

Watershed Talk

— A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for —
fisheries representatives and their organizations

2. Skeena Watershed Committee (Glenn Sigurdson and others)

The Skeena Watershed Committee experience was described and reviewed. This was a successful (for a period of time) experiment in cooperative management at a local level. To summarize the key messages:

a) Governments played a key role through signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Provincial Government and the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans.

b) this process of cooperative fisheries management was successful as long as all the parties (DFO, Province, First Nations, sport fisheries, commercial fisheries) saw themselves winning while inside the process, and losing if they step outside the process.

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c) reason for the breakdown: a change in government that resulted in at least one of the parties being able to “get a better deal” by going outside the process.

c) Fraser Chinook: work in progress – an examination of the 2008 Fraser chinook management process. A series of questions has been developed and results to date seem to be responses from the DFO perspective. The presenter has committed to follow up with First Nations and their technical representatives in order to complete the picture.

CLOSING BREAK-OUT SESSION

Participants divided into two groups. Each group was tasked with highlighting key lessons learned over the two days regarding the three “pillars” that the ISDF is working on: Monitoring and Compliance; Governance; and Decision-making. The other task was to provide brief answers to the “10 Cross-cutting Questions” that were part of the forum material provided. My principal area of interest was Governance – and I was surprised to find that nobody in the group acknowledged the NWIFC presentation from the previous day, or Mike Graham’s comments this morning, as providing THE key lessons in governance. Prompted by our moderator, I stated that the lesson in governance is simple: without FN meaningful participation in decision-making our fisheries resources will virtually disappear. This prompted a response of protest, which enabled me to repeat the Mike Graham message: human population and development pressures result in loss of fish populations; governments cannot resist these pressures; only First Nations with title and rights can do so, and without that the fisheries resource will go down the sewer.

NEXT STEPS

The facilitators will synthesize the results of the two day workshop and use them to put forward a progressive agenda for a two day forum in early December. It was expressed that this forum is hoped to be somewhat "broader-based" and will at least in part consist of a report card on where the ISDF started and its progress/ results to date.

Regularly Scheduled
**Fraser Watershed Joint
Technical Committee Meeting**
Hosted by FRAFS

and
Wild Salmon Policy Forum

Hosted by the BC First Nations Fisheries Council

FWJTC MEETING: December 10 & 11, 2008
WSP FORUM: December 12, 2008

These meetings will be held in the
Lower Mainland of BC
Location to be announced next week

Monitoring/Compliance, Barkley Sound Case Study, and Fraser Chinook Case Study

These presentations were informative and interesting. In the interests of brevity I will summarize as follows:

a) Monitoring and Compliance: good progress has been made but some participants in the fisheries are slow to get on board; they should not be allowed to hold back the overall progress on this initiative or the ones who have bought in will begin to reject the initiative.

b) Barkley Sound: reasonably successful process at the local level that seems to be resulting in better relations between FNs and the sports and commercial sectors. Progress made to date includes better management of local fishery openings and closings to alleviate potential for conflicts.