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# A message from our Executive Director

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## *We Rely On Salmon. Salmon Rely On Us.*

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support in defending salmon and steelhead and ensuring our communities continue benefiting from these incredible fish.

The past year has been remarkable, and I am particularly proud of the following achievements:

- Through collaboration with our dedicated partners, we helped reduce the impacts of fisheries.
- We expanded our support for Indigenous-led land use planning initiatives and habitat protection efforts. These proactive approaches not only protect critical habitats but also foster sustainable development and job opportunities for local communities.
- Our science, education, and community engagement initiatives expanded partnerships and helped empower communities to participate in conservation efforts.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we will address the pressing issue of Alaskan interception, which is now the largest harvest impact on wild Skeena sockeye and steelhead.

Our work to protect critical habitats in the Skeena estuary – an area upon which all Skeena salmon and steelhead depend – will intensify.

We are committed to expanding our support for Indigenous-led land use planning, which plays a pivotal role in securing the long-term health of our watershed.

We are also excited about opportunities to support First Nations in developing new and innovative selective fishing initiatives.

I'm energised and hopeful about our dedicated team, flourishing partnerships, and the growing interest within our communities to see Skeena salmon thrive for years to come.

Your continued support is the backbone of our efforts – our achievements are your achievements. Your passion for this place and your deep love for these magnificent fish drives our work forward. Together, we will ensure that salmon continue to enrich our communities and secure a healthy future for all the creatures that call the Skeena home.

# Our Team

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Greg Knox – Executive Director  
Julia Hill Sorochan – Assistant Director  
Nita Back – Office Administration  
Hup-Wil-Lax-A, Kirby Muldoe – Indigenous Engagement Lead  
Dr. Michael Price – Director of Science  
Kait Yehle – Fisheries Biologist  
Adrienne Berchtold – Ecologist & Mining Impacts Researcher  
Dan Mesec – Director of Communications  
Alice Arbuthnot – Communications Manager  
Joelle St-Gelais – Website and Graphics Specialist  
Marie Blouin – Education Program Manager  
Cassie Groves – Summer Education Program Assistant  
Ella Almgren – Summer Education Program Assistant  
Sarah Railton – Forester / Lead Land Use Planner  
Kate Dillon – Biologist / Land Use Planner  
Len Vanderstar – Habitat Biologist  
Greg Taylor – Senior Fisheries Advisor  
Dr. Jim Pojar – Trustee  
Na'Moks, John Ridsdale – Trustee  
Carrie Collingwood – Trustee  
Mariusz Wroblewski – Trustee  
Anne Hill – Trustee  
Dr. Jack Stanford – Trustee  
Pic Walker – Advisor



# Our Mission

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Together, we defend wild salmon, steelhead, and their habitats to ensure their long-term health and resilience, which are crucial to the Skeena region's diverse communities, economies, and ecosystems.

**Our goal is to ensure the Skeena Watershed is healthy for our families and future generations, taking a scientific, educated, and collaborative approach.**

While many wild salmon systems have suffered from pollution, overfishing, and habitat loss, the Skeena region offers hope for people and salmon to coexist.

Policy and legislative reform touches everything we do at SkeenaWild. Reforming outdated policies and ensuring good legislation that centres around salmon and people are key to defending our communities' health and the resources we depend on.

# 2023 Highlights

## Growing our Team

This year, we hired three new team members!

SkeenaWild's Education Manager of five years, Christine Slanz, retired, and we welcomed Marie Blouin to take over our Education Program. Marie has a background in education and a deep commitment to environmental stewardship.

Alice Arbuthnot joined the team as our new Communications Manager, who brings expertise in storytelling and outreach to share our mission, work, and successes with the world.

Fisheries Biologist, Kaitlin Yehle, came aboard to support our team with fisheries management and research. Kait brings strong research skills and experience with aquatic fieldwork.

## Alaskan Interception Now a High-Priority for Canada

With significant reductions in B.C. fisheries, Alaska is now the largest harvester of many Skeena and other B.C. salmon populations. SkeenaWild and Watershed Watch have been increasing pressure on the Pacific Salmon Commission and Treaty to make Alaskan interception a high priority for Canada. Our work is far from done, but we're making progress.

## B.C. Mineral Act to Be Reformed

We are proud of our work acting as an intervenor in support of Gitxaala and Ehattesaht First Nations, who brought the Supreme Court case against the free entry claim-staking system. Because of this case, B.C.'s Mineral Tenure Act will be reformed over the coming year, and mineral claims will no longer be granted automatically without consideration of other values on the land.

## **Coastal GasLink**

Since the construction of the pipeline that runs through northern B.C. began in 2019, the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office has issued more than \$800,000 in fines, 59 warnings, and 30 orders, which includes 13 stop-work orders. Calgary-based TC Energy Corp. fines follow repeated non-compliance with environmental requirements, deficiencies with erosion and sediment control measures in the construction of the gas pipeline, and for providing false information in inspection records. The CGL pipeline project crosses about 625 lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, and wetlands, many of them fish-bearing.

## **Conservation Land Cancellation**

Since we launched to the public in May 2023, we and our community have been putting pressure on the Government of B.C. by sending letters and calling representatives to insist that these Land Act cancellations be immediately rescinded and given interim protection to ensure no further land development occurs in these environmentally sensitive and beloved recreational areas until more secure legal designations are established.

Despite promises, the Government of B.C. has still not taken action. In 2024, we will ramp up our campaign.

