

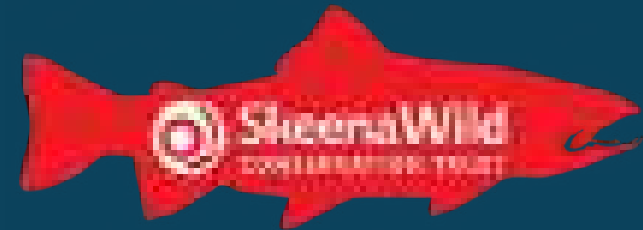


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2024 Annual Report



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A message from our Executive Director

We Rely On Salmon. Salmon Rely On Us.



Salmon are the heart of the Skeena. For those of us lucky enough to call this region home, the Skeena is more than a river—it's a lifeline. For others, it's a connection and a symbol of hope, a reminder that wild salmon systems like this still exist in a changing world.

But the challenges salmon face are growing. Warming oceans, intense droughts and floods, unsustainable fisheries, and habitat destruction threaten their future. Yet salmon are nothing if not strong. They've weathered ice ages and environmental upheavals before—and they will thrive, if we give them a fighting chance. At SkeenaWild, the strength of salmon and the people who care about them fuels everything we do.

2024: What We Achieved Together

This year, we focused on getting more salmon back into the river.

- **Tackling Alaskan interception:** We stood up against the largest harvest pressure on many B.C.-bound salmon, challenging unsustainable practices, revoking illegitimate eco-certifications, and pushing for fair treatment at the Pacific Salmon Treaty.
- **Improving local fishing practices:** Our work strengthened fishing plans, reduced impacts on vulnerable species, and supported Indigenous selective fisheries using tools like fish wheels and beach seines.
- **Rebuilding at-risk populations:** We helped develop and implement actions for salmon populations in the Babine, Kispiox, and Bulkley/Morice systems, giving these fish a better chance to recover.

We also worked hard to protect critical salmon habitats:

- **Advancing Indigenous-led Land Use Plans:** We celebrated the completion of the Upper Nass plan and began others focused on safeguarding fish, water, and communities.
- **Addressing industrial impacts:** We challenged harmful projects like Telkwa Coal and pushed for improvements at Red Chris to ensure salmon habitats are protected.
- **Engaging communities:** Through workshops, field trips, summer camps, and updates on salmon and habitat issues, we connected with thousands of people. Science guided all of it—from discovering new salmon habitats to shaping protections.

None of this would have been possible without you. Your support makes it all happen. Together, we're building a future where Skeena salmon continue to thrive, sustaining the people, cultures, and ecosystems that depend on them. Thank you for being part of this journey. Let's keep the momentum going!

Thank You.

Our Team

- 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
- Kaitlin Yehle – Fisheries Biologist
- Adrienne Berchtold – Ecologist & Mining Impacts Researcher
- Dan Mesec – Communications
- Alice Arbutnot – Communications Manager
- Marie Blouin – Education Program Manager
- Ella Almgren – Summer Education Program Assistant
- Amelia Williams Thomas – Summer Education Program Assistant
- Oasis Cleveland – Summer Education Program Assistant
- Sarah Railton – Forester / Lead Land Use Planner
- Kate Dillon – Biologist / Land Use Planner
- 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



Our Mission

The Skeena Watershed is the second largest wild salmon watershed in British Columbia and teems with a vibrant diversity of fish and wildlife. It's one of the world's last, large, undammed wild salmon ecosystems that is also inhabited by significant human populations.

We are a community united in defending wild salmon, guided by science and research.

Working alongside Local communities, Indigenous nations, governments, and individuals, our work is committed to ensuring salmon's long-term health and strength.

Our mission is simple: Keep wild salmon and steelhead around for the long haul. Together, our community is stronger.

2024 Skeena Wins

First Eco-Label to Revoke Sustainability Seal

Ocean Wise stopped recommending Southeast Alaska salmon while reviewing the fishery's practices and impacts—a significant outcome of our Alaska's Dirty Secret campaign.

Progress on B.C. Mineral Tenure Act Reform

Momentum is building for much-needed changes to B.C.'s century old mining laws. Under a court-imposed deadline, the provincial government must develop a framework for consulting First Nations on mineral claim-staking by March 2025. Additionally, the Province has committed to broader reforms, aiming to introduce new legislation by Fall 2026. SkeenaWild will continue advocating for stronger environmental protections to safeguard B.C.'s wild salmon and their habitats, ensuring they can thrive in a changing climate.

Stronger Returns

This year saw relatively strong returns of Skeena sockeye and steelhead, showing improvement compared to recent years and expectations.

Focus on Selective Fishing

This year, fisheries in the Skeena were more selective than ever. Initiatives like the Kitselas K5T fish wheel, Wet'suwet'en dip net fishery, the Lake Babine Nation's Seines fisheries, Lax Kw'alaams fish trap and Gitanyow dip net and seine fisheries helped reduce impacts on non-target salmon and steelhead.

Restoration Success

Adult spawning coho have been spotted above Dover Road on Willow Creek—a direct result of restoration efforts by Kitsumkalum, Westland Resources and SkeenaWild.

Improving Resource Management

The Upper Nass Land Use Plan has been completed and is being voluntarily followed by companies and licensees, providing a clear framework for sustainable operations in the region.

