

POSSIBLE PROCESS FOR PRE-SEASON PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN(S), IN-SEASON MANAGEMENT AND POST-SEASON EVALUATION (DRAFT # 2).

This document outlines the details of a process of exchange between Fraser River First Nations and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) that will ultimately lead to the development of a Conservation Management Plan for Fraser River salmon. This plan will document the broad views of Fraser River First Nations regarding the salmon fishery for consideration in DFO's Integrated Fisheries Management Plan and other planning processes.

The general principles guiding the process are outlined in the document entitled "*Draft Framework For Consultations Between The Department Of Fisheries And Oceans And Fraser River First Nations Through The Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Forum Process*"

1. DEFINITIONS / CLARIFICATIONS:

First Nation: a First Nation group, organization (including a tribal organization) or its representative(s) that has an interest in the Fraser River fisheries resource.

Watershed: those discussions / interactions / processes that involve First Nations in the watershed as a group.

Sub-regional: interactions that occur with First Nations located within a common geographic area and having some level of shared general interests.

Local: the "smallest" aggregation of First Nations with whom DFO interacts on fisheries planning issues. Ideally this would occur at the tribal level, though in select cases, may mean the band level¹

Bi-lateral: any interaction that occurs between DFO and First Nations

Tier 1: Interactions occurring between Fraser River First Nations (generally refers to Watershed-level issues).

¹ In cases where there are established fisheries programs at the tribal council level receiving support from DFO or other sources, DFO has an expectation that communications / consultations can take place at this level, and that information will be transferred effectively from the tribal level to the band level and vice-versa. This information transfer would take place at both the management and technical levels.

Tier 2: Interactions occurring between Fraser River First Nations and DFO at the watershed level. Also referred to as Watershed-level bi-lateral.

Technical level: *First Nations:* fisheries technical reps / portfolio holders. *DFO:* stock assessment, resource management staff.

Management level: *First Nations:* generally considered the elected or appointed representatives of the groups involved in the process (or those delegated with some decision-making authority on fisheries issues). *DFO:* management level required for approval of various measures. On some issues, the technical and management roles will be fulfilled by the DFO resource manager (i.e. local fisheries management issues). On other issues, more senior management input would be required.

Fraser River Forum: A general meeting open to all Fraser First Nations (technical and management) and DFO staff in which information regarding general fisheries planning issues of concern at the Watershed level are communicated. It is not anticipated that specific fisheries management recommendations from First Nations would be developed in such sessions, but action items for follow up by the Interim Executive Committee could be identified. Minutes of Fraser Forum meetings would be widely distributed within the watershed as background information for other processes.

Stock Management Committee (SMC): A group comprised of First Nations and DFO technical representatives jointly chaired by the stock management co-ordinator and a DFO technical representative.

Conservation Management Plan (CMP): A plan whose annual development is led by the Stock Management Committee. The plan attempts to reconcile the various positions put forward by Fraser River First Nations and DFO, laying out management objectives and fishing plan options that meet the interests of Fraser River First Nations while respecting long-term management objectives for the fisheries resource.

Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP): A comprehensive document outlining DFO's intentions for the management of the fishery in a given season, including objectives, management measures, harvest rules, monitoring provisions, etc.

Post-season review report: A report produced annually by the Stock Management Committee which evaluates the success with which objectives of the pre-season Conservation Management Plan and IFMP plan were met.

2. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING and IN-SEASON MANAGEMENT:

The goal of the planning exercise would be the development of a watershed-level Conservation Management Plan as well as local and sub-regional (if appropriate) management plans. Development of these plans would be integrated into DFO's IFMP process, and other relevant planning processes.

The CMPs would include the following generalized sections:

1. Management objectives and priorities (includes escapement objectives / other management targets)
2. Management measures (harvest rules, monitoring and possibly enforcement strategies)
3. Comments / views on harvest strategies for non-Fraser (approach) area fisheries and non-aboriginal Fraser fisheries.

