

## ***Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

**Location of Meeting:** Esquimalt Angler Club, 1101 Munro St, Esquimalt BC V9A5P2

\*An online option was also available for participants: [Join the meeting now](#)

**Date of Meeting:** February 26, 2025

(Draft) Minutes

Recreational Attendees:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Gerry Morrison	SVIAC Director
Christoph Moch	Rec Angler
Wayne Zaccarelli	ACS/EAA/VFGPA
Louis Meszoly	Esquimalt Anglers
Chris Bos	Victoria SFAC Chair
Ryan Chamberland	Charter Operator/ Former SFAC Chair
Montagu Lee	SVIAC
Bill Campbell	SVIAC
Kris Bagan	Charter Operator
Clive Brown	Rec Angler
Christopher Miller	Rec Angler
Bill Campbell	SVIAC
Ryan Mchale	EAH
Jacquie Burdon	Take a Kid Fishing
Gord Martin	Guide
Doug Ferrier	Rec Angler
Wayne Sarak	Guide
Victoria Salt	Rec Angler
Brian Davison	SVIAC Treasurer
Triston McMillan	Guide
Mike Engel	Rec Angler
Jerry Frost	Rec Angler
Grant MacPherson	Rec Angler
Ron Neitsch	Guide
Megan MacDonald	Rec Angler
Ihab Rizf	Rec Angler
Martin Paish	SFAB Chair
Roy Carver	Guide
Jared Kennedy	Rec Angler

Government Attendees:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Mark Frisson	ECVI Recreational Fisheries Coordinator
Roy Osselton	Conservation and Protection

## ***Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

**Call to order:** 7:01 pm

### **Introductions**

Introductions and establishment of voting members

- Introductions completed. Attendees reminded of the requirements to be a voting member.

Additions to the agenda

- Agenda approved as written. Moved Bill Campbell, second Louis Meszoly, passed.

### **Unfinished Business**

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes

- Fall 2024 meeting minutes approved as written. Moved Grant MacPherson, second Christoph Moch, passed.

Update on Tod Creek Chinook Motion

- Tod Creek motion from fall 2024 was accepted and edits to the IFMP will be made to the IFMP (removal of Tod Creek as a Chinook population).
- Tod Creek was meant to refer to the Todd Creek tributary of the Sooke River.
- Question: Goldstream was supposed to be included in the Fall 2024 motion? Answer: Goldstream was not included in the final motion that was submitted by the mover.
- Goldstream addressed in a new motion. See *Table 1* below.

### **New Business**

2025/2026 IFMP Timelines

- Reminder that the 2024/2025 Salmon IFMP remains in place until a new plan is approved for the 2025/2026 season. The new IFMP deadline is June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Important to remember that even though we don't have a new IFMP, the Fishing plan for April 1, 2025, onward will be identical to 2024. A fishery notice detailing Chinook management measures will be issued for April 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15/Aug 1<sup>st</sup> regardless of an approved IFMP.
- General Chinook non-retention to begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Question: Are last year's Chinook MSFs planned to continue this year? Answer: Yes there is no planned changes to the MSFs for 2025. Area 19 will open for 1 hatchery Chinook per day from April 1 to May 31.
- Reminder that Subareas 20-4 to 20-7 and 19-1, 19-3, and 19-4 are open for two Chinook (hatchery-marked only) from March 1 to March 31.

SRKW Updates

- As outlined in 2024 the 2025 SRKW measures to remain identical to the 2024 measures.
- Important to note following an update to the 2018 Imminent Threat Assessment, Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada have formed the opinion that Southern Resident Killer Whales face Imminent Threats to their survival and recovery. As per the Species at Risk Act (SARA), Ministers must now recommend to Governor in Council that an emergency order be made to protect Southern Resident Killer Whales. The

## ***Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

Southern Resident Killer Whale 2025-26 management measures and process timelines are subject to change depending on the outcome of the Emergency Order process. We will consult on any potential new and/or adjustment of potential management measures, if necessary, as a result of the forthcoming Governor in Council's decision to establish or decline to establish, an Emergency Order.

- Question: when will a decision be made on management measures: Answer: there is no timeline that can be communicated at this time. The minister does have the unfettered authority to implement measures when deemed necessary.
- Comment: While the minister has unfettered authority it is also the responsibility of the Department to consult with affected communities and stakeholders when making such decisions.
- Comment: SFAB SRKW working group is yet to be engaged on these important updates.
- Comment: it seems that the Department's team responsible for developing SRKW recovery measures are working in silos from the rest of the Department.

