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## President's Update

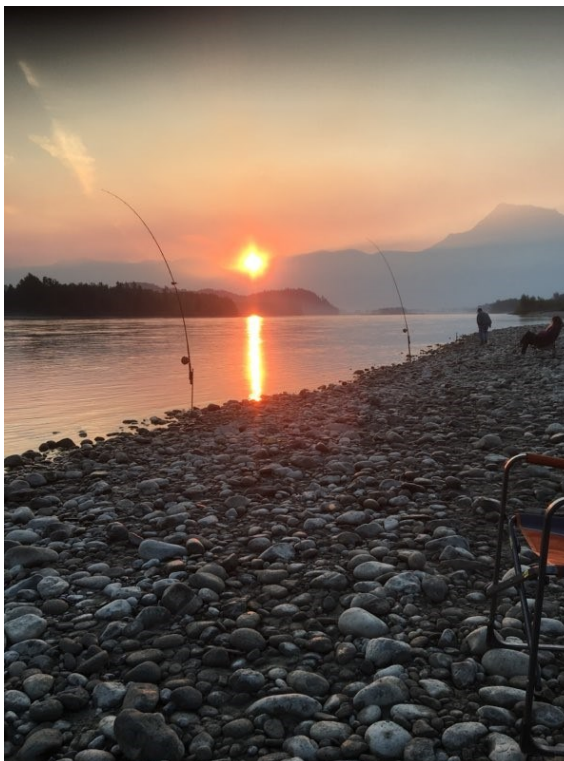
By Dean Werk, FVSS President

**Welcome all FVSS supporters and members, First of all I wish all of you a wonderful Holiday Season and all the Best for a Safe, Happy and Healthy 2024 Year!**

I am thankful to have been able to continue as your current President for the 2023 Season. We have been busy on many fish and fishing related issues and concerns. It would be good to ensure that all of our supporters and members know how

much we engage over the year and also to take direction from you as to where we can/need to focus more of our efforts. Please email me directly or call me anytime (Contact info for me is at the bottom of this).

I feel we had a good number of fish (Salmon) return in the 2023 season and it is encouraging especially after all the efforts the FVSS put in to ensure the Atlantic Fish Farms were removed from the Discovery Islands - 34 Fish Farms have been removed over a 4 year period. We seen what I feel was the best returns of Chinook in 20 years, Coho numbers that encroached nearly 90K interior fish, Pinks upwards of 12 million, Sockeye was nearly 2 million and the only numbers that were lower was Chum at about 500K. In the coming 3 to 4 years we should see a consistent incline



in Salmon numbers returning to the main stem Fraser and upstream tributaries. In saying this, we look for direct FVSS efforts to get opportunity for our members and all anglers for the future generations.

**Vedder Gravel Extraction** continues to be a big file and we are lucky to have leads like Dr. Marvin Rosenau (lifetime founding FVSS member) and Terry Bodman (a lifetime of skills and longtime member) as well as myself to navigate the muddy waters. This takes all the energy we have to stay on top of this. The FVSS is not against Gravel removal, we are against ruining good habitat for the fish for the sake of a "quick gravel grab" for construction purposes. We are engaged at the highest level with the Provincial and Federal Gov agencies and the Vedder River Task Force team. We are hopeful that common sense will prevail and we can see a responsible and accountable amount of gravel removed for the 2024 year and further.

**Thompson River Fishery** - this was a near and dear to my heart effort to keep this fishery open and to have continue, I worked diligently with Federal Fisheries (FOC) and the Interior SFAC lead (Sandy McDonald a great guy who has been on this for years too) and the Nicomen Band Fishery Manager. We were able to come to terms with a few of the concerns by the Nicomen Band and there was a fishery for 4 Jack Chinook per day from August 28th until Sept 22. This fishery is fantastic and has been one that people have been enjoying since back in the 1940's and 50's. The dialogue began in January 2023 and went until late July and I will be writing letters in January 2024 again. I already did a follow up to all parties involved in November and we look forward to continued fishing opportunity in the coming years.



