

## 2. Corporate Info

## **CHARTER of the THE INSTREAM FLOW COUNCIL**

The Instream Flow Council (IFC) is an organization of state and provincial fish and wildlife management agency representatives with public trust responsibilities who are dedicated to developing and administering effective instream flow programs for maximum beneficial use of aquatic resource values. Participation on the Instream Flow Council consists of professional fishery resource managers who are: 1) committed to protection and improvement of stream fishery values; 2) responsible for making fishery and water management recommendations that reflect the public interest; 3) dedicated to the acceptance and advancement of instream flow methodologies; and 4) concerned about effective use of public water resources for multiple uses. Instream Flow Council participants represent the interests of state and provincial fish and wildlife management agencies in North America with public trust responsibilities and their constituents.

The IFC is founded on the principle of public trust. At its simplest level, the public trust doctrine revolves around the concept that government owes its citizens special duties of stewardship regarding common property resources which the state holds in trust for the public. At this most basic level, the public trust doctrine holds that government must act as a fiduciary in its management of the resources which constitute the corpus of the trust. The beneficiaries of the trust are the citizens of the state, including future generations. Common property resources, including water, fish, wildlife and land, are held by the states in their sovereign capacity and are subject to the public trust.

### **VISION**

That each stream and river would have instream flows that provide or maintain ecological functions and processes similar to or better than those exhibited in their natural or unaltered state.

### **MISSION**

To improve the effectiveness of state and provincial instream flow programs and administrators for restoring, maintaining and enhancing aquatic ecosystems.

### **MISSION TENETS**

Instream flow management must include the following principles: 1) long-term sustainability as a fundamental value; 2) clear and specific management goals; 3) sound ecological models as a basis of understanding the structure and function of streams; 4) an understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of stream ecosystems; 5) a recognition of the dynamic character of stream systems and the organisms that reside therein; 6) close attention to context and scale of instream flow issues; 7) acknowledgment of humans as an ecosystem component; and 8) a commitment to adaptability, practicality and accountability.

### **GOALS**

**Program Support and Development:** Upon agency request, to provide independent support of state and provincial fish and wildlife agency programs that: 1) appropriately use methodologies for determining instream flow requirements; 2) provide reasonable interpretations of data from such studies; 3) effectively protect instream flow water rights; and 4) exhibit ethical practices.

**Personnel Development and Support:** Upon request, to provide appropriate information and support to fish and wildlife agency member biologists and staff who appropriately use instream flow methods, interpret results and develop instream flow recommendations based upon scientific data.

**Advancement of Methods:** To endorse analytical tools and delineate applicable conditions for their use in the ecological assessment of instream flow needs; and to encourage development of new methods and applications of instream flow science.

**Conflict Resolution:** Upon request, to provide objective evaluation of specific studies that involve application of instream flow methods to set stream flow standards for aquatic resources.

**Inter-Organizational Cooperation:** To provide a mechanism to facilitate exchanges of information and experiences between state and provincial natural resource agencies involved in instream flow management.

**Identification of Opportunities:** To provide assistance to: 1) state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies identifying opportunities for protecting or securing instream flows and/or enhancing fisheries; and 2) private groups and other public agencies developing or improving instream flow laws.

## SERVICES AND BENEFITS

The IFC is committed to improving the management and overall well-being of fishery and aquatic resources through an effective program of assisting state and provincial fish and wildlife management agencies implement and administer instream flow programs. The talented professionals that comprise the membership possess a wealth of information and expertise. These dedicated individuals are the real strength of the organization and willingly volunteer their time and ability. Because many fish and wildlife agencies are represented by the membership, a great many experiences, successes and failures can be shared, re-applied or re-tested to avoid repeating ineffective practices, increase future instream flow successes and minimize the commitment of increasingly limited personnel and fiscal resources. The IFC has the ability to provide management and planning expertise to meet member agency's needs, and this expertise comes from professionals and an organization dedicated to effective aquatic resource management.

The role of fish and wildlife management and, particularly the science of instream flows, has evolved considerably over the past 20 years and continues to evolve rapidly today. By virtue of its members' expertise and involvement, the IFC is at the forefront of today's issues and challenges concerning instream flow administration. The IFC does not provide a strict mandate that any member agency must adhere to. Rather, the organization functions only at the request of its members to assist them (and their associated commissions or directors) in meeting current and future challenges, and grasping new opportunities to become more effective. Some of the management assistance that can be made available to member agencies upon their request include:

- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Information Exchange**
- **Program Review and Evaluation**
- **Development of Proactive Strategies**
- **Development/Improvement of Legislation**