



# Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission FY2024-25 to FY2028-29 Budget Framework Approval

Sustainability, City Light, Arts & Culture Committee

April 5, 2024

# Presentation Overview

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- Historical Context
  - High Ross Treaty and Agreement
  - Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC)
- Skagit Environmental Endowment Fund & Activities
- Five-Year Budget Framework
- Purpose of Council Resolution

# Historical Context – High Ross Dam & Treaty

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Ross Dam Construction 1939



**1937:** Ross Dam construction began.

**1940:** 1,380 feet asl

**1949:** 1,615 feet asl (*\*above the BC river elevation*)

**1970:** Applied to raise to 1,725 feet asl (*\*flooding 5,000 more acres into BC*)



# High Ross Treaty and BC-Seattle Agreement

- Treaty between US and Canada established in 1984.
- Settled the High Ross dam controversy between the US and Canada
- BC Province and the City of Seattle administer the Agreement
- Established the Endowment Fund to protect the environmental integrity of the transboundary watershed.



# Upper Skagit Watershed's Importance

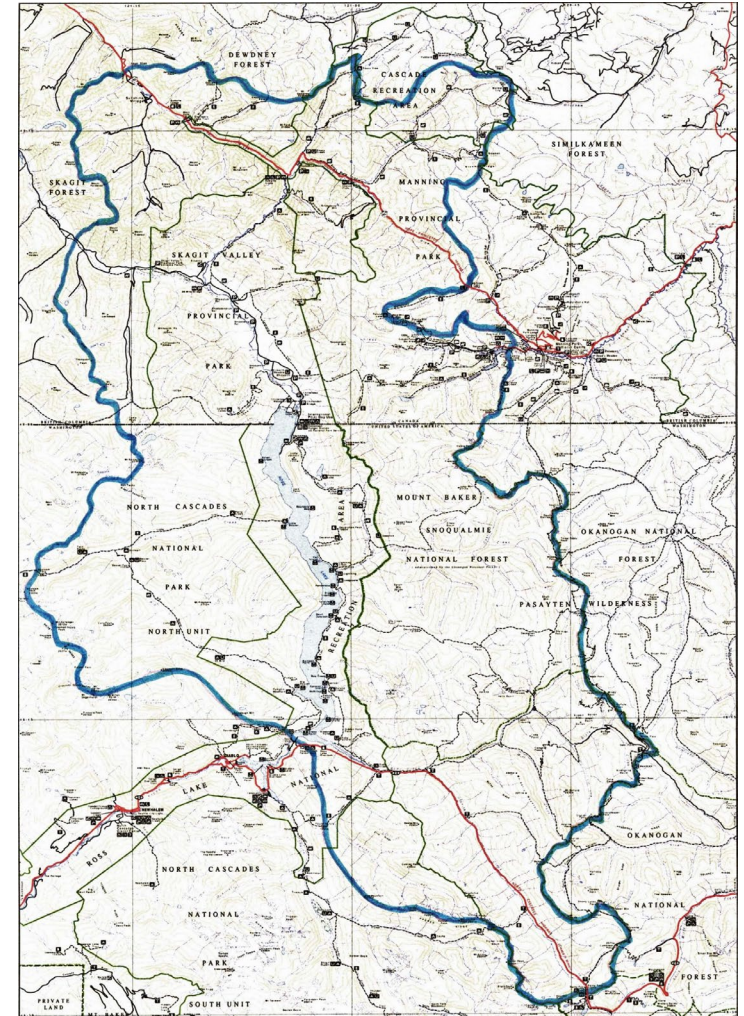
- Skagit River provides over 30% of fresh water flowing into Puget Sound.
- Largest and healthiest populations of threatened steelhead and Chinook salmon in Puget Sound and largest run of chum salmon in conterminous US.
- Chinook salmon make up 80% of the food source for the endangered Puget Sound resident Orca population.
- Largest and most diverse population of bull trout (a threatened species); 90% spawn in the Upper Skagit.
- Critical for reintroduction of grizzly bears, habitat for spotted owls and stands of old growth forest.
- Otherwise protected by B.C. provincial parks, the North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake National Recreation Area.



# Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission

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- Administers the Skagit Environment Endowment Fund.
- Consists of 16 Commissioners: 8 appointed by the Mayor of Seattle and 8 appointed by the Premier of British Columbia.
- Each serves a staggered 4-year term.
- Two co-chairs one from each country.
- Staff are provided by Seattle City Light and the Province of British Columbia.



# Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission

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- Purposes:
  - Conserve and protect wilderness and wildlife habitat.
  - Enhance recreational opportunities in the Skagit Valley.
  - Acquire mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreational purposes.
  - Conduct studies of need and feasibility of projects.
  - To plan for and construct hiking trails, footbridges, interpretive displays and the like.