Local level management plans (and sub-regional level plans, where they exist) would be linked to the broader watershed management plan where possible, but would contain a different level of detail. Areas of non-agreement with the watershed plan would be identified.

Process:

The Stock Management Committee (watershed level) and technical representatives (local level) plays a strong role (*has the lead?*) in the development of draft plans / proposals. The management level plays a role (*has the lead?*) in the identification of priorities and in the acceptance of plans and proposals recommended by the Stock Management Committee and technical representatives.

Chronology:

Fall / early January : Post-season report + Calendar for planning

Draft work plan (watershed level)

The Interim Executive Committee / Stock Management Committees meets to discuss the strategies for development of the watershed Conservation Management plan and other planning requirements for upcoming the season (e.g. schedule of meetings, identification of priority issues to address, etc).

The Stock Management Committee develops a draft post-season review report (watershed perspective). After a review by the Interim Executive Committee, this is distributed to all Fraser First Nations for comments / input.

ii. Post-season (local level)

Local DFO resource managers meet with local First Nations group to identify issues / concerns from the previous season. Where possible, options for addressing concerns

will be discussed at the meeting, or laid out in follow-up interactions. If a First Nation has comments relevant to the watershed-level post-season review, it is their responsibility to forward them to the Stock Management Committee. Cc's to the DFO local manager as appropriate. DFO staff will feed comments from the meeting into the DFO post-season review process as appropriate.

Local DFO resource managers work with local First Nations groups to develop schedules of meetings / timelines for the upcoming planning session.

Mid-January: Post-season review and preliminary pre-season Fraser Forum Meeting

i. information

Information on post-season catches / escapements / pre-season outlooks is provided by DFO and sent to all Fraser First Nations (*via the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat*).

The Stock Management Committee distributes the draft post-season review report via the secretariat.

ii. watershed level

DFO presents catch and escapement data at a Fraser Forum meeting, with a question period ensuing. The Stock Management Committee presents their draft post-season review report and gives an overview of input received. Additional agenda items may be identified by the Interim Executive Committee.

DFO representatives present preliminary stock outlooks and identify possible implications for fisheries. Various parties in the process may identify key issues anticipated to arise in the upcoming season (the Interim Executive Committee and Stock Management Committee will have prepared in advance a list of anticipated issues). General discussion of options for action plans to address issues. The Interim Executive Committee will follow up on any action items (e.g. strike sub-committee, compile additional information, etc.) .

Minutes of the Forum meeting will be distributed broadly by the Secretariat to Fraser First Nations as background to local and sub-regional meetings.

Mid-January – mid March : Preliminary pre-season

i. Conservation Management Plan (CMP) – preliminary draft (watershed level)

As soon as possible in the new year, the Stock Management Committee will develop a draft document containing general watershed-level management objectives, possibly including recommendations on escapement targets, identifying key management issues and presenting possible strategies to address issues. The stock management co-ordinator will co-ordinate drafting of the document, endeavouring to reflect all views, but

areas of disagreement between members of the committee would be clearly identified. After a review by the Interim Executive Committee, the draft CMP will be distributed by the Secretariat to all Fraser First Nations.

ii: Preliminary bi-laterals (local-level)

DFO staff meet with local First Nations group to identify general management objectives / strategies / issues for the upcoming season (in some cases, this meeting could serve to cover post-season information, if no meeting is held in the fall). Pre-season outlook information previously distributed will serve as background. Also, the preliminary draft CMP paper could serve as a starting point for some discussion. Groups could identify general level of acceptance of content, identify areas of disagreement, and identify additional objectives and issues of relevance to the local area fishery.

Local-level fishing requirements should be clearly identified by the First Nation in the preliminary local-level bilateral meeting. DFO and the First Nation discuss what portion of this information should be communicated to the watershed level, and incorporated into watershed-level fishing plans.

If the First Nation has comments they wish to have incorporated into the draft CMP document, it is their responsibility to forward them to the chair of the Stock Management Committee or the Interim Executive Committee directly. Cc's to the DFO local manager as appropriate. DFO staff feeds comments from the meeting into their local and regional internal planning processes as appropriate.