# **2023 Lowlights**

## **Another Low Return on Skeena Steelhead**

This year marks the fifth consecutive year of low returns and the fourth lowest return on record in 68 years. At ~10,000, the 2023 return is close to the extreme conservation concern threshold of 8,000. Environmental conditions, including low stream flows and warm temperatures, were unfavourable. We pressed the province to implement additional measures to protect steelhead, including reducing impacts from commercial fisheries, engaging with local communities to develop a comprehensive management plan for 2024, and to take action on the issue of Alaskan interception – which is by far the single largest source of mortality for Skeena steelhead.

# In the News

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B.C. BORN SALMON FROM DWINDLING RUNS INCREASINGLY CAUGHT BY ALASKAN FLEET

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SHOULD ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENDERS LIKE COASTAL GASLINK BE GRANTED INJUNCTIONS?

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BRITISH COLUMBIA'S 'DIRTY DOZEN' MINES NAMED IN NEW REPORT

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SKEENAWILD IS RIGHT TO SOUND THE ALARM ON CANCELLED CONSERVATION LANDS

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# In the News

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ENVIRONMENT AND  
COMMUNITY GROUPS APPLAUD  
B.C. SUPREME COURT RULING TO  
REFORM PROVINCE'S MINERAL  
STAKING REGIME

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HEART OF STEEL – PART III:  
STEELHEAD, INTERRUPTED

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SKEENAWILD FILM AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL  
SHOWCASES THE BEAUTY  
OF B.C.'S NORTH COAST

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THE FOLLIES OF SALMON  
ENHANCEMENT, LESSONS FROM  
BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PAST.

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# Program Updates



# Fisheries

Since 2020, the North Pacific Ocean has been experiencing La Niña, which has meant better conditions for salmon with more food availability and cooler water. These conditions seemed to benefit some species and populations, especially enhanced sockeye.

However, the North Pacific is now experiencing a strong El Niño, or warm phase, which is bringing challenging conditions for our fish. El Niño typically means warmer ocean and freshwater temperatures, drought, and less food with lower fat contents. These conditions create uncertainties. In light of this, we have been raising awareness and pushing for precautionary management.

SkeenaWild will focus increase focus on the following issues in 2024:

- Southeast Alaskan Interception
- Increasing Selectivity
- Babine Spawning Channels

## 2023 Returns

### 1.9M SOCKEYE

This year, the Skeena River saw 1.9 million sockeye despite a forecasted strong return. We successfully advocated for the closure of the commercial fishery on August 2nd, protecting chum, steelhead, and late wild sockeye population.

### PINK

The pink return was strong coast-wide. Pink are much more adaptive and resilient than other salmon species due to their shorter life cycle and spawning requirements, making them climate change winners.

### CHUM

Skeena chum have been severely depressed but returned at about double the 10-year average.

### 25-30K CHINOOK

The Skeena chinook was low again this year, likely around 25 – 30k (well below the long-term average of 80 – 100k). After years of pushing, Chinook will soon be managed based on abundance in the Skeena. Typically, chinook are more vulnerable to climate change.

### COHO

Coho were strong, well above the long-term average at more than double the 10-year average.

### 10K STEELHEAD

Another low steelhead return this year estimated at ~10,000 at the end of September (long-term average 34,000). We have been advocating hard for steelhead and continue to in 2024.

## **Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI)**

Implementation of science-based recovery plans for endangered salmon populations is the most important objective and could help address the full suite of threats we are tackling. We're providing input on each strategy and developing an independent annual program audit. DFO allocated \$647M to develop this initiative and its four pillars to reform harvest, hatcheries, habitat, and improve collaboration. SkeenaWild, alongside our Marine Conservation Caucus partners, are working to ensure PSSI can meet its rebuilding objectives through an annual audit.

## **Pacific Salmon Commission**

SkeenaWild has been sitting on the Northern panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission for the past 13 years. Our strong voice at this table has resulted in the issue of Alaskan interception increasing in priority for Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiations.

## **First Nations Traditional Commercial Fisheries**

SkeenaWild continues to support our Indigenous partners in developing their selective fisheries programs. We continue to support Lake Babine Nation in implementing its stock assessment program.

# Fisheries For The **Future**



## It's Time for a **New Approach**

In this new reality of a rapidly changing climate, more frequent and extreme weather events, and declining productivity of salmon populations, the current approach to managing fisheries is unsustainable and threatens our salmon. SkeenaWild has a vision for a new, proactive, inclusive framework to apply to all fisheries which we are developing and aim to unveil by spring 2024. We hope to use this framework as a tool to work with First Nations, DFO, the province, and commercial and sport fisheries to support transitions to more adaptive and sustainable practices.

# Alaskan Fisheries

**Every year, millions of British Columbia's wild salmon are killed in commercial fisheries in Alaska.**

Since October 2021, we've been working with Watershed Watch and other B.C. and US partners on a major campaign to bring attention to the interception of B.C.-bound salmon in Southeast Alaska – [AlaskasDirtySecret.com](https://www.alaskasdirtysecret.com) – we are calling for immediate changes to the Canada / US Pacific Salmon Treaty.

**Alaska saw an aggressive year for commercial fisheries, with Districts 104 (Southeast Alaska outer coast) and 101 (approach to Nass) harvesting over 18 million salmon. We estimate over 3 million of these were Canadian salmon, with additional, unreported impacts to chinook and steelhead.**

While the Alaskan interception of Canadian salmon continues unchecked, Canadians make incredible sacrifices to protect and rebuild our struggling salmon runs.

[Learn More](#)





The response to this campaign has been very strong. This year, we switched focus to the markets side of the campaign, raising awareness and calling on the public to pressure sustainable seafood certification agencies, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Ocean Wise, to remove their sustainability certificates for the Southeast Alaskan salmon fishery.

