

Smithers & Northwestern BC
February 2024 SEHAB Report
Alternate Representative: Marjorie Lieuwen
Community Advisor: Jonathan Minson

1. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are directly related to DFO

a. Toboggan Creek Hatchery

- i. The Upper Bulkley chinook broodstock program is being suspended for some time to allow stock assessment efforts to step up and determine the status of the stock. We strongly encourage this assessment to be done thoroughly so we can figure out the best steps to help this stock rebound. The Buck Creek hatchery in Houston will be happy to provide field support for this assessment as we work in the Upper Bulkley watershed.
- ii. The 2023 chinook broodstock were transported to Toboggan Creek to be held in the cool groundwater available in their holding tanks as Upper Bulkley river temperatures soared to 23 degC in July. All the brood died suddenly, and all indications from vet reports, soil testing and confirmation of CN spraying along the tracks point to glyphosate poisoning. CN has a bad history with spraying practices and fines.
- iii. In late fall of 2023 Toboggan had to cull all their Toboggan Coho and UBR chinook fry due to BKD outbreak. This was of course very difficult.
- iv. The society that supports Toboggan is facing serious financial difficulties. They do not have sufficient funds to support the staff needed to operate the hatchery effectively and safely. If this is not resolved by end of this fiscal they will be in trouble.
- v. The society has concerns about DFO putting the assessment program for Toboggan coho including fish fence, smolt trap and clipping/tagging up for bid. This has been Toboggan hatchery's role since the 80s.

2. Any positive things that are directly related to DFO

a. In general:

- i. New Community advisor hired and started in January, Jonathan Minson. Former CA Natalie Newman will be able to focus on Restoration work so we're happy to have that increased capacity.
- ii. DFO has been proactive to seek community's input on drought response. Locally, DFO has expressed support of stepping up regular meetings during emergency conditions to facilitate efforts

b. Buck Creek Canfor Hatchery and Nature Centre

- i. We're very grateful that we received a top up to our PIP grant for some improvements including a standby generator, backup water pump and an industrial fan for spring when the water chiller heats up the hatchery a bit too much.