2024 Skeena Lowlights

SE Alaska Salmon Fishery Certification Undermines MSC Credibility

An independent adjudicator appointed by the Marine Stewardship Council, a sustainability eco-label, issued their decision to dismiss the objection brought forward by SkeenaWild, Watershed Watch and Raincoast Conservation. SkeenaWild's fisheries biologist Kaitlin Yehle commented *"this decision is disappointing and very misleading. This is a fishery that does not adhere to internationally recognized best practices with respect to handling and release of bycatch species, basic catch monitoring and data collection, and is intercepting millions of south-migrating salmon from populations of conservation concern, yet is marketed to consumers as 'sustainable.'"*

KSM Mine Moves Forward Despite Outdated Assessment

The B.C. Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has allowed the proposed KSM mine to proceed, citing the project as "substantially started"—a claim with little supporting evidence—and despite its environmental assessment being over a decade old. Proposed by Seabridge Gold, the KSM mine could become one of the world's largest gold-copper operations, featuring massive tailings lake requiring maintenance for centuries. Its location poses serious risks to the Nass and Unuk rivers, which are essential for salmon, eulachon, and the cultural, economic, and subsistence needs of local communities.

DFO Extends Commercial Sockeye Fishery, Raising Concerns

DFO justified extending commercial fishery openings into mid-August due to an abundance of sockeye, deviating from the annual fishing plan, which typically restricts openings to the first few days of August. These late-season openings increase harvest pressure on weaker wild Babine River sockeye populations, along with chum, coho, and steelhead.

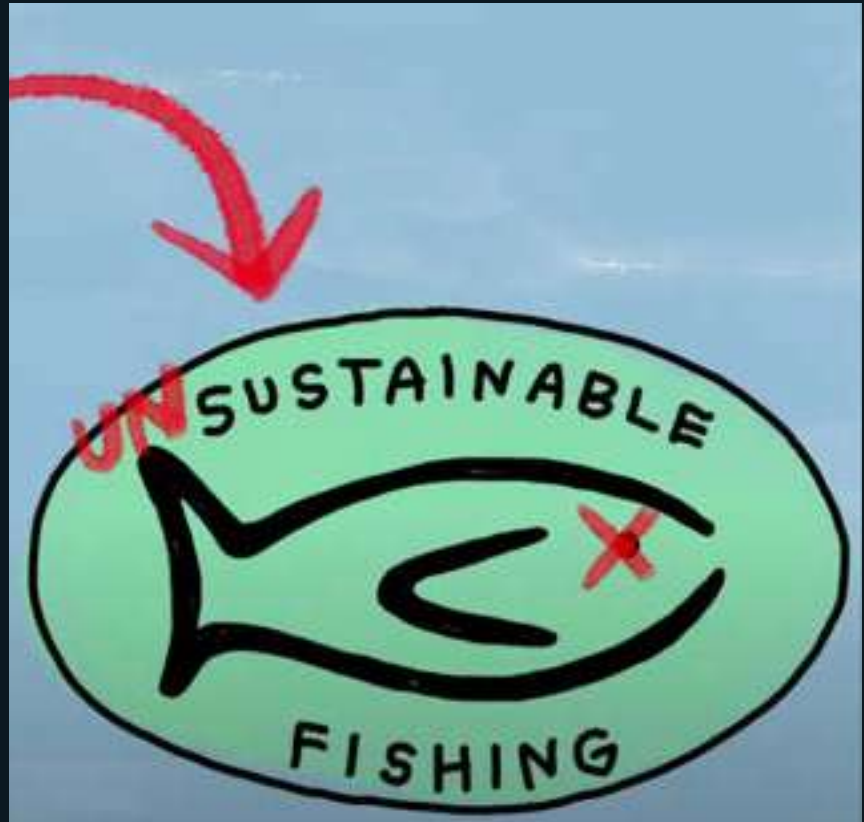
In the News

ALASKA'S DIRTY SECRET

B.C. GROUPS CHALLENGE ALASKA'S 'SUSTAINABLE' FISHERIES STATUS



OCEAN WISE PULLS LABEL FROM SOME ALASKAN SALMON FISHERIES



CONSERVATION GROUPS SAY ALASKAN FISHERMEN ARE TAKING B.C.'S SALMON STOCK



ADJUDICATOR REJECTS CONSERVATIONISTS' CONCERNS, RECOMMENDS MSC RECERTIFICATION OF ALASKA SALMON



In the News

THE FUTURE OF PACIFIC SALMON



© Kaitlin Yehle

SALMON, WILDLIFE AFFECTED BY HOT, DRY SUMMER IN TERRACE



© Shelley Lindaas

2024 SKEENAWILD FILM AND PHOTO FESTIVAL SCREENS IN TERRACE



© Brandon Broderick

B.C. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP FILES JUDICIAL REVIEW TO CHALLENGE NORTHWEST GOLD MINE PROJECT



© Chris Miller

Program Updates



Fisheries

Salmon and steelhead returning this year likely benefited from cooler ocean temperatures, thanks to a triple La Niña from 2020–2023. Cooler oceans mean that more and fattier food is available for salmon, resulting in increased productivity. However, a low snowpack over the past winter and lingering drought conditions from 2023 contributed to challenging freshwater conditions for salmon this summer.

Many systems throughout the Skeena and Nass had record-low water levels throughout the season and water temperatures over 20°C for several days in early /mid-August. Reports of significant pre-spawn mortality were observed during this period (e.g. at the Babine fence and anecdotally from Kitselas and Gitanyow fishers). La Niña is expected again through the winter of 2024/25, which is associated with cooler, wetter conditions in the North Pacific and generally considered favourable for salmon at sea.

SkeenaWild will increase focus on the following issues in 2025:

- **Southeast Alaskan Interception**
- **Increasing Selectivity**
- **Babine Spawning Channels**

2024 Returns

2.5M SOCKEYE

The Skeena sockeye return was higher than anticipated from the pre-season forecast of ~1.5 million, with an estimated return to Canada of ~2.7 million and run past Tye of ~2.5 million (consistent with the long-term average).