### **Salmon – fisheries planning**

- Chinook
  - Much of the Chinook fishing plan was covered off under “2025/25 IFMP planning”
  - Major constraining factor on Chinook fisheries are Fraser River stocks of concern. The Department will be consulting on Summer 5<sub>2</sub> Chinook management measures through the 2025/26 IFMP.
  - The allowable ER on summer 5<sub>2</sub> permitted in recreational fisheries could have a significant impact on the Strait of Georgia Chinook fisheries.
  - Comment: The Summer 5<sub>2</sub> population achieved SMSY in 2022 and the stock trajectory has been tracking upward over the last 4 or 5 years.
- Coho
  - Inside waters are constrained by Interior Fraser River (IFR) Coho. Under the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST), they are currently in “low-status”. Though escapements have been improving over the years and the escapement thresholds to move out of low status have been achieved the survival thresholds have not been met for 3 consecutive years.
  - Under the PST Canada and the USA are held to an exploitation rate (ER) cap of 20% on IFR Coho equally divided between the two countries.
  - Canada chooses to manage to a more precautionary ER of 3-5%.
  - USA is currently utilizing the majority of their 10% ER on IFR Coho.
  - Question: What was the outcome of the 2024/25 consultations on increasing IFR Coho impacts in Canada closer to the 10% limit? Answer: The Department consulted on increasing IFR Coho impacts for 2024 so that interior Nations could harvest more. The Department received feedback that the current course should be maintained as a result no change was made to IFR Coho impact in 2024.
  - Outside of times when IFR Coho are thought to be a part of the catch the Department is working on some management tools to help guide fisheries management decisions on Coho fisheries.
  - It is anticipated that there will be no major changes to the recreational Coho fishing plan in 2025.
- Pinks
  - Two years ago the Fraser River saw one of the largest out migrations of Pinks smolts in recorded history.

## ***Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

- A very large return is expected back to the Fraser River in the summer of 2025. The run size could be on the order of 30 million.
- Should ocean conditions remain favorable for Pinks expect a large abundance of Pinks in the Victoria area during the summer.
- Comment: encourage people to celebrate this large abundance and take advantage. Pinks are a great way to introduce kids and new anglers to the recreational fishery.
- July 27<sup>th</sup> will be the “Take a Kid Fishing” day where skippers will be taking kids and their families out salmon fishing for the day. New skippers are always needed and appreciated. Encourage all to come and participate!

### **Proposed Nitinat Hatchery Chinook Production Changes (See attached letter)**

- Concerns have emerged from the Department regarding the Sooke Seapen program’s effectiveness.
- Survival rates of Sooke seapen releases have been significantly lower than comparable programs, including natal Nitinat Chinook releases.
- CWT and thermal mark data indicate that approximately 25% of these fish strayed into non-natal systems such as Sarita, San Juan, and likely other nearby rivers annually, posing genetic risks and conflicting with genetic conservation objectives.
- To maintain a no net change in the expected number of Nitinat Chinook adults returning to southern West Coast Vancouver Island waters, including Area 20, DFO is proposing to move the Sooke Seapen production back to natal production at Nitinat Hatchery, taking into account the higher survival rates of natal releases.
- The proposed shift in production strategy is expected to result in a net neutral to net positive outcome for fisheries. By prioritizing natal smolt releases, we aim to sustain or even increase the number of returning adult Chinook to WCVI fisheries.
- Concerns expressed by the committee that there has not been adequate or meaningful consultation on this proposed change.
- Comment: More information is needed on how the Department plans to support the Jack Brookes hatchery and its Chinook production.
- Comment: The SFAC would like to see the raw coded wire tag data.
- Concern that the Department’s survival rate calculations are biased due to the large amount of mortality that Sooke Net Seapen Chinook face compared to other populations. Such as high pinniped predation due to low river flows in the fall for returning adults.
- Comment: Cutting Chinook production in the Victoria area does not align with the Department’s messaging around lack of prey availability for SRKW.
- Comment: Jack Brookes hatchery Chinook are not being marked which does not align with the Department’s mark-selective fisheries objectives.
- Fisheries management to follow up with the Salmon Enhancement Program (SEP) on concerns and next steps.

### **Halibut – Season Planning**

- Pacific Halibut biomass is down. The total allowable catch cut by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) again for 2025 by 15.8%. This means lower TAC for all fisheries in Canada.
- In 2024 the recreational sector had a TAC of ~800,000 pounds. It is estimated ~830,000 pounds were caught. Recreational fishery incurred a 30,000 pound overage that will be deducted from the 2025 recreational TAC.
- The TAC in 2025 with the incurred overage and TAC reduction will be ~650,000 pounds.

## Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes

- Two age classes currently propping the fishery up and these two age classes are of smaller size <90 cm.
- Size of halibut at age is decreasing.
- No information to indicate there has been a strong recruitment of younger halibut. But this will remain uncertain until halibut are large enough to be caught in the stock assessment fisheries.
- The SFAB halibut committee has proposed an opening date of April 1st, 1 per day, 1 possession, with a max size of 102cm.
- Concern from the committee that the low TAC is significantly impacting early-season recreational halibut fisheries (February through March) which are extremely important to the Victoria/JDF area. Halibut fishing is often best in the early spring, with favorable tides and the absence of Dogfish.
- Smaller maximum sizes significantly impact the Southern island as “chicken size” halibut are less common while halibut >100 cm are often a large portion of the catch in Area 19 and southern portions of Area 20.
- Comment: the Department should be looking at allocating different regions of the BC coast their own Halibut TAC instead of managing the entire coast under the same management measures. Area 18, 19, and 20 would benefit by having their own TAC that could be fished earlier in the season while other parts of the coast fish in the summer months.
- These considerations will be important for 2026 fisheries planning. 2025 fishing plan very unlikely to change now.
- Comment: During these times of low TAC for the recreational fishery the recreational fishery should be allocated more than 15% of Canadas' total TAC so that the fishery isn't significantly impacted. See *Table 1* below for halibut TAC motion.

### Conservation and Protection Updates

- Some abalone poaching has been observed in the area.
- Observed night fishing at the Ogden Point breakwater. Some illegal rockfish retention being seen.
- Staff will be looking at getting Salmon ID materials and regulations at local boat ramps, marinas, and docks during the summer months.
- Comment: Thank you to C&P for your ongoing efforts and consistent attendance at SFACs.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 9:40 pm

### Handouts

The following handouts were available for attendees:

- Spring 2025 Regional Recreational Updates
- Fall 2024 Meeting Minutes

**Minutes prepared by:** Chris Bos and Mark Frisson

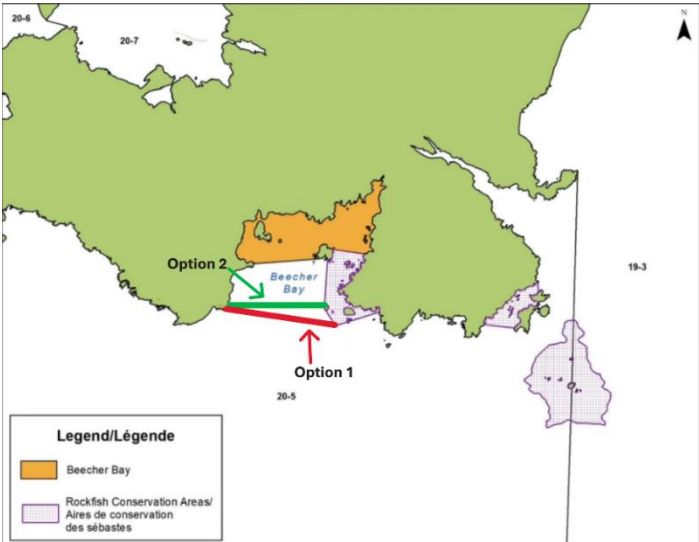
**Table 1: Motion Summary:**

<b>Motion Number</b> Committee – Motion # - mm/yy – Motion subject line	<b>Motion</b> (Motion title, Description, Motion)
<b>Greater Victoria SFAC -Motion 1 – (02/25) - DFO</b>	Whereas:

