

Enhancing Estuary Resilience:
An Innovative Approach to Sustaining Fish and Fish Habitat in a Changing Climate

A BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) Project

Project Backgrounder

In the fall of 2019, The Nature Trust of British Columbia launched a five-year project to improve estuary habitat and enhance the long-term sustainability and health of wild B.C. Pacific salmon fish stocks.

The project will monitor and research estuary resilience to sea-level rise and climate change using the Marsh Resiliency to Sea-Level rise (MARS) tool at 15 sites on Vancouver Island, the central coast and Haida Gwaii. Data will be collected for five categories of resilience: the distribution of marsh elevation, change in elevation, sediment levels, tidal range and the rate of sea-level rise. These metrics will provide baseline information to inform the restoration phase of the project.

The \$8,552,415 project budget is funded by the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, a contribution program jointly funded by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Province of B.C. A key element of the project is a focus on developing strong relationships with coastal First Nations communities, environmental organizations and academic institutions.

Partners in the project are the West Coast Conservation Land Management Program, Cowichan Tribes, Snuneymuxw First Nation, K'omoks First Nation, Da'naxda'xw-Awaetlala First Nation, Tlowitsis First Nation, Kwakiutl First Nation, Ahousaht First Nation, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, Nuxalk First Nation, Heiltsuk First Nation, the Council of the Haida Nation, the Hakai Institute, Simon Fraser University and Marine Plan Partnership.

The West Coast Conservation Land Management Program is a multi-partner program that includes Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and The Nature Trust of BC.

Tom Reid, West Coast Program Manager, The Nature Trust of BC, will lead the multi-faceted project and be responsible for the project deliverables.