*Cont. from Pg. 01*

**I am also currently sitting on many meeting boards dealing with Salmon, Steelhead and Sturgeon concerns**, this is an ongoing full time job but one that is rewarding to me. I have been voted in as the UFV-SFAC (Upper Fraser Valley - Sport Fish Advisory Committee) Chair position. This now puts me at the SFAB (Sport Fish Advisory Board) mainboard meetings which I currently attended on Nov 30 and Dec 1st. I have also taken on the position of the Salmon Advisory Board member - interestingly enough there is a NEW restructuring of the SFAB process - this will hopefully streamline all North Coast, South Coast and inland Fisheries so we all have a voice.

This will result in more Fraser River attention and hopefully will lead to more opportunity and access to Salmon for our members and Recreational Anglers and Guides.

Generally speaking, we have a great area with robust runs of Salmon, access to the Vedder river hatchery stocks and many

tributaries to fish. Just going "Fishing" matters to us at the FVSS and that needs to be recognized by the Province and the Federal Government. It is not always easy to navigate the in's and out's of all the politics, but I try hard to be involved and to listen to our Board as well as anyone who has direction for the future. We can always do better and I strive to do just that. Remember the FVSS vision "Conservation, Opportunity and Family", it's important to our community and all those who live here, visit the area and the resource itself.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of the FVSS - Board of Directors - a unique demographic group of individuals ranging in age from 20 years to 82 years young, a truly dedicated group of individuals who put the future first and look to do all we can to ensure fishing stays as our heritage and culture.

**All the Best,**

**Dean Werk - FVSS President**

Contact: Phone - 604.991.3474

Email—[info@greatriverfishing.com](mailto:info@greatriverfishing.com)

## Fishing Update

By Nick Basok, FVSS Director

Hello to all members of the FVSS, This is just a quick update on the local salmon fisheries that were enjoyed this summer and fall. The first fishery this summer was for summer run red chinook on the Chilliwack/Vedder River starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and the Chehalis River starting on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Chilliwack/Vedder had a very good run of red chinook, with fish from 8-15 lbs. The Chehalis also had a decent fishery for red chinook, but due to very low water conditions success was more difficult. The best method in both fisheries was drift fishing roe or soft beads under a float.

The only Fraser River salmon fishery was for pinks in early September. This was a great fishery as water conditions and the weather were prime for throwing jigs, spoons, and casting flies. This fishery was enjoyed by many people in the Fraser and Harrison Rivers. The main fishery this fall was the coho fishery on the Chilliwack/Vedder, Harrison/Chehalis, Lower Sumas, and Dewdney Slough. There was also a huge fishery on



the Chilliwack/Vedder for the fall run white chinook, which returned in record numbers. Both, Coho and chinook, were being taken float fishing roe, soft beads, or roe bags. Twitching jigs and casting various spoons/spinners was also quite successful.

In August, many people also enjoyed the Thompson River jack fishery, which was opened due to the FVSS working diligently with DFO and First Nations. There were lots of fish and many anglers enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this fishery.

It will be interesting to see the final estimates of the numbers of returning pinks, chum, coho, and chinooks in our local waters, as these are often used to determine future fisheries.

The FVSS remains committed to keeping the pressure on DFO to keep our fisheries open and hopefully getting new opportunities for all anglers. Get out and enjoy these fisheries when you can.



## Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition

By Terry Bodman, FVSS Director

The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition is an organization representing 28 groups with diverse interests from environmental non-government organizations, hunting and angling guides, conservation organizations, wildlife viewing, ecotourism, naturalists, hunters, anglers, and trappers with over 273,000 members and more than 900 businesses across the Province of British Columbia. The Fraser Valley Salmon Society is one of the 28 member organizations.

The FWH Coalition has clearly stated principles that member organizations are committed to. They are:

- The conservation (management, restoration, and protection) of habitat across B.C. is fundamental to the needs of fish and wildlife.
- That all native species should have abundant, self-sustaining populations.
- That restoration, conservation, policy and management of species and habitat is guided by science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- The coalition recognizes and respects the constitutionally protected rights of Indigenous peoples and our collective commitment to advancing reconciliation in British Columbia.
- We will support the process of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples by seeking agreement on the protection, enhancement and utilization of fish, wildlife, and habitat.



