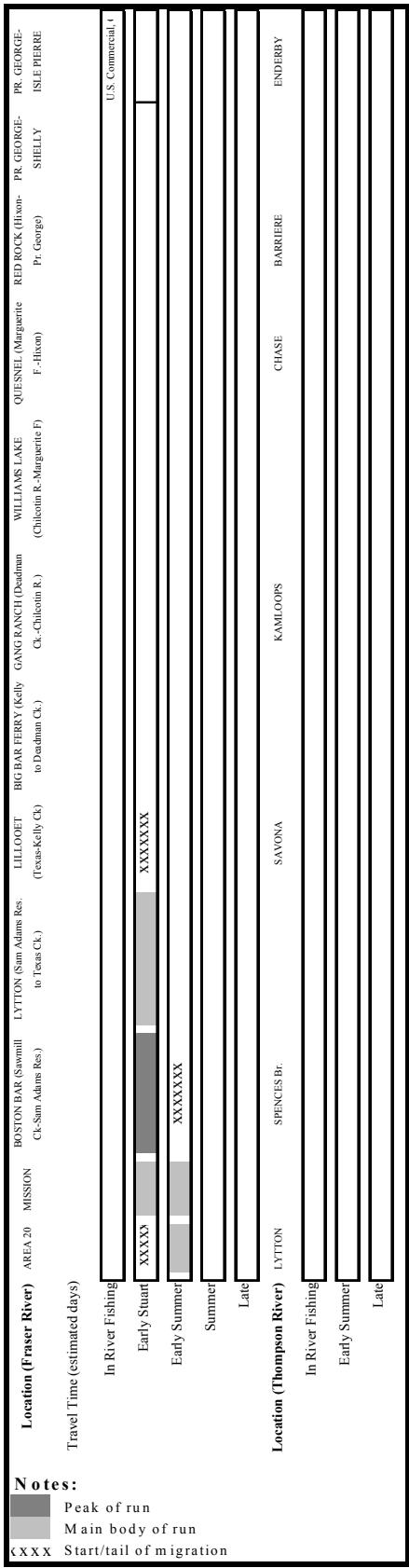


July 18, 2003

Volume IX  
Issue 14

# Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for  
fisheries representatives and their organizations



## WORK PLANS FOR 2003-2004

In a perfect world, many of you would be too busy fishing right now to worry about what the Stock Management Coordinator was up to. As it is, it appears that we will have a week or two to get ready for in-river fishing. All of us at the Secretariat are using the time to plan our summer and winter work schedules, not to mention holidays.

From where I stand, the relationship between DFO and Fraser First Nations deteriorated significantly over the past year. The nature and quality of consultations on this summers fishing plans was unacceptable, and the process was largely unworkable in 2003. The 2002 sockeye review was tremendously time consuming, and so far has accomplished nothing. Recommendations developed during the review (including those intended for implementation in 2003) have yet to be implemented. The process to develop sockeye escapement goals is moving very slowly, if at all. After what seems like five years, I am still waiting to see the promised Wild Salmon Policy, and, for better or worse, and despite implementation delays, the true impacts of the Species at Risk Act will begin to be felt over the next year.

Dealing with these issues and addressing these problems is my highest priority for the coming year. My focus will be on stock conservation, protecting stocks at risk, and improving communications, particularly at the technical level, and through the Ad Hoc Fraser Technical Committee. I will be keeping you informed of my

progress, or lack of it, through regular meetings of the Ad Hoc Fraser Technical Committee, and through contributions to the Watershed Watch. **For further information, contact Ken Wilson at (604) 301-0418 or [wilsonkh@telus.net](mailto:wilsonkh@telus.net)**

## READY TO EMBARK

Since the last meeting of the IEC I have been wondering whether or not Fraser First Nations are ready to embark on this latest attempt at building a process, an exclusive first Nations process? On the one hand I am excited about the future, on the other I am scared, scared of what the alternative is. I have come to the conclusion that I do not know either way, and surly only the creator has that answer. The only thing I know for certain is that unless I do everything within my mandate to help make this happen, I will certainly have failed.