PINK

Pink salmon were relatively abundant for an even year, with an estimated return of just under 3 million.

CHUM

Skeena chum returns were extremely low again, which is consistent with recent years, as chum have been depressed for several decades.

Nass returns followed similar patterns to Skeena returns, but with a better return of chum salmon.

- Pink and chum salmon returns were relatively strong in abundance, above recent averages
- Sockeye, coho and steelhead returns were average to slightly above average
- Chinook returns were poor, consistent with recent years

~23K CHINOOK

Skeena chinook returns were very low, consistent with recent years, with a preliminary estimated terminal run of ~23,000 (long-term average ~100,000).

COHO

Coho return was slightly below average.

35K STEELHEAD

There was a good return of summer-run steelhead (~35,000; long-term average ~25,000), which is welcome following five years of very poor returns. Steelhead returns were strong in other north and central coast systems as well, such as the Nass and Dean Rivers, which may indicate a response to favourable ocean conditions. However, in-season freshwater conditions were challenging, and focusing on long-term health and population patterns is important. Skeena Steelhead may have also benefitted from less fishing in Southeast Alaskan interception fisheries.

[Learn More](#)

Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC)

With significant reductions in B.C. fisheries, Alaska is now the largest harvester of many Skeena and other B.C. salmon populations. The Treaty is not dealing with these issues appropriately. The pressure we have made through our campaign work over the last few years has made Alaskan interception the highest priority for Canada at the PSC. We are finally seeing honest conversations about the issues discussed with the Alaskans at the Northern Panel. Our commissioners are showing up and onside with our concerns and work.

First Nations Traditional Commercial Fisheries

SkeenaWild continues to support the Lake Babine Nation (LBN), Gitksan and Gitanyow in developing their selective fisheries programs. We also continue our work in support of Lake Babine Nation in implementing their stock assessment program. Increased assessment is allowing the value of the fishery to improve through improved precision, better timing, and increased production. Lake Babine Nation is exploring a new fish wheel project for 2025. LBN had a large commercial fishery in Babine Lake this past season.

Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI)

The PSSI is DFO's initiative to stop the decline and rebuild Pacific Salmon. There are four pillars that direct DFO to reform harvest, hatcheries and habitat and improve collaboration.

SkeenaWild is working with partners to assist PSSI staff in meeting the rebuilding objectives; this includes regular meetings with the Marine Conservation Caucus and DFO, proactively providing input on each strategy.

B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy

SkeenaWild is working with partner organizations and the B.C. Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries to influence the implementation of B.C.'s Wild Salmon Strategy. Our focus has been to advocate for improved habitat protections and steelhead management. We have also successfully pushed back against commercial, sport and First Nations who are advocating for increased hatchery / Alaska style ocean ranching production and increasing harvest.

Fisheries For The **Future**

The Future is **Selective**

SkeenaWild is supporting several selective fishing projects in the Skeena and Nass, expanding communications to highlight these fisheries, and helping facilitate knowledge sharing between Nations.

We visited Kitselas K5T fish wheel and the Gitanyow Fish Camp at Lax An Zok and we witnessed firsthand the efficiency, precision, and sustainability of selective fishing methods like fish wheels and dip nets. These practices minimize bycatch and protect vulnerable species, setting a standard for the future of responsible fishing.

[Learn More](#)

Fisheries For The **Future**

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

In our new reality of a warming climate, more frequent and extreme weather events, and declines of many salmon populations, the current approach to managing fisheries is unsustainable and threatens our salmon. SkeenaWild is working on a new, proactive, inclusive sustainability framework to apply to all fisheries. We are developing this framework based on best practices and current research. We will seek input from partner organizations, and will apply it to all Skeena fisheries using an incentivized approach. Highlighting fisheries that demonstrate selectivity, are adaptable to in-season abundance and have independent monitoring. We will also provide suggestions and support where improvements are needed. We hope to use this sustainability 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. While the Alaskan interception of Canadian salmon continues unchecked, Canadians make incredible sacrifices to protect and rebuild our struggling salmon runs.

We are 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 – the response to this campaign has been very strong.

Relatively low pink salmon abundance in Southeast Alaska this season saw reduced fishing pressure compared to recent years, with a total harvest of ~19 million salmon in the net and troll fisheries. Skeena sockeye and steelhead may have benefited from less harvest pressure in Alaska's outer coast interception fishery (District 104) compared to recent years, but information is still lacking for most species.

[Learn More](#)





