in response "At present salmon habitats in watersheds....are managed by multiple government agencies – that make uncoordinated decisions. This lack of coordination means that the cumulative impacts of decisions are not addressed. In essence, no one agency is really responsible for ensuring that watersheds are healthy and able to support a range of uses .... Therefore we need a systematic transformation for government including: Start managing watersheds holistically as ecosystems, increasing their resiliency to accommodate change. Decisions on resource users can then be adapted to ensure we stay within ecosystem capacities rather than exceeding them, as can now be the case."

As can be heard from the community consultation completed to date, a common theme is evolving. Essentially the Roundtable would like to see a more meaningful participation from government to assess, enhance where necessary and monitor the valuable fishery resource in the Xenigwet'in Caretaker area that includes both the Taseko and Chilko River watersheds and provides sustenance for the First Nations people.

During the 2009/2010 Chilko River Watershed Roundtable, the forum process continued to provide an overview of ecosystem based management planning and the potential benefits to Fish in the Xenigwet'in Caretaker area with a recommendation to pursue implementation for watershed management of the Xenigwet'in Caretaker area.

Of note: This year three of the four forums were held within the Xenigwet'in Caretaker area giving everyone the benefit of experiencing the resource first hand rather than a windowless rented meeting room in Williams Lake. It added personality and a certain reality to the important topics undertaken at the table. It also allowed some participants to attend who may have not been able to attend otherwise. For instance some of the Fishery Resource Workers at the North Chilko camp were able to attend for the session held in October at Tsylos Park Lodge and community members dropped into the session hosted by Xenigwet'in First Nation in September at their newly constructed Visitor Information Centre. Participants battled full snow conditions to make it out to Taseko Lake Lodge for the meeting held in November 2009 and also enjoyed the area in full sunshine and brilliant blue sky – all within 24 hours. We believe this assisted in building public awareness and allowed us to connect with other community members in the area.

**3.3 REQUIRED: attach all DOCUMENTATION of Final Outcomes, and LIST attachments here. These may include technical reports, maps, photos, evidence of communications, lists of meeting participants, etc.**

See attached report:

***2009 Chilko River Roundtable Meetings Summary and an Overview of Ecosystem-Based Management Planning and its Potential Benefits to Fish in the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area.***

**3.4 Please describe how the benefits of this project will be sustained and/or be built upon into the future. What are the planned next steps, or recommendations for further work, if applicable?**

Our work to date and willingness to share information is a way to transfer knowledge to other areas within the Basin that are experiencing similar issues and problems to complete planning processes that will guide efforts towards sustainable watershed management. Through the Roundtable we have increased public awareness of watershed issues and provided a forum for discussion to take action. Xeni Gwet'in will continue to address watershed concerns and take steps for the remedial action recommended to protect and enhance Salmon Stocks within the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker area which as part of the Fraser Basin benefits all British Columbians.

**3.5 What are the top three lessons learned from this project that could be useful to communicate to others doing similar work in the Basin?**

1. "At present salmon habitats in watersheds....are managed by multiple government agencies – that make uncoordinated decisions. This lack of coordination means that the cumulative impacts of decisions are not addressed. In essence, no one agency is really responsible for ensuring that watersheds are healthy and able to support a range of uses."

2. "Therefore we need a systematic transformation for government including: Start managing watersheds holistically as ecosystems,... Decisions on resource users can then be adapted to ensure we stay within ecosystem capacities rather than exceeding them, as can now be the case."

3. Ecosystem based management planning and the potential benefits to Fish in the Watershed with a recommendation to pursue implementation for watershed management.