**Chairmans report to Salmon and Riparian Support Trust AGM, July 2022.**

Another year ticked over and the McKinnons Creek hatchery is still functioning, providing fin clipped salmon to the Rangitata river, assisting in the testing of the fish screen on the Rangitata Diversion race and providing a number of retired gentlemen with an interesting pastime in a “mens shed “ environment. I cannot thank these volunteers, and the weekend teams enough for their tireless and sometimes thankless work in the cold and the wet. They have ensured the continuation of the hatchery over another difficult Covid influenced year.

A great deal of work has taken place this year including a remarkable upgrade of the tool shed and storage in the container thanks to John Manning, new fish screens, repairs to the shed water supply, the last release of 60,000 fish in 2021, upgrades in SOPs and Biosecurity measures and so it goes on.

Keeping back a number of fish 3 year ago and classing them as broodstock has paid dividends by giving us a back stop in case of low returns. It remains a challenge to look after them for 3 years with the limited resources we have and will do so into the future until something more permanent can be organized. We used only 43 fish this year, approx half being broodstock and half returned fish to produce this years crop of nearly 110,000 fry. Large numbers of fish were released into McKinnons creek and many of these have spawned in the stream.

There is a glimmer of hope on a secure future for the hatchery as a put and take fishery through published support for the hatchery by CSI Fish and Game and a good relationship with its staff. Its possible that improved returns to the headwaters and complete exclusion of fry to irrigation schemes, could mean that the hatchery is not needed in the future however this will take time to verify and in the mean time the extra fish will be a bonus for anglers. We are in discussions with Fish and Game about adding an extra tally of fin clipped fish over and above the annual limit of wild salmon to the District Angler notice in the near future.

Our biggest challenge is being able to attract newer volunteers to take over the hatchery from the “Old Guard”. If anglers want the hatchery to continue they need to front up and help the operation of the hatchery with new younger volunteers.

Finally I wish to thank all the helpers from the past year, also those who have given donations including the Winnemem Wintu tribe of Canada, CSI Fish and Game staff, and also the committee who have guided the direction of the hatchery this year.

Phil de Joux,

(Chairman SRST)