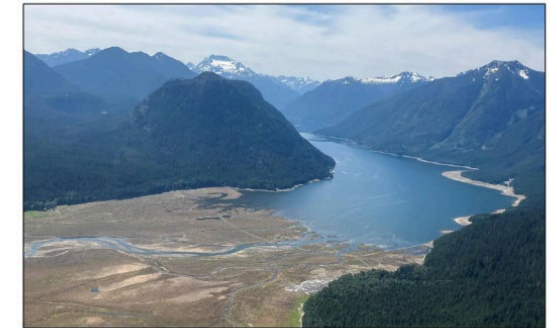
# SEEC Funding Priorities

- Ecosystem Science
- Indigenous Peoples Engagement
- Environmental Education
- Watershed Integrity
- Recreation

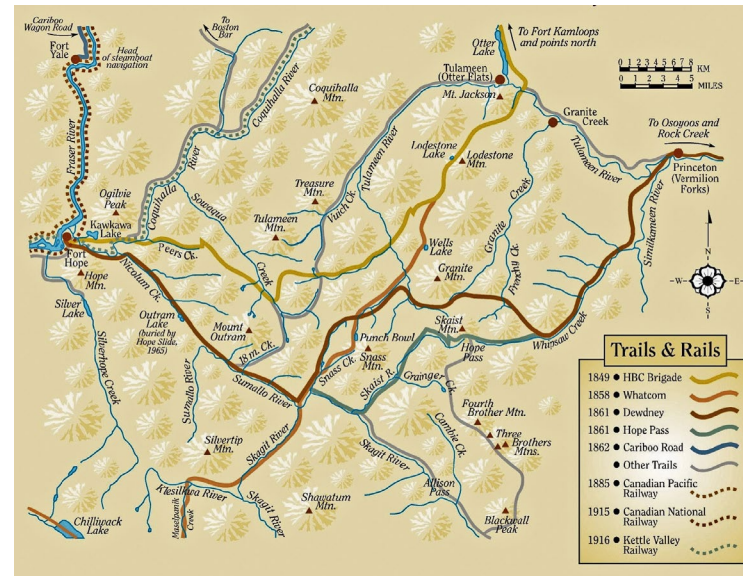


## International Interpretation Program BC Parks Annual Overview 2023

Prepared by **A.J. Fedoruk**  
Park Interpreter  
Skagit Valley Provincial Park  
BC Parks



Ross Lake from helicopter, June 2023





British Columbia

## 140 organizations and officials oppose exploratory drilling in area between 2 protected B.C. parks



Imperial Metals seeking permit in the Skagit headwaters just north of the U.S. border



Rafferty Baker - CBC News - Posted: Aug 14, 2019 5:37 PM PT | Last Updated: August 14, 2019



The Smitheram Valley is one of the three main valleys in the area known as the Donut Hole, where Imperial Metals wants to explore for gold. (Wilderness Committee)

Environment | Local News | Local Politics | Nation & World

## Mining proposal for Skagit River headwaters in B.C. sparks outcry from congressional Dems, Gov. Inslee

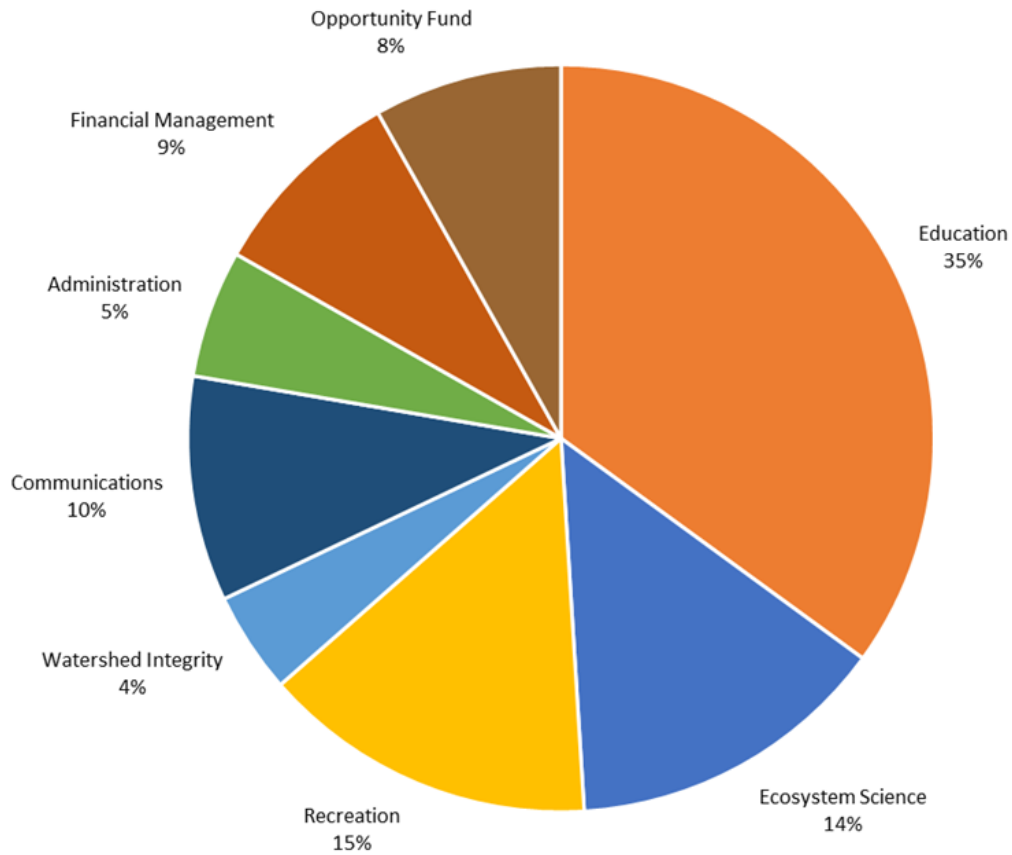
May 22, 2019 at 8:34 am | Updated May 22, 2019 at 12:19 pm