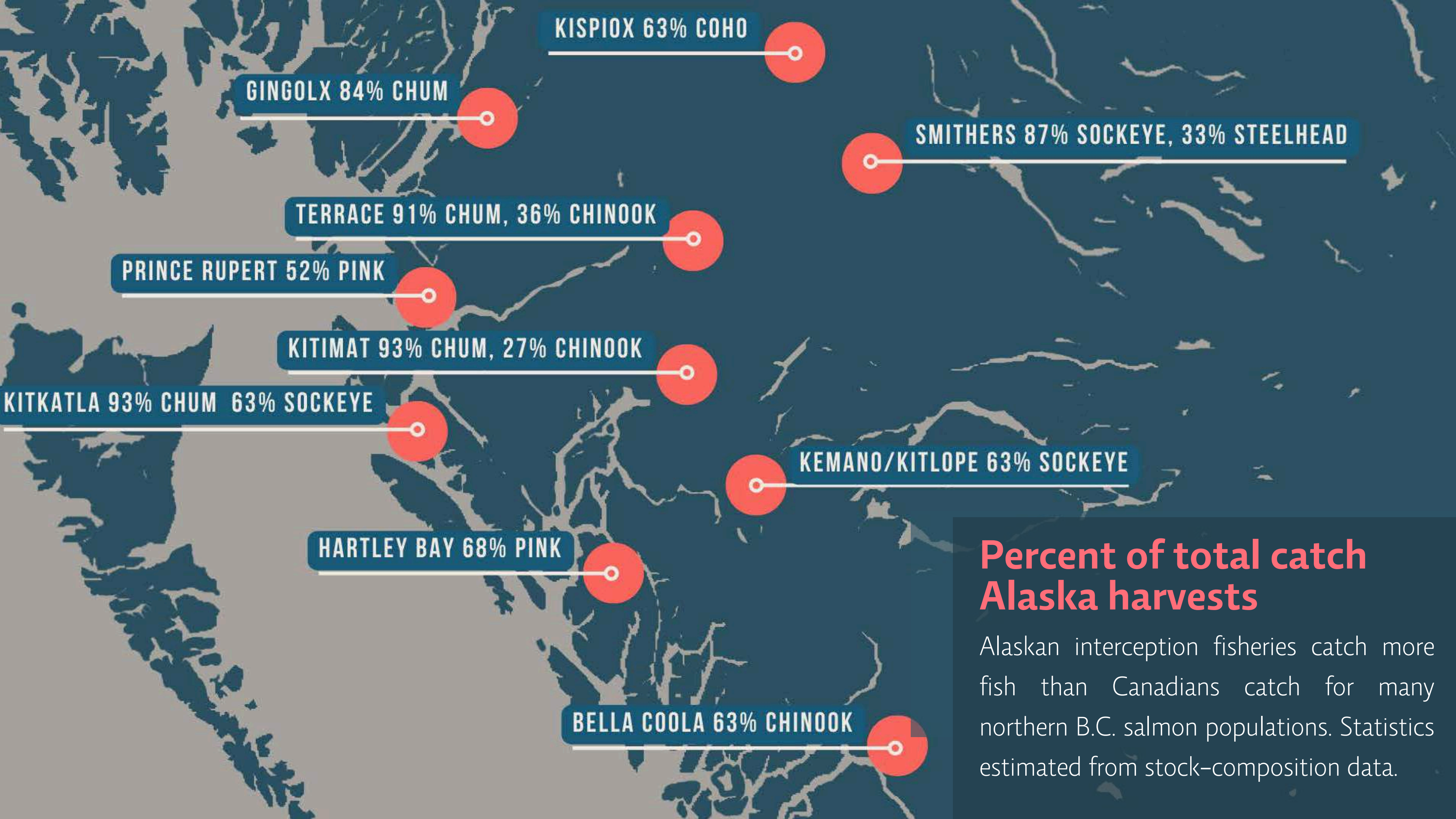
After many years of working with the Pacific Salmon Commission to reduce the interception of Skeena and Nass fish from Southeast Alaskan fisheries, we switched our focus to the markets side last year, raising awareness and calling on the public to pressure sustainable seafood certification agencies, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Ocean Wise, to remove their certificates of sustainability for the Southeast Alaskan salmon fishery. Ocean Wise stopped recommending salmon from Southeast Alaska in June, publicly citing the evidence we put forward regarding impacts to B.C. salmon.

In April 2024, together with our partners Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Watershed Watch Salmon Society, we filed a formal objection to the MSC's recertification of the Alaska salmon fishery and followed that process through to an oral hearing with an MSC-appointed adjudicator in September. Unfortunately, on October 29, the adjudicator upheld the recertification, allowing the fishery to retain its eco-label despite clear evidence of unsustainable practices. This decision is deeply misleading and the salmon should not be marketed as sustainable because this fishery intercepts millions of salmon from at-risk populations and lacks basic bycatch handling and monitoring standards. Most recently, we started reaching out to U.S. consumers and are pressuring major retailers like Whole Foods and Sobeys not to sell salmon from southeast Alaska.

[Learn More](#)

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

We will continue to pressure the Pacific Salmon Treaty for a better deal and working towards updated State of Knowledge reports on B.C. and Skeena salmon and steelhead caught in Alaskan fisheries from 2022–2024.



KISPIOX 63% COHO

GINGOLX 84% CHUM

SMITHERS 87% SOCKEYE, 33% STEELHEAD

TERRACE 91% CHUM, 36% CHINOOK

PRINCE RUPERT 52% PINK

KITIMAT 93% CHUM, 27% CHINOOK

KITKATLA 93% CHUM 63% SOCKEYE

KEMANO/KITLOPE 63% SOCKEYE

HARTLEY BAY 68% PINK

BELLA COOLA 63% CHINOOK

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

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 by Science Director, Dr. Michael Price:

Salmon Millennium Project

Dr. Price partnered with DFO's molecular genetics laboratory, SFU's Ancient DNA lab, and UNB.C.'s archeology department to explore the change in the genetic diversity of salmon over the last 1,000 years. The team are 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. **2024 Update:** Preliminary results show a predominance of sockeye (>90%) of the bones analyzed thus far, and small but equal proportions of Chinook and coho. Of the sockeye bones, the majority are male, suggesting that selective harvesting practices were employed by Lake Babine Nation Fishers 1,000 years ago.

Rivers of Change Research

Through his post-doctoral fellowship and 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 to understand how salmon populations will respond to land-use development and future climate change.

