



This document presents the strategic plan for the Nechako Watershed Roundtable for 2022 to 2026. The Nechako River is one of British Columbia's largest rivers originating in the northwest region of the province. The Nechako watershed encompasses all land drained by the Nechako and the Stuart river systems, is home to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and is supported by a rich diversity of ecosystems. The watershed overlaps with the traditional territories of 15 First Nations, and seven local governments including five municipalities and parts of two regional districts.

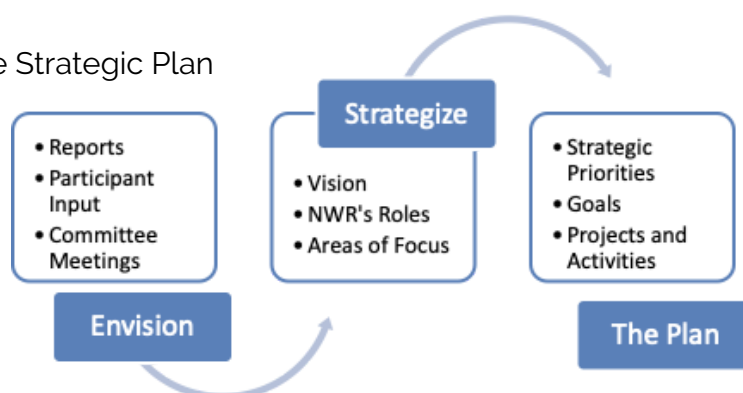
Over the past several decades ecosystems and communities in the Nechako watershed have experienced numerous severe impacts including the mountain pine beetle epidemic, major wildfires, declining White Sturgeon populations and salmon stocks, along with climate change. During this time there have been (and continue to be) many important initiatives aimed at addressing the resulting effects at the local and regional level. The need to coordinate these efforts has also become more apparent. The Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR) was created in 2015 to address the need for collaboration and to advance the vision of a healthy Nechako watershed.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to guide the NWR's activities over the next five years. Recognizing that the NWR has no formal jurisdictional authority, our 2022-2026 strategic plan provides an overview of NWR's strategic priorities, goals and key projects.

The NWR's primary role is to serve as a collaborative body that convenes and connects related efforts across the Nechako watershed. This role includes a strategic priority to advance reconciliation in collaboration with Indigenous Nations and Peoples to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the potential implications of the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). The plan is intended to guide how the NWR works with others to benefit ecosystems, communities, and the vision of a healthy watershed for future generations.

The strategic planning process reconfirmed the vision, the NWR's roles, and important areas of focus, which in turn led to identifying strategic priorities, goals and projects. Figure 1 below shows how the plan was developed.

Figure 1. Developing the Strategic Plan





All plans need to identify a desired outcome or destination, often referred to as a vision. This strategic plan builds on the original vision: 'For the Nechako watershed to be healthy for generations to come' (Fraser Basin Council 2016). The NWR continues to be committed to achieving this vision, described by participants in this strategic planning process as a watershed which:

- has resilient and diverse aquatic and forest (terrestrial) ecosystems;
- supports people, communities, and human activities;
- has water ways (lakes, rivers, streams) with natural seasonal variations; and
- is sustainable and will support future generations.

The NWR's overall role is to convene those interested in the Nechako Watershed; help connect related programs and activities; and support collaborative efforts. More specifically in pursuing the vision described above, the NWR's roles are to:

- identify common priorities and actions to address them;
- advocate for the watershed with all orders of government;
- bring together diverse people and perspectives to work on common goals; and
- advance reconciliation with First Nations in NWR activities and collaborations.

Along with the vision and roles, a number of topics or themes were identified as areas on which the NWR would focus its efforts. These areas of focus include:

- water management and governance, with flow regimes providing multiple benefits
- fish management and habitat restoration, with an emphasis on salmon and sturgeon
- wildlife habitat and collaboration on research and management
- public education and engagement
- climate change including mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

The strategic plan is based on the vision, the NWR's roles and the areas of focus (see Table 1). The NWR's Core Committee would oversee the implementation of the strategic plan, with the support of a securely funded Secretariat. Implementation includes keeping track of and reporting on progress in pursuing the strategic priorities, goals, and the various projects and activities, as well as generating and overseeing the financial and human resources required to implement the plan. Ultimately, the NWR's purpose - bringing people together to further the well-being of the Nechako watershed and its inhabitants - is also the most useful way to measure its success. By continuing to do what it does best - convening, connecting, and collaborating - and holding itself accountable to fulfilling these roles, the NWR will be successful in carrying out its strategic plan.



Table 1. Summary of the NWR's Strategic Plan for 2022-2026

Strategic Priorities	Goals	Projects	Years
Convene partners including all four orders of government, and support collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together diverse people and perspectives to work on common goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Meetings and Spring Technical Meetings Working Groups (Youth Engagement, Lakes Monitoring) Online library of information and resources (digital portal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ongoing 2022-2026 Ongoing Expand 2022 or 2023
Support efforts to restore watershed health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common priorities and actions to address them Support efforts that restore health of lands, waters, and ecosystems in the Nechako Support sharing of and access to information and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes Monitoring Working Group A sub-watershed restoration pilot project with First Nations Best practices for managing riparian areas Online library of information and resources (digital portal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Scoping underway, Initiate 2022 Initiate 2022 or 2023 Expand 2022 or 2023
Advocate for the watershed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the watershed with all orders of government, and diverse groups benefitting from land and water resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial land use and resource management planning processes Responsive engagement to emerging watershed issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (TBD by province) Ongoing
Advance reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance reconciliation with First Nations in NWR activities and collaborations Collaborate with Indigenous Nations and Peoples to uphold the UNDRIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sub-watershed restoration pilot project with First Nations Online library of information and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping underway, Initiate 2022 Expand 2022 or 2023
Ensure a resilient organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider governance options to support NWR goals Maintain a strong and diverse organization with sufficient funding and resources Implement the strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance options under the Water Sustainability Act and/or the BC Societies Act Core Committee activities: Annual Meetings, Spring Technical meetings, securing human and financial resources Core Committee - monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate 2022 or 2023 Ongoing Ongoing