### **SINCE MAY 2023, OVER 1,500 LETTERS**

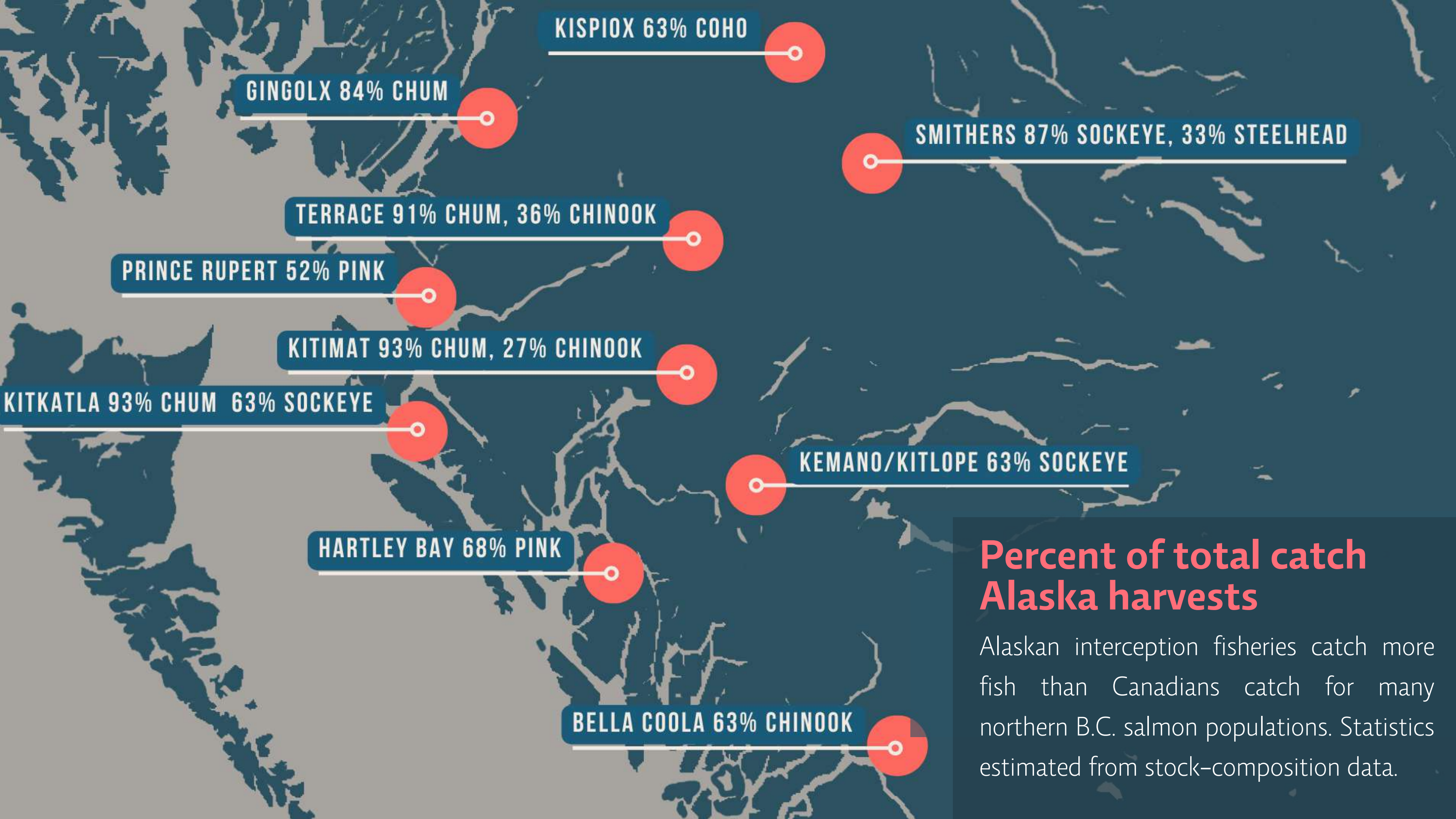
Have been sent to the MSC and Ocean Wise demanding the de-certification of the Southeast Alaskan salmon fishery as sustainable. This attracted the attention of the MSC, who we recently met with to discuss our concerns with both the fishery and their low standards for sustainable certification.

With significant reductions in BC fisheries, Alaska is now the largest harvester of many Skeena and other BC salmon populations and with the Pacific Salmon Commission and the Treaty not dealing with these issues, we have successfully pressured them to make Alaskan interception a high priority for Canada.

### **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024**

We will continue to pressure the sustainable seafood certification agencies to revoke Alaska's sustainable status and keep Alaskan Interception a high priority at the Pacific Salmon Commission.

[\*\*Learn More\*\*](#)



## Percent of total catch Alaska harvests

Alaskan interception fisheries catch more fish than Canadians catch for many northern B.C. salmon populations. Statistics estimated from stock-composition data.

# SkeenaWild Science Program

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SkeenaWild undertakes scientific research on salmon and salmon ecosystems. In addition to ongoing fisheries and Wild Salmon policy-related research, several science programs are underway and Science Director Dr. Michael Price continues to merge his research into SkeenaWild initiatives:

## **Salmon Millennium Project**

Dr. Price partnered with DFO's molecular genetics laboratory, SFU's Ancient DNA lab, and UNBC's archeology department to explore the change in the genetic diversity of salmon over the last 1,000 years. He is looking at salmon bones unearthed from Smokehouse Island (Babine River) that date back more than 1,000 years and more recent (100 years) scales from fish caught in commercial fisheries identified as from the Babine population to quantify the potential change in genetic diversity.