Mid - March – late March: Pre-season Forum meeting and IFMP (Integrated Fisheries Management Plan) process

i. information

Draft IFMP document is sent to all Fraser River First Nations.

Updated stock assessment information and outlooks (i.e. forecasts, etc.) distributed to all Fraser River First Nations.

The Stock Management Committee updates the draft Conservation Management plan, building upon comments received to date, and after review by the Interim Executive Committee, distributes to all Fraser River First Nations.

→ *Disucssion on Oct. 11 sub-committee meeting ended here.*

ii. Fraser Forum meeting (watershed level)

The Interim Executive Committee reports on progress made on action items since previous meeting.

DFO presents draft IFMP document and updated stock assessment / outlook information and fields questions, provides clarification. Issues raised by parties

present. Action items may be identified to address issues and followed up on by Interim Executive Committee (i.e. strike sub-committees, compile additional information, etc.). Discussion of how First Nations comments received to date at the watershed level could be incorporated into the IFMP. Stock Management Committee follows up on suggestions for input to the IFMP from the watershed level.

The Stock Management Committee also presents updated draft of the CMP, receives comments and suggestions.

iii. IFMP review (local level)

First Nations review to see if / how concerns expressed to date have been considered. Feedback to DFO.

iv. IFMP review (watershed level)

Stock Management Committee reviews IFMP to see if / how concerns expressed to date have been considered. Feedback to DFO, in discussion with the Interim Executive Committee.

April / May: Pre-season plan: develop final details.

i. information

Approved, or near-approved IFMP is sent out for all Fraser First Nations. Note: even after IFMP approval, there is much to work out in the details of management plans.

ii. Pre-season Bilateral (local level)

DFO presents IFMP to local First Nations group. Discusses how First Nations input was considered. Fields questions / concerns and receives comments. Both parties report on progress made in addressing issues raised at previous meeting (s).

Discussion of details of local fishing plans / monitoring / enforcement. Discussion of how such details link with watershed-level draft Conservation Management plan and IFMP.

Action items identified.

- are formal harvest plans required at the local level???

iii. Finalize Conservation Management Plan (watershed level)

The Stock Management Committee creates final draft of the CMP, and after approval by the Interim Executive Committee, distributes to all Fraser First Nations via the secretariat. *(is there some sort of "ratification" or individual band sign-off process???)*. Once "ratification" occurs (???), document is sent to DFO (RDG??). DFO provides formal response.

July / August: In-season updates and monitoring

i. information

Weekly conference calls of the Stock Management Committee commence. Updates from the Fraser Panel Process, fisheries, in-season stock assessment information, and other information pertinent to the management of fisheries. Interim Executive Committee members or Stock Management Committee members can recommend agenda items.

Distribution of in-season information via the secretariat (email distribution + Watershed talk).

ii. watershed level

Members of the Interim Executive Committee and/or the stock management committee may identify additional meetings / calls / discussion processes in-season to address special issues that arise.

More discussion is required on how meaningful exchange of views can be accomplished in-season given the time limitations of in-season decision-making processes (e.g. Fraser Panel participation).

All parties record issues that arise in-season to be addressed in the post-season process.

iii. local level

Most in-season interaction at the local level will occur as informal exchanges between resource managers and First Nations technical staff. Technical staff (both DFO and First Nations) are responsible to forward issues of management / policy concern to the management level. Communications will likely be through phone, email, fax rather than in-person due to the time limitations of in-season management.

All parties record issues that arise in-season to be addressed in the post-season process.

RETURN TO THE POST-SEASON PROCESS

2. PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS / DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY DFO (eg. proposals for new fisheries)

-- to be developed....possibly similar process to Shuswap framework

3 PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY DFO

-- to be developed....Policy Dialogue Forum could be a component of the process

4 PROCESS FOR INPUT WATERSHED-LEVEL DFO STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANS

-- to be developed....stock management committee to play a strong role.