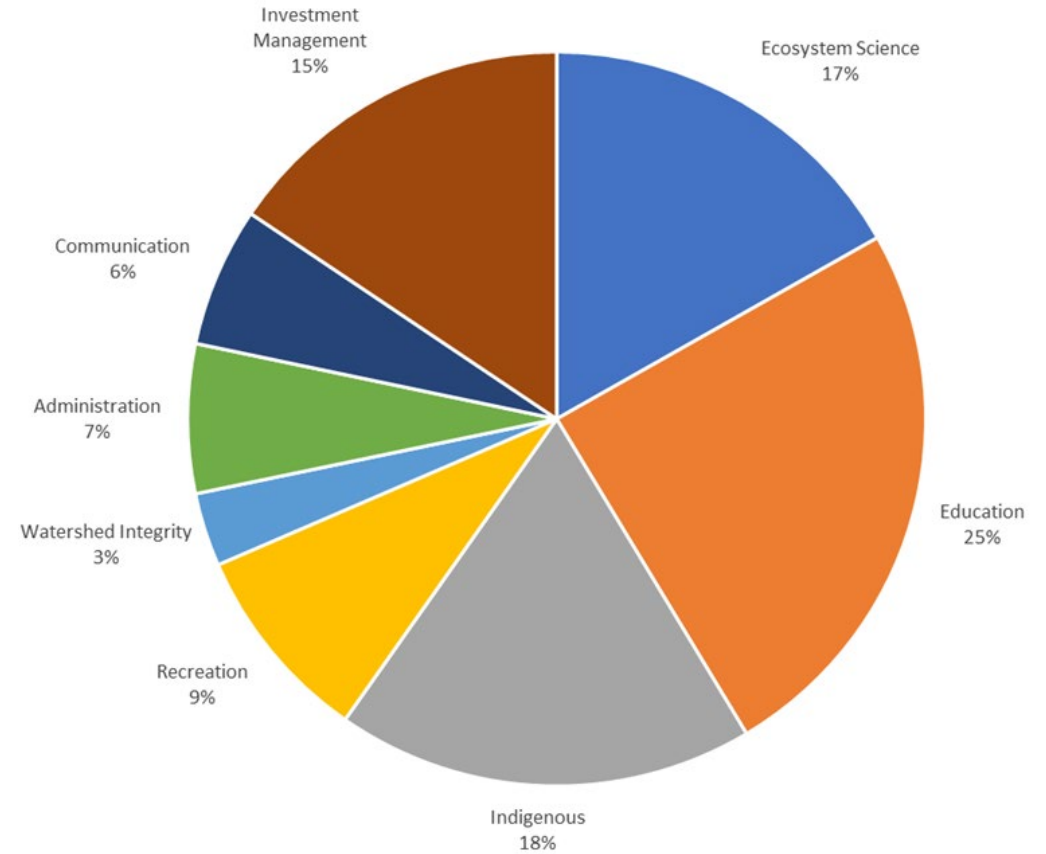
1 of 4 | Logging is shown in the "donut hole," a Manhattan-sized patch of public land left unprotected because of historic mineral... (Mike Siegel / The Seattle Times, 2018) More

# SEEC 5-Year Budget Comparison

**Prior 5-Year Budget**  
*April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2024*



**Current 5-Year Budget**  
*April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2029*



# Examples of SEEC Grantees

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- Hope Mountain Centre for Outdoor Learning
- BC Parks
- North Cascades Institute
- North Cascades National Park
- Student Conservation Association
- Fraser Valley Conservancy
- Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council (NNTC)
- Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SSRMC)

# Commission Approved SEEC 5-Year Budget Framework

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For the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2029

<b>I. ADMINISTRATION and FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>		<b>\$735,059</b>
<b>II. PROGRAM EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$2,587,911</b>
A. Communications / Outreach	\$204,433	
B. Ecosystem Science	\$557,454	
C. Education	\$818,236	
D. Indigenous	\$608,816	
E. Recreation	\$291,528	
F. Watershed Integrity	\$107,443	
	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$3,322,970</b>

# Purpose of Council Resolution

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- Consistent with Council Resolution 31568 adopted in 2015:
  - Approves the budget framework for Canada Fiscal Years 2024-2025 through 2028-2029 (April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2029).
  - Allows budgeted expenditures to be carried forward into subsequent fiscal years.
  - Allows budget framework to be resubmitted to Council if cumulative expenditures are expected to exceed the approved 5-year budget framework.



# THANK YOU

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**Seattle City Light**