## **Rivers of Change Research**

Through his post-doctoral fellowship and in partnership with Simon Fraser University, Skeena Fisheries Commission, and Gitanyow Nation, Dr. Price is exploring the evolution of salmon habitat following glacier retreat and forest removal.

## **Skeena Sockeye Century Project**

Dr. Price's final PhD chapter will be published in the Global Change Biology Science journal, in which his research explores how sockeye populations rearing in different freshwater lakes in the Skeena have responded to a century of change in climate and competition. His research highlights the importance of diversity to be able to adapt to uncertain changes that may come and the need to protect habitats that may be critical in the future.



# Science & Research

## Rebuilding Plans

*This year, much of SkeenaWild's science effort continues on the priority activities outlined in the Rebuilding Plan for Wetzin'kwa sockeye (Wet'suwet'en ancestral territory). SkeenaWild Science Director, Dr. Michael Price, is the lead biologist overseeing the development and implementation of the rebuilding plans.*

### 1 Tracking Sockeye Salmon Spawning

Summer 2023 was our third year tracking sockeye back to spawning grounds. Fish are inserted with tags at Witset Canyon that transmit a signal, which we track via helicopter and fixed stations located at strategic sites throughout Wet'suwet'en territory. Results are preliminary, but more than half of those tagged fish tracked back to spawning grounds returned to Atna Lake. We also continued our environmental DNA (filter water samples for DNA shed by the presence of species) collection to monitor glacially dominant stream habitats not historically known to host salmon.

### 2 Juvenile Health Monitoring

Spring 2023 was year two of a study that live-captures juvenile sockeye emigrating from Morice Lake to determine age at emigration, size at age, and ultimately to explore whether mortality during this life stage is impeding the population's recovery. Based on last year's size-at-age data, >70% of juveniles left the lake after one year; <30% left after two years.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

In 2024, we will work closely with the Wet'suwet'en to develop a rebuilding plan for chinook salmon in the Wetzin'kwa – although diminished, it is still the largest chinook population in the Skeena.

[Learn More](#)

# Emerging Opportunities

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One of the highlights from our science work this past year was to learn more about emerging opportunities for salmon. While climate change presents serious challenges for salmon, they are incredibly resilient and adaptive. Some cold glacier-driven rivers are beginning to host fish that hadn't previously. Better understanding of how salmon are adapting to climate change ought to inform how we work to shift policy and management to ensure that emerging habitats due to deglaciation are protected.

Through his Liber Ero Postdoctoral Fellowship, Dr. Price's research aims to ensure climate-resilient salmon populations and Indigenous food security for the future. Broadly, his research explores how salmon and their freshwater habitat are responding to climate change and land-use development. Specifically, he seeks to document the spatial shift in spawning distribution of salmon within a large Northern B.C. watershed over a century of change in climate and industrial logging. Similar to his doctoral research, he uses a rich collection of fish scales – in addition to aerial photographs and glacier reconstruction – as his window into the past to better understand the colonisation of new habitat by salmon. This research is a partnership between Simon Fraser University, Gitanyow Nation, Skeena Fisheries Commission and SkeenaWild.

## **SFU Workshop:**

In March, SkeenaWild partnered with Simon Fraser University to co-host the Watershed of Change in Northern Rivers workshop. The workshop brought together 42 experts and leaders from academia, Indigenous, provincial and federal governments, and non-profits to discuss the science and stewardship of four northern watersheds – the Taku, Stikine, Nass, and Skeena. The inspiration for this workshop was to bring together those working on place-based solutions to the climate crisis and taking action to build climate resilience in salmon watersheds of the north. Discussions and information aimed to weave together watershed science, salmon management, land-use planning, and Indigenous rights.

# Salmon Habitat Protection

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The Skeena is one of the last remaining wild salmon strongholds. That's why we have hope: because we've already seen great things when salmon are put at the center. SkeenaWild's team works with scientists, Indigenous Nations, businesses, government agencies, communities, and individuals to ensure that our most valued resource thrives. By embracing sound science, we meticulously assess impacts and craft innovative solutions that prioritize the well-being of salmon and our communities.

**We work to improve mining, forestry, fisheries, and energy because we agree with 86% of British Columbians that industrial development should not occur at the expense of wild salmon and their habitat.**



# Marine Habitat

## Skeena Estuary Protections

Alongside conservation partners, we advocate for the Skeena Estuary, a place all Skeena salmon and steelhead depend, to be designated as an Ecologically Significant Area under Section 34 of the Fisheries Act. This designation would provide additional conservation and long-term protection through regulation, to better protect fish and fish habitat in candidate areas (such as Flora Bank) that are sensitive, highly productive, rare, or unique.

## Port Expansion

The Prince Rupert Port Authority and DP World Canada are undertaking a feasibility study to double the container terminal capacity. This project would be located south of the existing Fairview Terminal, where Kaien and Ridley Islands meet. The proposed second terminal would remove several hectares of important and rare eelgrass habitat for juvenile Skeena salmon.

[Learn More](#)

# Mining Reform

Impacts from mining are a growing concern in the Skeena Watershed. Open pit mines pose significant threats to salmon and steelhead due to metal and acid contamination and communities dependent on nearby water sources. In collaboration with our many partners, we've doubled efforts to bring 100-year-old mining laws into the 21st century and better understand the impacts on fish and water. We're assessing impacts on water and fish from mines in the region, working with Indigenous partners to implement better monitoring and treatment, bringing new mining protocols into Indigenous-led land use plans, pursuing academic publications, and researching compliance violations from mines in B.C.