## **Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes**

<p><b>Decision to Terminate the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program has contributed to enhanced Chinook production since 2016, supplementing the diet of the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales, providing enhanced food, social and ceremonial opportunities for T'Sou-ke First Nations and enhanced fishing opportunities for the local Sooke community and,</li> <li>• DFO has recently approved changes to their Nitinat River Chinook production strategy, without any external consultation, engagement or input from key stakeholders and,</li> <li>• As part of the revised Nitinat River Chinook production strategy, the DFO has made a decision to terminate the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program without formal engagement, consultation or communication with key stakeholders, including SVIAC, T'Sou-ke First Nation, and the broader Sooke community and,</li> <li>• DFO's lack of transparency and stakeholder engagement undermines the trust and collaboration with SVIAC, T'Sou-ke First Nation and the Sooke community.</li> </ul> <p>Be It Resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SFAC requests that DFO defer their decision to terminate the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program as a critical conservation and community initiative.</li> <li>• The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is urged to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Immediately engage in meaningful consultation with SVIAC, T'Sou-ke First Nation, and other Sooke community stakeholders regarding the future of the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program</li> <li>○ Reinstate the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program production requirements (500,000 smolts) in the 2025 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) and Salmonid Enhancement Program production plan for Spring 2026 outplanting.</li> <li>○ Collaboratively explore long-term alternative solutions for Sooke River Chinook recovery that align with local resource needs and ecological priorities while ensuring the continuation of the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program .</li> <li>○ Prioritize the ecological, cultural, and socio-economic impacts on First Nations, local fisheries, and the Sooke community in any future deliberations regarding the Sooke River Chinook enhancement.</li> <li>○ The DFO is further urged to recognize the critical role of the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative / Orca Food Security Program in addressing the food security needs of the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales and the cultural and economic well-being of the T'Sou-ke First Nation and Sooke community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Moved Bill Campbell, second Gerry Morrison, passed</b></p>
<p><b>Greater Victoria SFAC- Motion 2 – (02/25) - Otolith Data from Sooke River - Jack Brooks Hatchery Broodstock collected in 2023 and 2024</b></p>	<p>Whereas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has been collecting Otolith data from the returning Chinook salmon collected by the Jack Brooks Hatchery for their annual broodstock, and,</li> <li>• DFO has previously made available to the public, Otolith data for Jack Brooks Hatchery broodstock annually through 2022, and,</li> <li>• DFO has not made available to the public, 2023 Otolith data for the Jack Brooks Hatchery broodstock, despite numerous email and telephone requests, and,</li> <li>• DFO has not likely had sufficient time to process the 2024 Otolith data from the Jack Brooks Hatchery broodstock collected in fall 2024</li> </ul> <p>Be it Resolved that:</p>

## Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes

	<p>In the mutual interest of transparency, trust and collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SFAC urges the Department to immediately make available to the public, 2023 Otolith data from the Jack Brooks Hatchery broodstock,</li> <li>• The SFAC urges the Department to immediately make available to the public, 2024 Otolith data from the Jack Brooks Hatchery broodstock, when the data is available.</li> </ul> <p><b>Moved Bill Campbell, second Gerry Morrison, passed</b></p>
<p><b>Greater Victoria SFAC – Motion 3 – (02/25) – Goldstream River Chinook IFMP Implications</b></p>	<p>Whereas Goldstream River is listed in the Southern Pacific salmon 2024/2025 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan as a Chinook Salmon spawning location with a COSEWIC assessment as a stock of special concern and;</p> <p>Whereas Goldstream River does not have historic Chinook population other than past hatchery transplants;</p> <p>Whereas listing streams that do not support Chinook populations in the IFMP as supporting Chinook populations could lead to inappropriate management measures and unintended consequences.</p> <p>Be it resolved that Goldstream is removed from the 2025/2026 salmon IFMP as a Chinook spawning location.</p> <p><b>Moved, Grant, second Christoph Moch, passed.</b></p>
<p><b>Greater Victoria SFAC – Motion 4 – (02/25) – Beecher Bay Chinook MSF Expansion</b></p>	<p>Whereas there has been a proposal sent to the Department from local First Nations and the SFAB to expand the Beecher Bay Chinook MSF boundary outward toward Alldridge Point and;</p> <p>Whereas the boundary expansion would provide a large area of suitable Chinook fishing waters;</p> <p>Be it resolved that the Greater Victoria SFAC supports this proposal and asks the Department to implement a new boundary for April 1, 2025. See map.</p>  <p><b>Moved, Christopher Miller, second Christoph Moch, passed</b></p>

## ***Greater Victoria Area Spring 2025 SFAC Draft Meeting Minutes***

<b>Greater Victoria SFAC – Motion 5 – (02/25) – Recreational Halibut Allocation.</b>	<p>Whereas the current Halibut TAC no longer provides for a full-season recreational Halibut fishery and;</p> <p>Whereas the maximum size limit has decreased to a point where it significantly impacts areas with a low abundance of small halibut such as Areas 19 and 20;</p> <p>Be it resolved that the Greater Victoria SFAC requests the recreational halibut allocation increase from the current 15% to 20% of Canadas TAC.</p> <p><b>Moved Ryan Chamberland, second Doug Ferrier, passed</b></p>
--	---