



WATERSHED TALK

NEWSLETTER

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The Forum and the IFMP

The Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning held in North Kamloops on March 19-21 featured the highest attendance of First Nations in its history.

The March Forum was also notable as it was the last one for Les Jantz, Acting Director, DFO BC Interior. Les has been a “Forum fixture” ever since its inception but he’s passing the torch with his retirement this spring. First Nations in attendance joined members of the FRAFS EC in thanking Les for his dedication over the years and wished him well for the future.

The timing of this Forum (late March), combined with a rapidly-approaching deadline for input to the 2014/14 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP), has resulted in some scrambling as First Nations attempt to come to grips with management issues for the 2014 fishing season.

First Nations attending the Forum strongly felt that the April 7 deadline for input to the

IFMP could not realistically be met if DFO wants meaningful advice, recommendations, as well as positions and consensus, on the management issues for the upcoming Fraser salmon fishing season. An extension to the April 7th deadline has been requested in a letter from the First Nation attendees to DFO.

Participants also agreed that there was insufficient time during the March 19-21 Forum for First Nations to fully discuss among themselves the potential management issues for 2014 chinook, coho, and sockeye fisheries. Much information was provided by DFO, both through the JTWG as well as at the Forum itself, but there were still outstanding questions regarding a number of management issues that could not be addressed in the time available.

First Nations at the Forum did commit to working with their technical support in their particular areas in order to examine the available information and attempt to formulate conservation and harvest plans as soon as possible.

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The Forum and the IFMP (*continued*)

Work in progress since the Forum:

- March 25th: The Lower, Mid/Thompson and upper Fraser met by conference call regarding the three coho management options put forward by DFO. It will take some time to distill the information, assess what it means to sockeye, chum and coho management this year, then communicate with coastal First Nations on the issues.
- March 26th: The LFFA met by conference call with DFO technical staff to review how the Interior Fraser River (IFR) coho exploitation rate models can forecast Lower Fraser fisheries.
- On April 3rd: FRAFS Senior Biologist Mike Staley will lead a conference call with First Nations technicians on the JTWG on the subject of Sockeye Spawning Escapement.
- Talks are underway for arranging direct communication between the Upper Fraser and the St'at'imx and some Bands in the Nlaka'pamux Nation.

While some First Nations might be able to provide targeted input to the IFMP based on their own local circumstances by the April 7 deadline, more time is required for First Nations to work out some collaborative and integrated plans (an objective of the Forum process).



FRAFS EC members Thomas Alexis and Ernie Crey wished Les Jantz a happy retirement. In his remarks, Les noted the strong "ethics" of the First Nations fisheries people that he'd worked with over the years. Good luck Les!

Upcoming:

The Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon

May 7th to 9th, 2014
Hupacasath House of Gathering,
Port Alberni

The Agenda will be distributed
before the Forum.



Consensus for the Fraser Salmon Management Council

At an Assembly held on March 25th, First Nations reached consensus in support of the Constitution and By-laws of the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC). “We’ve made a huge step forward,” said Pat Matthew, Chair, Main Table.

Last Tuesday’s consensus is an important milestone reached after years of hard work in the Fraser Salmon Road Map Process, and months of research by our governance consultants Michele Guerin and Sheldon Tetreault. “I think it’s a great accomplishment,” said Chief Fred Sampson (Siska).

The FSMC is the Tier 1 governance structure in the process of being formed by the 81 First Nations from the Fraser watershed and marine approach areas who have signed the Letter of Understanding with DFO.



Some of the participants at the FSMC Assembly held on Tuesday, March 25th:

Tina Donald (Simpcw), Bobbi Peters (Chawathil); Janice Billy (FSMC Main Table); Grand Chief Clarence Pennier (Stó:lō TC); Pat Matthew (FSMC Chair); Sally Hope (Seabird Island); Ed Hall (Kwikwetlem); Carl Edgar Jr. (representing Nuu-chah-nulth TC); Robert Leech (T’it’q’et); Sheldon Tetreault (GTA); Willie Sellars (T’execl); Rick Bailey (Katzie); Pedro Moreno (Yale FN); Neil Todd (FSMC Main Table Coordinator); Thomas Alexis (Tz’atl’en); Dean Joseph (Yekooche); and Jordan Maher (Proxy representative for Halalt, Cowichan Tribes, Penelakut and Stz’uminus).

In front: William Rabang (Stó:lō Nation) and Clint Tuttle (Sumas FN).