Skeena Sockeye Century Project

Dr. Price's final PhD chapter was 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 maintaining a diversity of habitats for fish to be able to adapt to uncertain changes in the climate and the need to protect habitats that may be critical in the future.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

In collaboration with Brendan Connors, Dr. Price has initiated a Special Collection of articles to be released in late 2025 for the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences that will provide a diversity of perspectives on the past 20 years of the Wild Salmon Policy's successes and challenges.

Science & Research

Rebuilding Plans

This year, much of SkeenaWild's science effort continues on the priority activities outlined in the Wet'suwet'en Rebuilding Plan for Wetzin'kwa sockeye (Morice). We are actively pursuing funding for two primary components:

1 Tracking Sockeye Salmon Spawning

Summer 2024 was the fourth year tracking Sockeye back to spawning grounds. Wet'suwet'en Fisheriers conduct this study by inserting fish with tags at Witsset Canyon. These tags transmit a signal, which are then tracked via helicopter and fixed stations located at strategic sites throughout Wet'suwet'en territory. We are currently awaiting the results.

2 Juvenile Health Monitoring

Spring 2024 is year three 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. We are currently awaiting the results.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

In 2025, we will continue working 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. With a draft background report now completed, we're gearing up to formally develop the rebuilding plan. We're also working with the Wet'suwet'en to develop a rebuilding plan for sockeye in the Zymoetz (Copper) River over the next two years. This population was traditionally harvested by Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan.

[Learn More](#)

Emerging Opportunities

A key highlight from our science work this past year was an improved understanding of emerging opportunities for salmon. While climate change presents serious challenges, there is hope—particularly here in the Skeena. Salmon are remarkably resilient and able to survive changing conditions, as they had during previous ice ages and subsequent thaws. With some cold glacier-influenced rivers beginning to host fish that hadn't previously, we're working to better understand these new habitat opportunities for salmon. They'll survive and thrive in the future if we give them a chance and protect the habitats they require.

Since 2022, we've assisted Wet'suwet'en Fisheries in the collection of environmental DNA (microscopic genetic material in water and sediment) from rivers largely influenced by melting glaciers in search of new salmon populations. Results from the work confirm the presence of Chinook, coho, and sockeye in each of two rivers that flow from the coast mountains into Wetzin'ben (Morice Lake) and C'eneelee'ben (Atna Lake). A third river (referred to as Pyramid Creek) that flows into Wetzin'ben was sampled in 2024, and we're awaiting the laboratory results.

The culmination of work in this area broadly, and detection of fish in emerging habitats specifically, has informed our "Conservation Priorities" report, which we delivered to the Office of the Wet'suwet'en Departments of Fisheries and Natural Resources in September. A more thorough understanding of how salmon are adapting to climate change must inform the way that we manage their habitat. For example, we've recommended increased protections for 301 square kilometres adjacent to existing protected areas. Combined, this protected region would total 1,207 square kilometers of Wet'suwet'en territory.

Salmon Habitat Protection

In the Skeena, salmon are woven into its fabric. To those who live here, the Skeena and its many tributaries serve as a lifeline, and our salmon are the lifeblood. To those who live elsewhere, its global significance offers hope and inspiration that places like this – large, undammed wild salmon ecosystems – still exist.

The Skeena River Watershed is the second-largest watershed in British Columbia and provides spawning and rearing habitat for all five salmon species, steelhead, and at least 30 other fish species. Salmon feed ecosystems, people, cultures, and economies.

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 assess impacts and craft innovative solutions that prioritize the health of our watersheds, salmon habitats, and communities over profits for large corporations.

Marine Habitat: Ksi Lisims LNG

The Ksi Lisims Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project is a joint venture between the Nisga'a Nation, Rockies LNG Limited Partnership, and Western LNG LLC. The project proposes a floating LNG facility on B.C.'s northwest coast, aiming to produce 12 million tonnes annually, making it Canada's second-largest LNG plant.

Ksi Lisims Environmental Assessment (EA): SkeenaWild focused on these key issues –

- **Fish Impacts:** We have concerns about potential impacts on juvenile salmon using the Nass estuary and nursery habitat. The proponent didn't provide sufficient data on the project's impacts on juvenile salmon near the terminal

The B.C. EAO concludes that “there is no information to suggest that effects on juvenile salmon in the project area will result in effects on the Nass River fisheries at large.” **SkeenaWild Science Director Dr. Michael Price, through his assessment, found this conclusion “premature and not scientifically defensible.”**

- **Climate:** Estimated **33M tonnes of GHG emissions yearly** undermine climate goals.
- **Electricity Demands:** 4,700 GWh annual demand threatens B.C.'s decarbonization plans.

Prince Rupert Gas Transmission (PRGT) Pipeline: A 10-year-old EA certificate for a different pipeline route demands a new EA.

SkeenaWild, along with many others, urged for a new EA review for the new pipeline route. The old certificate expired in November 2024.

Marine Habitat: Skeena Estuary Protections



The estuary of the Skeena River is where the fresh waters of the vast interior Skeena watershed meet the ocean waters of the Pacific. This nutrient-rich area has a massive eelgrass-covered shoal known as Flora Bank, just adjacent to Lelu Island. This unique nursery zone contains the highest abundances (25 times more) of juvenile salmon compared with other habitat in the Skeena River estuary.

[Learn More](#)

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

We are working with community partners to designate the Skeena estuary as an Ecologically Significant Area under Section 34 of the new Fisheries Act. This designation would provide additional conservation and long-term protection, through regulation, for fish and fish habitat in candidate areas (such as Flora Bank) that are sensitive, highly productive, rare, or unique.