[Learn More](#)



# Mining Reform

## 1 B.C. Mineral Tenure Act to be Reformed

We are proud of our work acting as an intervenor in support of Gitxaala and Ehattesaht First Nations, who brought the Supreme Court case against the free entry claim-staking system. Because of this case, B.C.'s Mineral Tenure Act will be reformed over the coming year, and mineral claims will no longer be granted automatically without consideration of other values on the land.

Unfortunately, the decision ruled that the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIPA) was not an enforceable act, and it also did not place an injunction on claim-staking, which means while the 18-month reform process occurs – B.C. could experience another “gold rush” in the interim while reforms are being developed. Gitxaala Nation filed an appeal on the Court's refusal to apply UNDRIP and stop unconstitutional mineral tenures.

[Learn More](#)

## 2 Dirty Dozen Report

The second edition of the Dirty Dozen report was released in late May by B.C. Mining Law Reform network. SkeenaWild provided the bulk of research and writing support to produce this report. The report profiles the top twelve polluting and risky mines in B.C. and makes policy reform recommendations to address the issues showcased by each mine.

[Learn More](#)

# Mining Reform

## 3 Environmental Assessments

SkeenaWild participates in the many Environmental Assessment processes for industrial proposals in Northwest B.C. We provide technical and scientific expertise to push back on risky mining projects and to improve overall mining practices and oversight. Recent mine projects we've engaged in include Telkwa Coal, Eskay Creek, Red Chris, and Brucejack.

## 4 "Mining 101"

SkeenaWild's Adrienne Berchtold – Ecologist and Mining Impacts Researcher, and Hup-Wil-Lax-A, Kirby Muldoe – Indigenous Engagement Lead, organized a successful "Mining 101" workshop for Gitxsan Nation, which educated Hereditary leaders on mining impacts and best practices. We'll continue to work with the Gitxsan Nation to develop policy tools they can employ to govern mining in a way that achieves greater environmental protection.

## 5 B.C. Tailings Map

Last year, SkeenaWild provided core technical assistance on the creation of a database and online interactive map of tailings storage facilities across B.C. In 2024, we aim to expand the database to include new information like tailings holding surface water and construction type. We're also interested in adding layers such as cumulative impacts tools and Indigenous territories.

[Learn More](#)



# Mining Reform

## 6 Critical Minerals

SkeenaWild is proud to work alongside Northern Confluence, a key conservation partner that released a report this year, 'Critical Minerals: A Critical Look' which presents alternatives to simply more mining as the solution for reducing fossil fuel dependence.

### **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024**

With strong momentum afoot, we look forward to working with our conservation partners at the B.C. Mining Law Reform Network to reform mineral tenure law to make sure mining is no longer automatically prioritized over conservation and Indigenous rights and that environmental protections are considered at first stages of mining exploration. This coalition is placing greater focus on advocacy related to critical minerals mining and policy.

[Learn More](#)



# Land Use Planning

Indigenous community-led land use planning is one way in which reconciliation can be operationalised. Our long-term goal is to move from outdated forestry practices and land use plans that do not adequately protect functioning habitats to detailed spatially-explicit land use plans that protect wildlife, ecosystems, culture, and local economies. These land use plans detail how, when, and where development can occur. With some Indigenous-led land use plans already operationalized in the Skeena Watershed, it's clear they provide guidance and certainty for sustainable rates of resource development, foster positive, respectful relationships, help promote long-term ecological resilience, protect shared values, and maximise benefits to local communities.

SkeenaWild's experienced land use planning team, led by professional forester Sarah Railton, is working closely with Gitxsan hereditary chiefs and the Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office to facilitate the development of community-led land use plans for all Gitxsan Watershed Groups that have asked us for help.

[Learn More](#)

# Forestry Reform

## Province Quietly Cancels 1.35 Million Acres of Conservation Lands Without Proper Consultation

Between 2019 and 2020, the provincial government cancelled over 1.35 million acres (nearly double the size of Metro Vancouver) of land designated under the Provincial Land Act for conservation and recreational use in Northwest B.C. that residents hold dear.

These cancellations put valued habitats at risk of being removed from public lands, logged or impacted by industrial development, including popular recreational areas such as Klinger Lake, Tye Mountain, Atlin, and the Stewart estuaries.

Since we launched to the public in May 2023, we and our community have been putting pressure on the Government of B.C. by sending in unique letters and calling representatives to insist that these Land Act cancellations be immediately rescinded and given interim protection to ensure no further land development occurs in these environmentally sensitive and beloved recreational areas until more secure legal designations are established.

Despite promises, B.C. has not taken action. In 2024, we will ramp up our campaign working with local community members to get these land protections reinstated.

[Learn More](#)

# Babine River Watershed

The Babine Watershed, an important tributary to the Skeena, hosts some of North America's highest densities of salmon and grizzly bear populations. While some protections exist for the Babine River corridor, tributaries such as the Shelagyote and other critical habitats need protection.

Development pressures within the Babine Watershed are growing as new forestry cutting permits are issued to multiple large-scale licensees, and Enbridge is working to develop a pipeline that will cross the northern and currently untouched portion of the Babine River Watershed.

SkeenaWild is collaborating with the Babine River Foundation to reduce the negative impacts of development within the Babine Watershed. We've identified areas that are at risk of losing hydrologic function, at-risk habitats, and those most heavily impacted and in need of attention.



