

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

Visions Conference 2009

- BY AIMEE ARSENAULT

The 2009 Visions Conference was held at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops on June 24 and 25. It was hosted by the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat (FRAFS) and the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission. This year's theme was "Moving together toward collaborative management: An evolutionary process". Representatives from First Nations communities, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and various fisheries organizations in BC came out to discuss and share stories about their collaborative approaches to fisheries management in the Fraser River and beyond.

Day 1 opened with a welcome by Chief Nelson Leon of the Adams Lake Band and a prayer by Elder Evelyn Camille. John Jules sang two welcome songs. FRAFS Chairperson Marcel Shepert provided an introduction to the conference theme and a brief history of Visions.

A panel of speakers set the stage by offering their perspectives on co-management. Bert Ionson discussed the multi-stakeholder perspective and provided some background information on the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum. His talk focused on management of chinook salmon in 2008 and the elements (or lack thereof) of collaborative management in that process. Kaarina McGivney of Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided an overview of DFO's perspective, identifying areas where progress has been made as well as addressing challenges for both DFO and First Nations. Grand Chief Saul Terry of the Inter-tribal Treaty Organization discussed the ultimate goal of ensuring that First Nations have continued access to the lands and resources. Howie Wright of the BC First Nations Fisheries Council provided a province-wide perspective and highlighted the importance of First Nations working together to define their own expectations for co-management.

The panel discussion was followed by a presentation from Mark Duiven of the Skeena Fisheries Commission. First Nations on the Skeena have achieved a functional co-management relationship with DFO, and Mark provided an overview of their experience. This presentation was very helpful in identifying some of the fundamental issues that need to be resolved before co-management can be achieved on the Fraser.

The last presentation of the day was given by Brenda McCorquodale of the BC First Nations Fisheries Council. Brenda gave an update on the structure and function of the council and the role they will play in working toward co-management for First Nations across the province.

Day 2 focused on examples of collaboration in various First Nations communities in the Fraser River watershed, defining First Nations' management needs and building the necessary tools. Pete Nicklin gave a presentation on the Quesnel Didson project, a collaboration between the FSWP, UFFCA, Northern Shuswap Tribal Council fisheries and DFO. Mark Saunders then presented on the DFO stock assessment framework for the Fraser River. Gord Sterritt gave a presentation on the Churn Creek fish wheel, an enumeration project by the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council sponsored by FSWP. Tom Nevin of DFO discussed the Nicola chinook indicator stock program, a collaboration with the Nicola Tribal Association fisheries department.

Dominic Hope gave a brief overview of the Qualark Didson project at Yale First Nation. Dr. David Levy gave a presentation on the Stuart Takla stream rehabilitation project, still a work in progress.

The conference was closed with a presentation by Angela Bate of DFO. Angela provided commentary and recommendations on collaboration between First Nations and DFO, and how we might work toward meeting the management needs of both parties.

On behalf of FRAFS and the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission, thank you to all the presenters and participants for a productive 2 days of information sharing and discussion. While we still have a long way to go in terms of achieving co-management on the Fraser, it was very helpful to hear about all the successful collaborative projects happening throughout the watershed. By sharing our success stories and addressing the many challenges that exist, we continue to build relationships and goodwill that will contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of working together to protect Fraser River salmon.

Thanks also to the Visions 2009 planning committee - Marcel Shepert, Neil Todd, Aimee Arsenault, Linda Stevens, Gord Sterritt, Pat Matthew and Murray Ross - for putting this conference together. Thanks to Jess Urquhart and Kara Edwards from the Nicola Tribal Association and Tina Donald from Simpw First Nation for helping with registration and making sure everything ran smoothly. A special thank you to Pat Matthew and the SFC staff for arranging the awesome banquet entertainment and a very exciting game of Indian Bingo. Thanks to Linda Stevens and Aaron Gillespie for arranging the Visions hockey game. Thanks to all who contributed gifts and prizes, and to those who set up displays to share information about their fisheries organizations. And finally, thanks to everyone who participated in the Visions conference this year, and for all the work you do to protect the fish.

If anyone is interested in hosting the 2010 Visions conference in their territory, please contact Aimee Arsenault, FRAFS Communications Coordinator.



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Early Stuart Sockeye 2009 – Update

By Neil Todd

The Fraser River Panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission held its first in-season meeting on Thursday July 2 at 11 a.m. The meeting took place by conference call.

Arrangements have been made again this year to provide a “listen only” call-in number for First Nations representatives to hear the proceedings of the bi-lateral Panel discussions. The call-in numbers, and meeting materials when possible, will be distributed via email by FRAFS ahead of time. The Panel meetings normally take place every Tuesday. The next meeting is Tuesday, July 7 at 11 a.m.

The main item of discussion during Thursday’s call was, of course, progress of the Early Stuart sockeye run to date.

While it is still too early to say for sure, it is starting to look like the run is tracking below the 75% probability number of 165,000 that was forecast pre-season. The Pacific Salmon Commission estimates that about 22,000 Early Stuart sockeye have passed Mission to date, with another 25,000 or so en route between Area 20 and Mission. Based on the limited information available to date, the Pacific salmon Commission ran some models which produced a total run size estimate of about 108,000. This will likely change as more information becomes available from the test fisheries each day.

A note of interest regarding Early Summer Run sockeye was expressed: they appear to be showing up a little earlier than expected. The PSC stated that even with a lower Early Stuart run, they would not expect to see the proportion of Early Summers in the test fishery that they are now seeing. Chilliwack and Nadina sockeye have been identified in the catches.

Environmental conditions appear to be conducive for good migration conditions at this time. Flow/discharge is reasonable (5400 cubic metres per second) and water temperatures are normal.

Tina Donald from the Simpw First Nation asked us to help her spread the word about a couple of slowpitch tournaments, so ball players, please be advised:

5th Annual “Juanita Haller” Memorial Slowpitch Tournament

ALL WOMEN

July 11 & 12, 2009

Entry fee: \$200

At the Chu Chua Ball Park
For more information contact:
Roberta Haller: 250-672-2177
Or Tina Donald: 250-672-0082

MEETING NOTICES

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2009

Fraser Panel Meeting - 11:00am

This is your opportunity to listen to the in-season management decision-making process for Fraser sockeye. Ken Malloway and Marcel Shepert sit on this Panel. Call in numbers are as follows:

Local (Vancouver area): 604-639-5228

Toll-Free: 1-888-789-9572

Passcode/Conf #: 3269389#

Call-in numbers will also be distributed via email through FRAFS prior to each call.

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2009

First in-season update call, hosted by FRAFS

Biologist Mike Staley

The call will begin at 4 p.m.

Call in numbers are as follows:

Local (Vancouver area): 604-899-2339

Toll-Free: 1-877-385-4099

Passcode/Conf #: 3196930#

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009

Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Forum

9:00am-4:00pm

Prince George Civic Centre

**Please RSVP to Aimee Arsenault if you
plan to attend this meeting!**

Chu Chua Vol. Fire Department 23rd Annual Slow Pitch Tourny

July 18 & 19, 2009 at the Chu Chua Ball Park

Entry fee: \$200 plus 2 grey dot slowpitch balls

Deadline for registration: Friday, July 10, 2009

Please make cheque/money order available to: Simpw First Nation

Mail to: Simpw First Nation, Box 220, Barriere, BC V0E 1E0

1st, 2nd, 3rd place trophy & money (based on # teams entered)

MVP Male and Female

For more information contact Tina Donald at 250-672-9995 ext 262
or 250-675-0082

Or email tdonald@simpw.com

Drug & Alcohol Free Event

Annual Fundraiser for CCVFD