Responsible Mining

Impacts from mining are a growing concern in the Skeena Watershed and northwest B.C. Open pit mines pose significant threats to salmon, steelhead, and communities dependent on nearby water sources due to metal and acid contamination and potential tailings dam failure. In collaboration with our many partners, we've increased our efforts to bring 100-year-old mining laws into the 21st century, assess impacts on water and fish from mines in the region, work with Indigenous partners to implement better monitoring and treatment, bring new mining protocols into Indigenous-led land use plans, and research compliance violations from mines in B.C.

[Learn More](#)



Responsible Mining

1 Mine Environment Neutral Drainage Program (MEND)

SkeenaWild Mining Researcher Adrienne Berchtold joined the MEND Steering Committee as an NGO representative. The MEND Committee is made up of federal and provincial governments, mining industry, and NGOs, and works on scientific and technical research to improve water quality outcomes of mining.

2 Reducing Risk of Tailings Facilities Workshop

SkeenaWild co-organized a technical workshop to discuss reducing the overall risk of tailings facilities, focusing on reducing water content (which reduces physical failure consequences) and managing chemical risks such as metal leaching and acid rock drainage. The workshop included presentations from First Nations, mine-affected community members, provincial government, industry, and mine consultants and aimed to identify safer, smarter mining practices for B.C.

3 Indigenous Transboundary Mining Conference

SkeenaWild Mining Researcher Adrienne Berchtold attended the 3rd annual Indigenous Transboundary Mining Conference in Juneau hosted by the Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Southeast Alaska. Indigenous leaders from B.C., Alaska, Montana, Washington, and Idaho, conservation organizations, community allies, and government officials from USA, B.C., and Canada explored policy, scientific, and governance solutions for protecting and remediating damage done to transboundary rivers by mining development. Participating in this annual gathering is one way that SkeenaWild maintains our commitment to working collaboratively with downstream communities on both sides of the international border to protect our shared rivers and salmon populations

4 Legal challenge filed against decision allowing KSM mine to proceed

This year, SkeenaWild, in partnership with the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC) and supported by Ecojustice, filed a legal challenge against the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office's (EAO) decision allowing the proposed Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell (KSM) mine to proceed. The EAO determined that the mine was "substantially started," enabling the project's 10-year old Environmental Assessment to avoid a new environmental assessment under updated legislation and science.

The proposed KSM mine, one of the world's largest proposed gold-copper projects, poses significant risks to the Nass and Unuk watersheds—critical salmon habitats and lifelines for local communities. Outdated assessments of this project's impacts threaten salmon populations and the ecosystems that sustain them.

The KSM mine plans include a 10 x 2 kilometer long toxic tailings lake situated in the Nass River watershed that will require maintenance for centuries. The impacts of a catastrophic failure, such as the one that occurred at the Mount Polley mine, would be immense. Local First Nations, including the Tsetsaut Skii km Lax Ha, and other stakeholders argue that the project's risks demand reassessment using current standards, climate science, and Indigenous knowledge.

This legal challenge underscores the need for robust environmental protections to ensure wild salmon thrive for generations. A victory would set a critical precedent, requiring outdated projects to meet today's legal and scientific standards. SkeenaWild remains committed to safeguarding wild salmon, their habitats, and the communities that depend on them.

[Learn More](#)



Responsible Mining

5 Eskay Creek

SkeenaWild reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) application to reopen the Eskay Creek mine, raising concerns about risks to water quality, fish, and the Unuk watershed. Key issues include inadequate safeguards for elevated metal levels, missing data on key fish species, and rising selenium pollution risks. We emphasized the need for stronger protections to ensure mining does not compromise wild salmon and their habitats.

6 Red Chris

SkeenaWild has requested a public assessment of the mine's proposed expansion in a letter to the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO). A decision is still pending.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

SkeenaWild is actively engaging on federal and provincial Critical Minerals policies, challenging the growing narrative that mining is an environmental saviour and a climate crisis solution. With B.C. yet to release a comprehensive Critical Minerals Strategy, the race for mining companies to build projects to extract these minerals exposes serious concerns about B.C.'s inadequate legislation and policies with respect to the rights of Indigenous people, downstream communities, private landowners and the environment.

[Learn More](#)

Land Use Planning

Our efforts go beyond the river. Our work with local communities are helping defend salmon habitat by improving logging practices through Indigenous community-led Land Use Plans (LUP) that better sustain fish, water, wildlife, and communities. Our long-term goal is to move from outdated practices that do not adequately protect functioning habitats to detailed, location-specific land use plans that proactively lay out how, when, and where development can occur to protect community values.

The Gitxsan Upper Nass Land Use Plan (LUP) was completed and submitted this year. The Province agreed to consider it in the Nass Timber Supply Review (TSR), which will determine the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) for the next 10–15 years.

This is an example that Land Use Plans are already helping improve resource management.

The Upper Nass LUP includes the Wii Minosik Protected Area, an extension of the existing Damdochax Protected Area, which conserves 5,221 hectares and is a connectivity corridor. The Wii Minosik Protected Area honours the legacy of Simoyget Wii Minosik's (Larry Skulsh) (1945–2024).

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

SkeenaWild will focus on supporting land use planning in the Upper Skeena and Babine Watersheds, covering thousands of hectares of critical salmon watersheds.

[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 are threatened by increased unsustainable logging and pipeline construction.

New logging permits have been 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.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

SkeenaWild will continue supporting Babine watershed land use planning. Research findings related to at-risk habitats and impacts to river flows will help inform planning and management.