# Education Program

## Fostering the next generation of watershed stewards and policymakers

The SkeenaWild Education Program, led by Education Manager Marie Blouin, is an interactive, curriculum-based initiative that engages community members of all ages and backgrounds. Through hands-on activities, participants learn about wild salmon, climate change, conservation, current events, and sustainability in both classrooms and outdoor spaces throughout the Skeena Watershed. Our 2022/2023 educational program reached over 2,400+ students, educators, and families. Our primary objective with the funding for this school year was to expand our program to deliver our environmental education workshops to more students in communities outside of the Terrace area while continuing to deliver our workshops to Terrace schools. We were successful in our goal of delivering 50% of our programming to schools in the Terrace area and 50% to schools in communities outside of the Terrace area, including Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Smithers, and Lax Galts'ap.

*"Our school has a beautiful setting in the North. Your support with teaching about the Skeena Watershed and surrounding area is valued."*  
**- Grade 5/6 Teacher.**



*"Even if they may not realize it now, these opportunities and experiences are incredibly valuable for the kids. It was also very valuable for me as a new teacher. I am thankful for the availability of such a valuable resource like SkeenaWild."*  
**- Grade 8 teacher.**

**[Learn More](#)**

# Education: In The Classroom

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## 57 In-Class Workshops

to K- Grade 12 students teaching about salmon, habitat, watersheds and climate change.

## 20 Outdoor Field Experiences

to local streams focusing on water quality testing and aquatic macroinvertebrate surveys.

This year, we developed a new water quality testing and monitoring program for middle schoolers that we delivered to 140 Grade 7, 8 and 9 students in Terrace, Smithers, and Prince Rupert. We also partnered with Kitselas Nation to provide salmon and watershed programming for Kitselas youth ages 5 to 25.

**2,500+** Students and educators directly reached through classroom and **76** outdoor field workshops at **14** schools in **5** communities.

[Learn More](#)

# Education: In The Community

**900+** Youth and adults were directly reached through **29** events.

Events included daily summer nature science camps, a series of non-instructional day camps, a series of Saturday morning eco club camps, pop-up nature science activities, a conservation camp for youth, and a science career conference for young women.

## Youth Conservation Leadership

In partnership with B.C. Parks, we ran our second Youth Conservation Leadership Summer Camp at Lakelse Lake Provincial Park for youth ages 11 to 16 years to teach them about watershed science and help them develop the leadership skills necessary to become future stewards.

## Eco-Explorer Watershed Summer Camps

We developed and delivered several day-long outdoor camps for youth ages 5 to 11 years during the summer months, on non-instructional days, and after school, directly reaching 112 youth in the Terrace area.

## Pop Up Nature Science Events

This past summer, we offered free events featuring hands-on activities. In its third year, we held 8 Pop-up Nature Science Events at community spaces and provincial parks in Terrace.

### **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024**

**Skeena Stewardship Educational Book:** We are developing an educational activity book that is tailored to the Skeena Watershed and focuses on environmental and cross-curricular connections for K-12 students.

[Learn More](#)

# Community Engagement

**SkeenaWild has a deep relationship with this place, and this place has a profound relationship with salmon. Our job is to defend those relationships. We strive to build connections, create dialogue, solicit feedback, and share information and stories about SkeenaWild's work and salmon-related issues.**

## **Skeena Salmon Art Festival**

Once again, SkeenaWild helped organize and sponsor the annual [Skeena Salmon Arts Festival](#). This locally curated, place-based, Indigenous art collective strives to direct big investments into community public art projects. This year saw several new murals, banners, sculptures and the beloved art collective exhibit that travelled the Northwest this summer and fall. This celebrated festival continues to generate energy and excitement throughout the region about Skeena salmon and the culture and communities connected to them.

## **SkeenaWild Conservation Award**

Fred Philpot received the inaugural [SkeenaWild Conservation Award](#) earlier this year. The award intends to recognize and celebrate the unsung conservation advocates who've made a measurable contribution to Skeena Watershed health. We plan to award a different deserved recipient each year.

Want to nominate someone? Get in touch.

## **The Skeena Squad**

Volunteer Groups: Skeena Stewardship Squad & SkeenaWild Youth Conservation Leadership Program. Working in collaboration with Lakelse Watershed Stewardship Society, B.C. Parks, and Eby Street Hatchery. This program focuses on Citizen Science, Water Quality Sampling, Stream Cleanups, Tree Planting, Storm Drain Painting, Staffing at Events, Watershed Discovery EcoCamps for Kids, Classroom Workshops, Field Trips, and Service Learning Projects.

## **Upstream: A SkeenaWild Podcast**

Season 2 of SkeenaWild's homegrown podcast series with Dan Mesec was released this past summer and has already garnered hundreds of downloads. Season 3 is currently in the planning stages, with a tentative release date in the new year. It explores the people, culture, science, and, of course, the salmon from all across the Skeena Watershed. [All episodes are available on Apple, Spotify or SoundCloud.](#)

## **Keeping the public informed**

SkeenaWild regularly releases informational videos about issues people care deeply about. Our fisheries update [summer series videos](#) were a huge hit, being viewed, shared, and saved across various social media channels. In addition to the in-season fisheries updates, we released a [report on the environmental conditions observed this season and how salmon were impacted](#). We are developing a plan to expand communications on the impacts of climate change over the next year. In 2024, we can also expect a State of the Skeena Report, which describes what has changed in the Skeena Watershed over the past 100 years, provides a current snapshot of the watershed and plausible future scenarios, and educates and promotes conservation.

# SkeenaWild Film & Photography Festival

The SkeenaWild Film & Photography Festival returned for its 12th year. We saw the number of submissions across various topics and participation at events in communities across B.C. continued to grow. We hosted the festival in Terrace with two sold-out events. The festival was offered as a fundraising event opportunity for interested community groups, and we saw sold-out events in Kitimat, Smithers, Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii. Screening participants and the general public viewed the finalists and voted for their favourites, and the winners received cash prizes.