The Fraser Valley Salmon Society through its support organization, the Gravel Stewardship Group, adhered to the FWH principles during its projects to support of the protection of the Gill Road Area and its continuing involvement in monitoring gravel removal from the Vedder/Chilliwack River system.



<https://chilliwackworknplay.com/>



<https://chilliwackdart.com/>

## Membership Update

By Dean Worrall, FVSS Director

I hope this update finds all current and lapsed FVSS members well and excited to embark on winter opportunities. As of today, our membership consists of 100 lifetime members and 40 yearly paid ones. FVSS membership costs \$100 for a lifetime, \$10 for an annual one, and membership has its perks! All lifetime members are entitled to 10% off purchases at Chilliwack Dart and Tackle, as well as 10% off at Work and Play; you can get your gear and support local business at the same time. The cost of FVSS membership is a very small price to pay for this impassioned group to

do its relentless work supporting recreational angler rights to the resource, and to protect and conserve the vital habitats that our fish need to thrive. Experience dictates that our collective voice resonates much louder than when we stand alone. If we don't stand up for this, now and into the future, who will?

FVSS directors are asking for your continued support by renewing your membership, and by encouraging and recruiting others to do the same. With you on board, the FVSS can continue to fight for our fish, their habitat, and our right to enjoy this precious resource.

Please follow us on Facebook [Fraser Valley Salmon Society](#), and Instagram @FVSS1985 for regular updates.

**Membership renewals can be sent to** [fraservalleysalmonsociety@outlook.com](mailto:fraservalleysalmonsociety@outlook.com)



## FVSS and The Vedder River Gravel Removal Proposal

By Marvin Rosenau, FVSS Director

The Vedder/Chilliwack watershed comprises the most important river-angling streams in British Columbia from an angler-effort perspective. More fishing days are expended here than any other stream in our province. While this recreational fishery is supported by hatchery production, particularly for steelhead, Chinook and Coho salmon, the wild populations are still abundant and provide the genetic backbone for these fish populations therein. Intact habitat is, therefore fundamental to the continued thriving of these wild fishes.

The Vedder and Chilliwack rivers, and their aquatic habitats, have been extensively impacted over the last century-and-a-half and this has profoundly affected wild fish production over the years, and mostly negatively. The Canada Fisheries and Oceans-run Chilliwack River Hatchery has mitigated this effect, to a certain degree, and at least in terms of numbers of fish returning and opportunities for harvest for various user groups. Nevertheless, continuing pressures on the habitat remain and stewardship groups such as the Fraser Valley Salmon Society must remain vigilant.

One of the most profound impacts to the Vedder River has been the historical, biennial (i.e., it happens every two years), gravel removals undertaken by the agencies for flood protection. Because of the extensive development over the last 100 years, the Vedder River, its Canal, and the downstream Sumas River have been diked, mostly, from

the Vedder Crossing Bridge down to the Fraser River. Large sediment loads, from upstream areas, depositing below Vedder Crossing are comprised of sand, gravel and cobbles and have the potential to compromise the flood capability of the dikes by depositing in the river downstream of the Vedder Crossing Bridge. This has been especially concerning for the Chilliwack dike near the Great Blue Heron Reserve. This part of the diking system was under-constructed but this was rectified in 2022 with the raising of the elevation at that time.

To deal with any losses in floodway river-flow capacity the gravel has, in the past, been removed every 2 years. While sand and gravel recruitment and computer-generated flow-capacity are calculated every two years, the removals were historically based on long-term averages of deposition rates. Until the yearly 2000's this average has been about 100,000 cubic meters every two years. This target value became problematic when the recruitment rate, and over-abstraction of gravel, started to become much greater than inputs in the middle part of the first decade of the 2000's.

While natural bedload sediment transfer and deposits in the Vedder-Chilliwack system are continuing over time, they do not happen from year-to-year in a consistent fashion. Large-flood events deposit a lot of sand and gravel in the Vedder River and Canal, while small-flood years actually are erosional and scour out the sediments and give the floodway more flow-capacity. In fact, from the mid-2000's to November 2021 the Vedder River was running a long-term deficit of about 600,000 cubic meters of sand and gravel compared to the initial baseline volumes at time of dike construction.