Education Program

Fostering the next generation of watershed stewards and policymakers

SkeenaWild's Salmon and Watershed Education Program offers place-based, inquiry-driven experiences for students from preschool to Grade 12 and beyond. Since 2018, we've provided engaging classroom workshops, outreach, and summer programs designed to connect students with the natural world. Led by a passionate environmental educator, our workshops use hands-on activities and demonstrations to bring the science of salmon and watersheds to life. These programs can be delivered inside, outdoors, or virtually, making them accessible to all.

"The SkeenaWild workshops have been an invaluable addition to our curriculum. Not only do they align perfectly with what we're teaching in the classroom, but they also offer real-world, hands-on learning. Watching my students conduct water quality tests and study macroinvertebrates was an absolute highlight. Programs like this are vital for developing environmental awareness in young people."

- Skeena Middle School, Teacher, Terrace.

"As a parent, I was so impressed by how the SkeenaWild program brought nature into my son's education. He couldn't stop talking about the salmon habitat lesson, and even started teaching me about watersheds and why they're important! I love that this program gives kids a chance to get outside and learn about the local environment. It's sparked a whole new interest in science for my son." - Parent, Kitimat.



[Learn More](#)

Education: In The Schools

65 In-Class Workshops

to Pre-K to Post-secondary 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 have expanded our collection of high-quality and accessible learning tools, which include games, posters, stories, and activities. We are also developing new lesson plans and printable educational resources for educators to promote environmental education that aligns with the B.C. curriculum and SkeenaWild's mission. Additionally, we have begun translating all our materials into French and are mindfully incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our educational materials.

New workshops in development:

- **Where the River Meets the Ocean: The Skeena Estuary**
- **Consensus Decision Making for Salmon in the Skeena Watershed**
- **Climate Change & Skeena Salmon**

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



Stream Explorations

[Learn More](#)

Education: Inspiring the Next Generation Through Summer Camps

This summer, SkeenaWild engaged over 80 youth through diverse, hands-on camps designed to inspire conservation leadership, environmental awareness, and scientific curiosity. From kayaking adventures and heritage exploration at the Youth Conservation Leadership Camp to outdoor learning at Eco-Camp and hands-on STEM projects at Active Minds Camp, participants connected with nature, discovered new skills, and gained a deeper understanding of salmon and ecosystem conservation. These programs empower youth to become stewards of their environment while fostering curiosity and a love for the natural world. This would not have been possible without the help of our summer students.

Youth Conservation Leadership 5 Day Camp

Various Locations

In partnership with Terrace Heritage Park Museum, we ran our second Youth Conservation Leadership Summer Camp for youth aged 12–18 years. This immersive week-long free program offers hands-on learning opportunities in water quality testing, plant ecology, ecosystem dynamics, and conservation career exploration.

Eco-Explorers 4 Day Camp

Ferry Island & Furlong

Youth aged 6–12 years explored nature through bug hunting, fort building, and salmon-themed games. Highlights included a Story Walk, plant scrapbooks, and a salmon obstacle course, ending with homemade ice cream—a perfect mix of fun and learning!

Active Minds Full STEAM 5-Day Camp

UNB.C. Campus

In collaboration with UNB.C., youth aged 6–12 years mastered navigation with compasses, tackled pollution challenges, built boats, and crafted spaghetti towers. Curiosity and creativity took centre stage and a highlight was the hands-on salmon dissection, sparking fascination among the campers.

Education Events: Community Engagement

Thousands of youth and adults were directly reached through various events

Events included non-instructional day camps, trivia for River Boat Days, Heritage Museum Park Canada Day celebrations, B.C. Parks Day, SIMA Fest workshop, Learn to be in Nature, and Quantum Leaps.

Quantum Leaps

A collaboration between SkeenaWild, Northwest Science and Innovation Society (NSIS) and UNBC to connect female youth with female professionals working in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) across the Northwest.

Learn to be in Nature

A new initiative with B.C. Parks, Skeena Diversity Society, and Terrace Public Library. This event provided newcomers and community members eager to spend time outdoors with an opportunity to explore local parks, meet nature enthusiasts, learn about our local environment and gain important skills on how to recreate in nature safely.

Pop Up Nature Science Events

This past summer, we offered free events featuring hands-on activities. In its fourth year, we held 12 Pop-up Nature Science Events at community spaces and provincial parks in Terrace including the local farmer's markets.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

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.

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

For the 5th year running, SkeenaWild supported 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 more new murals, banners, sculptures and the beloved art collective exhibit that travelled the Northwest this summer and fall, with an additional interactive QR code added to the pieces to give a deeper understanding of the artwork. This celebrated festival continues to generate energy and excitement throughout the region about Skeena salmon and the culture and communities connected to them.

Upstream: A SkeenaWild Podcast

Season 3 of SkeenaWild's homegrown podcast series with Dan Mesec was released this past summer and has built on past success. 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.

Peace & Unity Summit

The 5th annual summit in Prince Rupert brought together all ages to focus on youth leadership and defending salmon. Organized with the Nine Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams and others, Kirby Muldoe, SkeenaWild's Indigenous Engagement Lead, helped moderate. SkeenaWild presented on the Alaskan Interception Campaign and the North Coast Oil Tanker Ban.

The Skeena Stewardship Squad

This year we initiated a database that compiles information about individuals who sign up to volunteer and connects them to community groups looking for volunteers to support their initiatives.

Swim The Skeena Challenge

SkeenaWild and the Terrace Aquatic Center joined forces to encourage pool users to swim the same distance as the Skeena River at the pool. Along the way, participants learn about important areas and SkeenaWild's work within the watershed.

