



# WATERSHED TALK

## NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat

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### FRASER SALMON ROADMAP UPDATE

The most recent Fraser Salmon Roadmap Workshop was held on June 13-14, 2012 in Kamloops, BC. This workshop marked the beginning of a new phase in the process, where First Nations will work at a Tier 1 (First Nations only) level to prepare for negotiating a joint management agreement with DFO for the management of Fraser River salmon.

A key task for Tier 1 development will be to establish a mechanism for political participation to provide direction as this process moves into the negotiation stage. At the March 2012 Roadmap session at the Tsawout First Nation, Brenda Gaertner of Mandell Pinder recommended the development of a First Nations “Main Table” to serve as the core body for advancing the Roadmap process. The Main Table will be made up of 9 representatives (2 Upper Fraser, 2 Mid Fraser, 2 Lower Fraser, and 3 Vancouver Island/Approach).

The key objectives for the June 2012 workshop were to confirm the Terms of Reference for the Main Table, and to determine a process for appointing Main Table representatives. Workshop participants were successful in completing these tasks, and agreed to a deadline of October 15, 2012 for appointing Main Table representatives. The Fraser Salmon Roadmap Planning Group (FSRPG) was tasked with creating/finalizing a number of documents for distribution to Fraser River and Marine Approach First Nations to assist them with this appointment process. The following documents were distributed on July 29<sup>th</sup> via the FRAFS email list:

- Fraser Salmon Roadmap Letter of Understanding (LOU)
- Main Table Terms of Reference
- 2012-13 Work Plan Overview and Timeline
- Sample selection process for Main Table Representatives
- Fraser Salmon Roadmap Briefing Note (June 29, 2012)

The summary report for the June 2012 workshop will be distributed to First Nations next week.

The dates of November 6-8, 2012 have been reserved for the next Roadmap workshop, which will be held in the Vancouver area. Specific dates will be sent out as soon as possible, and posted on the FRAFS calendar.

Also, just a reminder that the Roadmap is an open and inclusive process. If your community is interested

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in this process but has not yet signed the Fraser Salmon LOU, you may sign on at any time (forms are provided under Schedule C of the LOU document).

If you require more information about the Roadmap process, or wish to sign the LOU, please contact one of the following:

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## **STO:LO SALMON CEREMONY: I WAS ASKED TO WITNESS**

**By Tracy Wimbush, Nicola Tribal Association**

Today I travelled with a few elders to Sto:lo territory, also known as Chilliwack, to attend their salmon ceremony. We started out in sunshine but ended in overcast skies. We arrived by 11:00 am, the salmon was just going on the fire, but the tents and chairs were all set. So we staked out our seats and took a look around. This area changed since I worked there. A new elders smoke house was being built behind us right beside their ethno-botany garden. There were cultural program buildings and the kitchen buildings, and in front of us was the archaeological building with a display of maybe 60-100 cedar baskets/cups/hot plates, etc. We were under one of six white tents. When the ceremony started I was called to Witness. This is where people from the different territories are called by name, and their responsibility is to tell what happened here today. After this, we heard about why we were doing the work.

The people were here before the salmon. All they had to eat was meat – deer, moose, goat, etc., but the people were tired of just meat and they prayed for something different. Salmon came to them and told them to make a hoop with a basket net attached and go down to the river and hold the hoop in the water and pull something out. The people did this, and a man went down to the river and did as he was instructed. He caught a Chinook. Salmon told him “These are my children. I have sent them to you to eat, but you must always respect my children and when you eat the first salmon you keep the bones and return them to the river and thank them for coming. If you do not do this my children will stop coming to feed you.”

(continued)



As the story ended, the salmon was coming, preceded by singers and carried by four elder women. Then a group of young women went up and brought a small bite size to each person. As this was occurring, we were entertained by the Sto:lo singers (I believe they sang four songs), and then a youth group from Cheam band, led by Darwin Douglas, danced the paddle dance, then a bone game dance, then the salmon dance. Once this was done, the young women were picking up the bones of the salmon so that they can be brought back to the river with prayer and song. Then a meal was served. Yummy, salad, halibut, crab legs, rice and Chinook salmon (of course). UMMM. The weather was changed so the hosts had the witnesses come up to say any words. I thanked the hosts for inviting us, and said that we thanked them for helping us protect and rebuild the early timed Chinook stocks. I also thanked the cooks and youth for showing us very good hospitality, and that they are continuing their cultural activities. After I spoke, I was interviewed for comment on fisheries management. Once this was done, we readied ourselves for the trip home. As we were getting ready, six of us were given blankets by the hosts.