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And this deficit was due to over-mining and natural erosion. So, in 2018 and 2020 the Fraser Valley Salmon Society lobbied hard against any further removal until the river had reached back up to its historical average bed volume, and was successful in stopping these removals.

The Atmospheric River event of November 2021 changed the equation quickly. A total of 440,000 cubic meters of material were measured to have been carried from the upper watershed and deposited into the floodway during that event. Notwithstanding this large amount, there was still a long-term deficit of 160,000 cubic meters of material in the floodway and most of the dikes had sufficient freeboard for a design-volume flood. Still, the Fraser Valley Salmon Society did not object to removals in 2022 given the high level of angst that the public had over the atmospheric flood. Remarkably, the agencies did not seem to be well coordinated and only removed 35,000 cubic meters of sediment in that year.

Then, in 2023 came the bit shocker. Rather than the City of Chilliwack organizing and managing the gravel removal, the Provincial Government, mostly under the Ministry of Climate Change Strategy (MECCS), announced that they were going to remove 364,000 cubic meters of material from the Vedder River, and do it in a Pink Salmon spawning year. One of the almost-inviolable rules of the agreements among agencies to undertake gravel removal on the Vedder River is to not

mine the material during years when Pink Salmon have laid their eggs in the gravel.

We expected that the Pink Salmon run this past year would have almost certainly been substantially reduced by the flood event in 2021 (the parental year of 2023 returns). There were very few Pinks spawning in the Vedder River this past fall, seemingly confirming our concerns.

As a result of this disturbing announcement, the FVSS pulled out all stops and began to lobby against such an effort throughout the latter spring and early summer of 2023. We used a campaign of letter writing, talking to decision makers, politicians, and via the media. Ultimately, we managed to get an online face-to-face conversation with the minister in charge, Hon. George Heyman. These efforts seemed to have the desired effect and the removal was called off for 2023.

Unfortunately, it appears that MECCS' consultants still want to take an unsustainable amount of sand and gravel out of the floodway in 2024 to a volume of 364,000 cubic meters. The FVSS is supportive of scientifically and technically defensible amounts for flood protection, but cannot see that this value is acceptable. So, the fortunate thing is that the Ministries/ Departments/City are still talking to us via a committee structure run by the MECCS and we are meeting with them approximately once a month.

We hope that common sense will prevail for the 2024 cycle and that the fish will not lose, again, as they have so many times in the past.

## Mid-Year Financial Summary

By Glen Stoner, FVSS Treasurer

It's Been 7 months since our AGM so as FVSS Treasurer I'd like to offer a snapshot on where we are financially.

First let me start by saying that we run a tight ship on a limited budget. Myself and each of the other FVSS Directors are committed to fiscal responsibility with the end goal of being good stewards of the funds we manage for the Fraser Valley Salmon Society.

This main purpose of this summary is meant as a look at where we are financially since the AGM. The majority of our annual income is through membership sales and other funds raised at our AGM through 50/50

draws and prize raffles. Our last AGM saw the highest 50/50 that we've seen in recent memory, for that we are grateful for the generosity of our members.

Here is a brief look at some of highlights and where we are now:

- Balance as of 2022 AGM \$8923.60
- 2022 AGM Proceeds \$1165.00
- Pay Pal deposits for Memberships \$385.00

Throughout the year we've had to cover some expenses such as web hosting, zoom meetings, printing, Society registration and a few other nominal items.

Our actual bank balance as of our last monthly board meeting was: \$9038.29

# FRASER VALLEY SALMON SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**NAME:** .....

**ADDRESS:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

**EMAIL:** .....

I would like to extend my membership by: (please check 1 box only)

- |                          |          |   |
|--------------------------|----------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 year   | \$10.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 years  | \$20.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifetime | \$100.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Donation | Any amount (No tax receipt available as we do lobby.) |

Please find enclosed \$.....Signature.....

Please mail to: Fraser Valley Salmon Society, 9839 Candow Street, Chilliwack BC, V2P 4K5

or

Please etransfer to [fraservalleysalmonsociety@outlook.com](mailto:fraservalleysalmonsociety@outlook.com)

Thank you for your support!!