Keeping the public informed

SkeenaWild regularly releases informational videos about issues people care deeply about, offering expert knowledge. This summer we provided a video-series on our fisheries and environmental condition updates. These videos were viewed, shared, and saved across various social media channels. In addition to the in-season fisheries updates, we released another report on this year's environmental conditions observed this season and how salmon were impacted.

SkeenaWild Film & Photography Festival

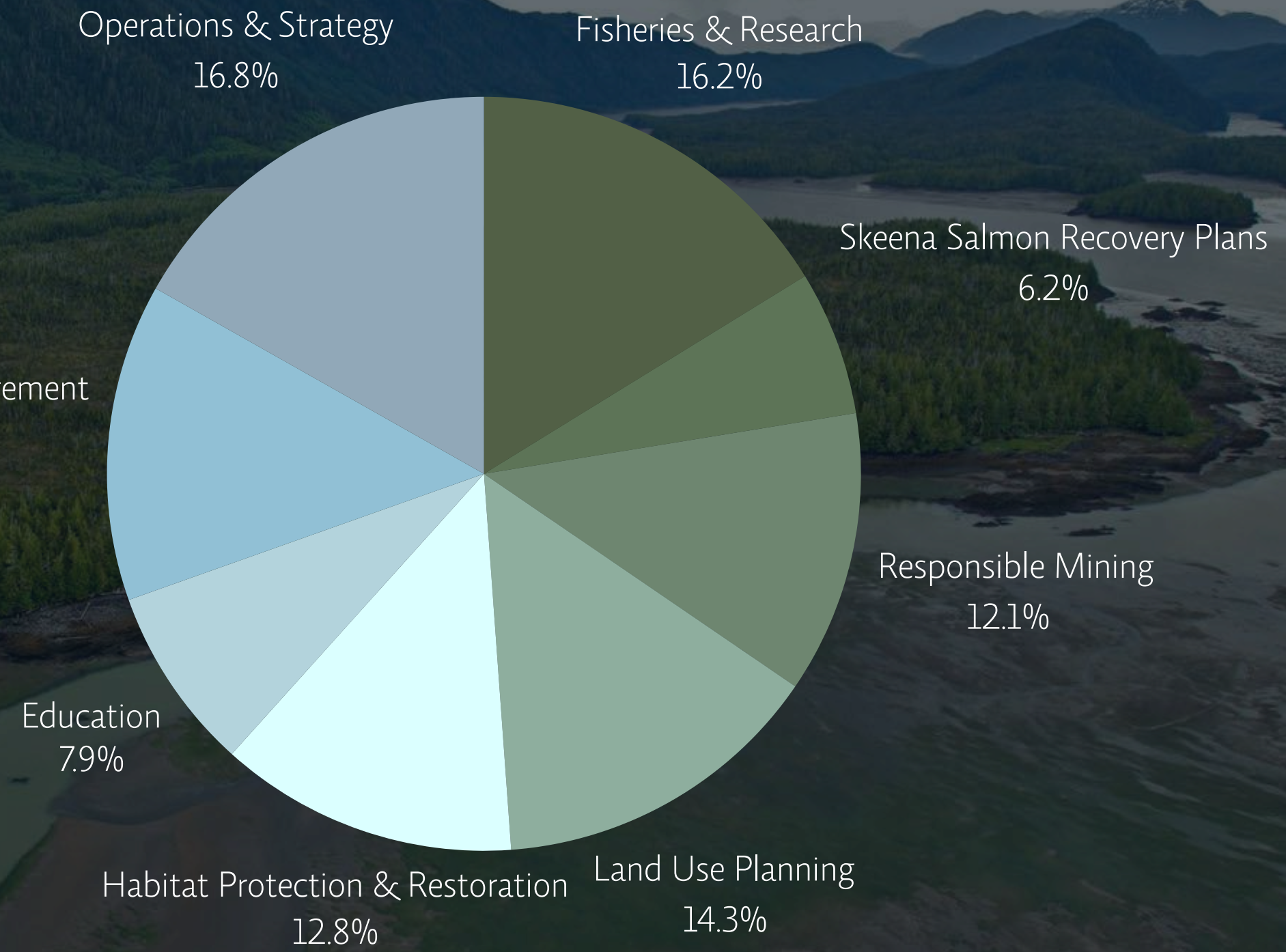
The SkeenaWild Film & Photography Festival returned for its 13th year, showcasing local talent year after year. We hosted the festival in Terrace with two sold-out events. The festival was offered as a fundraising event opportunity for interested community groups, and we saw sold-out events in Kitimat, Smithers and Prince Rupert. Participants voted for their favourite films and photos, and the winners received cash prizes.

A shortened 'Best of the Fest' is toured around the local schools and shown at SIMA Festival: Wintering Together during their Beyond The Slopes film night.

[Learn More](#)

Financial Summary 2024

SkeenaWild invested \$1,481,615 on salmon conservation in the Skeena Watershed this past year.



Every dollar counts

Thank you to all our supporters – big and small.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous donors, whose support comes from a wide range of communities, backgrounds, and interests. This diversity of giving reflects a shared commitment to defending the future of the Skeena Watershed and its resilient salmon populations. Your collective contributions fuel vital research, conservation of critical salmon habitats, and engagement in our communities. Thank you for standing together with us to defend the Skeena for generations to come.

A woman wearing a light-colored cap and dark overalls over a long-sleeved shirt is smiling and holding two large white bags filled with trash. She is standing in a forest with many green trees. The background is slightly blurred.

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 MERCH

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

CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM

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Phone: (250) 638-0998

Email: hello@skeenawild.org

[Facebook](#)

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

Learn more at skeenawild.org



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