[Learn More](#)



# 2023 Campaigns and Actions

On top of our important day-to-day efforts to educate, rebuild weak salmon populations, conduct important scientific research, improve policy, legislation, and proposed projects, we're also putting extra effort into specific campaigns to help ensure that salmon are here for the long haul.

## Southeast Alaska Fisheries Have the Biggest Harvest Impact on Skeena Salmon and Steelhead.

This year, we focused on pushing OceanWise and Marine Stewardship Council to decertify dirty Southeast Alaska's salmon fisheries as 'sustainable.' Fishers in Southeast Alaska intercept and kill hundreds of thousands of Skeena salmon in non-selective net fisheries as they swim past Alaska on their way home. Seafood certification organizations like Marine Stewardship Council and Ocean Wise certify these fish as 'sustainable' Alaskan seafood. But fisheries that catch another country's endangered fish are about as far from sustainable as you can get.

The solution is easy—Alaska needs to move its dirty interception fisheries away from our coast migration routes where B.C. salmon are returning to spawn to inside waters where Alaskans can still catch their own fish. One way to help them do this is to decertify their dirty fishery as 'sustainable.'

[Take Action](#)

## Restore Protections of 1.35M Acres of Conservation Lands in Northwest B.C.

These Land Act cancellation orders were made despite warnings against the move from government Conservation Lands personnel and with no consultation with land and resource planning committees, including the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board (BVCRB), Kalum Plan Implementation Committee (KPIC), Indigenous Nations, Municipalities, Regional Districts and the public at large.

*"The removal of these Land Act designations is already undermining the conservation status of these areas and is in violation of agreed-upon plans and management directions. For example, BC Timber Sales already logged one of the cancelled conservation lands and have multiple cut blocks laid out in another parcel that overlaps an old-growth deferral area."* — Len Vanderstar, former Provincial Government Conservation Lands Biologist.

[Take Action](#)

# Upcoming 2024 Campaigns

## Climate Resilience

### Fisheries Reform

In this new reality of a rapidly changing climate, more frequent and extreme weather events, and declining productivity of salmon populations, the current approach to managing fisheries is unsustainable and threatens our salmon. SkeenaWild has a vision for a new, proactive, inclusive framework to apply to all fisheries which we are developing and aim to unveil by spring 2024. We hope to use this framework as a tool to work with First Nations, DFO, the province, and commercial, and sport fisheries to support transitions to more sustainable practices.

### Tanker Ban

The Oil Tanker Moratorium Act (Bill C-48), passed in June 2019, prohibits tankers carrying more than 12,500 tonnes of crude oil from entering the Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Sound, and Dixon Entrance. This Act is critical for ensuring the long-term protection of our unique and remote region from catastrophic oil spills. In 2024 there will be 5-year review of the legislation.

A potential change in federal government next year would likely result in the repealing of the hard-fought North Coast Tanker Ban.

### Estuary Protection

We will continue to work with our conservation partners and ramp up our efforts to advocate for the Skeena Estuary to be designated as an Ecologically Significant Area under Section 34 of the Fisheries Act.

This designation would provide additional conservation and long-term protection through regulation, to better protect fish and fish habitat in candidate areas (such as Flora Bank) that are sensitive, highly productive, rare, or unique.

### STAY INFORMED

Don't miss all the latest news, stories and events from SkeenaWild and our affiliate organizations. Subscribe to our monthly newsletter and follow us on our social channels.



# You can help Skeena Salmon

## DONATE

Your tax deductible donation will go directly towards defending wild salmon and steelhead populations in the Skeena Watershed.

## USE YOUR VOICE

Get in touch and learn more about how you can defend salmon.

## JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

Join The Stream to stay informed of our programs and the latest news in the Skeena and how you can help.

## SHOP OUR SWAG

Support Skeena salmon and look good while doing it. We have SkeenaWild swag and merch for adults, youth and kids.

## CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM

Unit 103-4622 Greig Avenue, Terrace, B.C., V8G 1M9

Phone: (250) 638-0998

Email: [hello@skeenawild.org](mailto:hello@skeenawild.org)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Youtube](#)

[X \(Formally Twitter\)](#)

Learn more at [skeenawild.org](https://skeenawild.org)

# Financial Summary 2023

SkeenaWild spent \$1,411,749 on salmon conservation in the Skeena Watershed from December 2022 to December 2023. This is the breakdown of how we allocated those funds.

