

Sensitive Streams Under the Fish Protection Act

What is a Recovery Plan?

A recovery plan is a fisheries and water management tool that is intended to provide for the recovery of a fish population living in a sensitive stream as designated under the Fish Protection Act. These fish are at risk due to inadequate water flows or other habitat concerns. Along with new water allocation rules, enhanced riparian protection, and selective fisheries, recovery plans will help to provide the means to sustain the health and diversity of fish in BC. This planning process provides a practical and cooperative way for communities, stakeholders, First Nations and government agencies to develop solutions to water-land use conflicts and fish management concerns.

How is a Recovery Plan Initiated?

Recovery plans can be initiated in two ways. The Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks may direct that a recovery plan be prepared. Alternatively, a person or group may propose that a recovery plan be developed.

What Kind of Things May Go Into a Recovery Plan?

Recovery plans can be as flexible as needed to take into account the unique nature of individual streams and characteristics of fish populations. The plan would include a process for public participation and may include a variety of elements, such as:

- measures to provide a sufficient flow of water in the stream or for restoring fish habitat;*
- recommendations on how to promote cooperative efforts for the protection and recovery of fish population and fish habitat;*
- other measures as required to improve stock productivity and long-term habitat restoration.*

How is a Recovery Plan Implemented?

A recovery plan can be implemented in two ways. It can be implemented in a cooperative fashion that takes advantage of existing water planning processes and stream stewardship activities. Alternatively, and if it is in the public's best interest, Cabinet can approve implementation of a recovery plan.

Who will be Involved in the Development of a Recovery Plan?

While the Fish Protection Act requires a public participation process for each recovery plan, such participation is voluntary. Depending on the issues within a specific watershed, each recovery plan may involve a different mix of stakeholders.

Who will pay for the development of a Recovery Plan?

There are four main ways that the development of recovery plans will be funded . First, they may be funded by - or form part of - existing or proposed programs such as a stock assessment process or the Urban Salmon Habitat Program. Second, government agencies may provide targeted resources for the development of a recovery plan. Third, Cabinet may direct that Fisheries Renewal BC or Forest renewal BC assist in the development of recovery plans. Fourth, plans funded by local groups within a watershed.

How will You Know if a Recovery Plan is successful?

Each recovery plan will develop its own set of objectives based on criteria now in development. However, the ultimate goal is to recover a fish population so that a sensitive stream designation is no longer required. Success will be measured by enhanced, sustainable use or appreciation of a fish population.

How will Compliance be ensured?

Each recovery plan will include a strategy for enforcement and monitoring, including voluntary and government compliance measures.

What is the Relationship between a Recovery Plan and Other Watershed Planning Processes?

Recovery plans will be designed to allow maximum flexibility. This will allow them to complement, not conflict or replace, other water use planning processes which might be in place within a watershed. For example, a recovery plan for a designated sensitive stream may include elements from an existing water use plan, water allocation plan, or fish species recovery plan. Therefore, a "stand alone " recovery plan may not be required.

Could a Recovery Plan impact other activities?

Perhaps, in some circumstances. For example, if Cabinet approves a recovery plan under the Water Act, forestry, mining and other activities could be required to amend their water use practices or modify activities in and about streams to help ensure adequate water flows for fish or to protect important fish habitat. A recovery plan has no affect on powers and authorities made under the Forest Act, Range Act, or Forest Practices Code. Planning processes within the Forest Practices Code incorporate the protection of fish and fish habitat.