I feel like there is a small ground swell starting to happen and that "the parties" (DFO/Fraser First Nations) seem committed at some rudimentary level. It seems as though DFO is committed to providing resources, to what extent remains to be seen. When I ask myself whether or not the parties want to accomplish anything anyway? Again, I feel as though there is enough to make the initial attempt worth embarking upon. There is a long and troubled past and I am becoming acutely aware of this fact...must make small incremental steps, and enjoy the little accomplishments.

After the release of the Gaertner Report, questions arose as to how

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to get the key messages from the report out to Fraser First Nations? After meeting with the IEC on June 10<sup>th</sup>, I have come away with some ways and means of moving the report forward. Over the next few weeks, Brenda and I will be meeting to review and attempt to break the report down into a kind of "report lite" version, and then attempt to come up with a manner in which to communicate the report to Fraser first Nations. I am very excited about working on this project. I will attempt to keep readers of the watershed talk abreast as we move forward. **For further information, contact Marcel Shepert at (250) 562-6279 or [mshepert@cstc.bc.ca](mailto:mshepert@cstc.bc.ca)**

## GREETINGS FROM THE NORTH

As some of you may already know, my role of Assistant Stock Management Coordinator has been renewed with the Secretariat, and I will continue to operate from Prince George. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, a meeting of the IEC and technical staff was held to further develop our work plans for the remainder of the year. For myself, this includes both a continuation of previous duties and a host of new tasks. I will continue to perform such roles as submitting articles to the Watershed Talk, technical review of fisheries documents, and continued support of the UFFCA. In addition, I will work with Fraser First Nations to develop a test fishery strategy for the watershed. New duties include generation of the weekly sockeye migration graphs, supporting the Nechako River White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative, aid in the upgrading of the FRAFS website, and produce the Watershed Talk.

Following this edition of Watershed Talk, as the new producer and joint editor with Marcel Shepert (also known as ED or the executive director), please forward all new articles for the Watershed Talk to me at [jasonyar@telus.net](mailto:jasonyar@telus.net). It would be preferred if submissions could be received by either Wednesday afternoons or Thursday mornings at the latest. This will allow for editing and formatting time, which would support a Friday morning publication. If you have any other questions, feel free to phone me at (250) 962-2712. As to the nature of submissions, it is an open forum (but please keep the topics fish related). I hope to generate a topic plan to better guide the direction of the future issues. The SFC as the host of the Secretariat will continue to publish and distribute the Watershed Talk, my role (along with Marcel) is to reduce some of the current workload placed on SFC staff. I look forward to hearing from you.

## A DISAPPOINTING START TO THE FRASER SOCKEYE SEASON

As the tail of the Early Stuart run enters the river, the 2003 season is very disappointing so far. The record high water levels of 1999 appear to have inflicted more damage on the early stocks than the high en-route mortality recorded in 1999.

The survival of Early Stuart sockeye from the few fish that spawned appears to be very low. Only 25,000 fish are now expected to enter the river. Fortunately, current migration conditions appear good so we expect only a small difference of 10 to 15% fewer fish on the grounds.

The early part of the early summer runs may also have been affected. At this date very few early summer fish have appeared. This suggests that they are either very late or may have also suffered from poor survival from the few that spawned.

The poor start to the runs has delayed the beginning of fishing. These delays will make it even more difficult to manage the many fisheries that have both needs and expectations. Adding to the uncertainty this year is the fact that as of writing the Minister of Fisheries has not yet announced exactly how he intends to deal with the complications of Sakinaw and Cultus sockeye or late runs conservation in general. **For further information, contact Mike Staley at (604) 261-7065 or [mstaley@mstaley.com](mailto:mstaley@mstaley.com)**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & TELECONFERENCES

**JULY 24/03:** 9:00 AM – Ad Hoc Fraser Technical Committee Teleconference. Chair(s): Ken Wilson/Les Janz

**JULY 24/03:** 4:00 PM - FRAFS Technical Fraser Sockeye Update Teleconference. Chair(s): Mike Staley/Ken Wilson.

**JULY 31/03:** 4:00 PM - FRAFS Technical Fraser Sockeye Update Teleconference. Chair(s): Mike Staley/Ken Wilson.

**AUG. 7/03:** 4:00 PM - FRAFS Technical Fraser Sockeye Update Teleconference. Chair(s): Mike Staley/Ken Wilson.