Operations & Strategy  
18.1%

Fisheries & Research  
17.1%

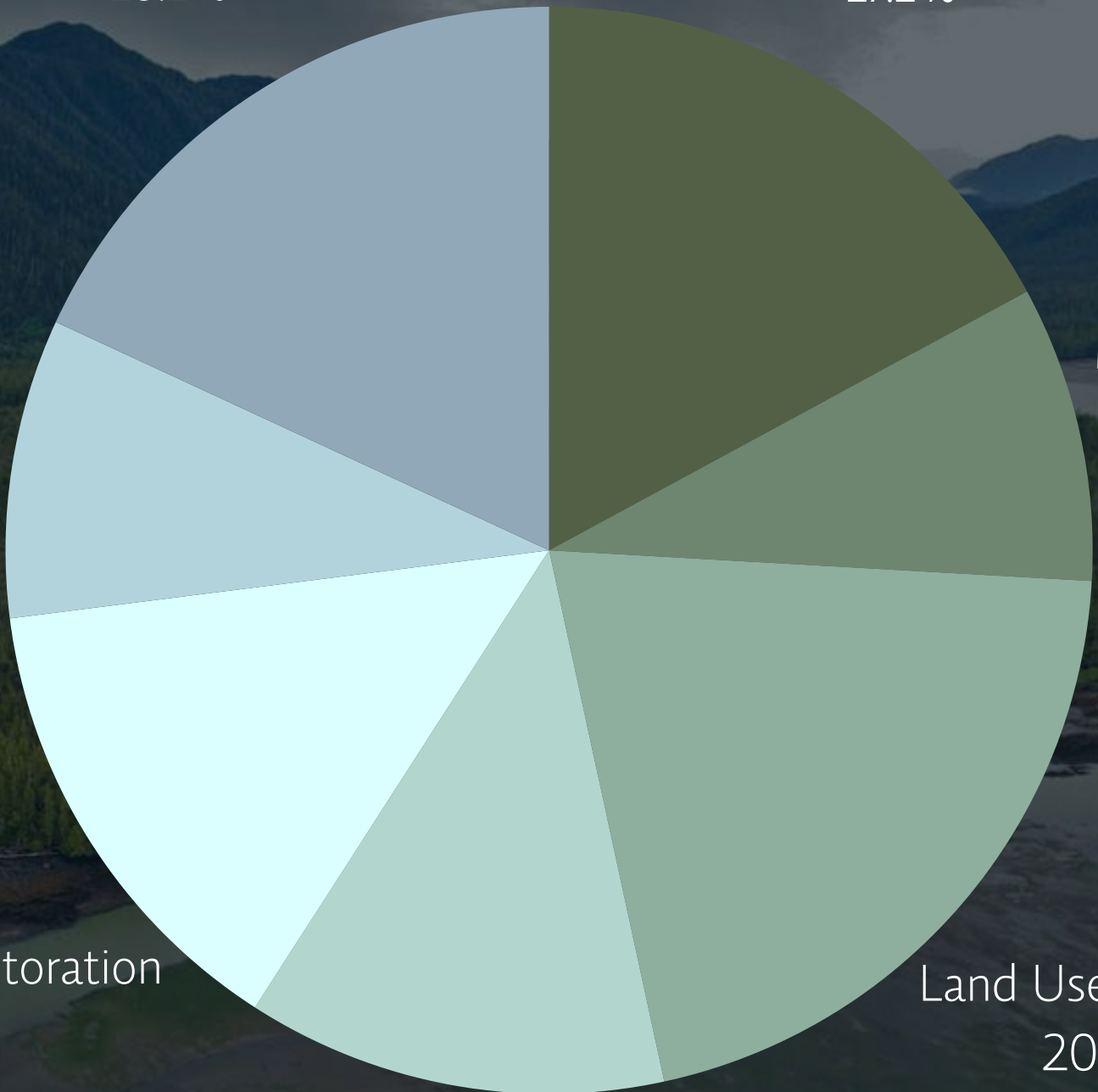
Mining Reform  
8.8%

Education  
8.9%

Habitat Protection & Restoration  
13.9%

Land Use Planning  
20.7%

Communications & Community Engagement  
12.5%



# Every dollar counts

Thank you to all of our supporters – big and small. Your contributions allow us to defend Skeena salmon.

Bob and Barbara Shaunessey

Tony Garvey

Terry and Peter Leggat

Rick Bresnahan

Larry Garlick

Richard Cline

Pic Walker

Paul and Donna Kranhold

Lindsay Eberts

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Louise Thompson

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Cynthia Mangnus

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Patric Maloney

Leon Fisher

Marjorie Stewart

Gavin Grapes

# Feeling. The. Love.

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Richard Bell

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Meghan Rooney

Keith Gourlay

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Eric Hobson

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Frontiersmen Gear

Fusion Eyecare

Benefaction Foundation

CanadaHelps.Org

BC Hydro

BC Parks

Provincial Employees Fund

Wild Salmon Center

PayPal Giving Fund

Canadian Online Giving Foundation

Naiad Stewardship Solutions Inc

Kermodei Tourism Society

Nature's Pantry

Sherwood Mountain Brewery

CFNR

The Fix

Unbound Gear and Apparel

Wendy Hadley

Wild Bike

Aquabatics

Terrace Standard

Edgerton Foundation

Real Estate Foundation

TD Friends of the Environment

Patagonia

The Holdfast Collective

Wilburforce Foundation

MakeWay

Vancouver Foundation

Terrace Community Foundation

Yvon and Malinda Chouinard Fund

Sitka Foundation

Marin Community Foundation

Northern Confluence Initiative

Northwest Training Ltd

Lakelse Watershed Stewardship Society

Fish Tales Tackle Shop

Houston Chamber of Commerce

Northwest Science and Innovation

Office of the Wet'suwet'en

Steelhead Society

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

B.C. Conservation Office

Terrace Women's Resource Center

City of Terrace

Western Organization of Resource Councils

Government of Canada

Mining Watch Canada

Pacific Salmon Watershed Fund

Full Circle Foundation

Boreal Songbird Initiative

An aerial photograph of a mountain range with a river valley below. The mountains are rugged and rocky, with some snow patches. The valley is lush green with dense forests and a winding river. A small town is visible in the foreground, nestled in the valley. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

A globally significant watershed

# Become part of the **solution.**

With your help, we can continue to help ensure the health and resiliency of wild salmon and steelhead populations in the Skeena Watershed. Your tax-deductible donation will go towards on-the-ground work. Thank you for helping the Skeena Watershed prosper.

Donate at  
[skeenawild.org/donate](https://skeenawild.org/donate)

# Get In Touch

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