

Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon - Update

BY AIMEE ARSENAULT, FRAFS COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

A Conservation and Harvest Planning Forum was held on April 7 & 8, 2009 at the Best Western Richmond Hotel. Day 1 was for First Nations only, and DFO joined the meeting on Day 2.

Day 1 was very successful, particularly regarding the discussion on Early Stuart Sockeye. First Nations agreed unanimously to heed the request from Upper River communities to conserve Early Stuart in an effort to rebuild. First Nations recommended to DFO that the spawning escapement target should be raised considerably, to the point where there would be no (or very little) TAC. Allowing as many Early Stuart Sockeye as possible to return to the spawning grounds this year will benefit everyone in the future.

First Nations also made progress on their Early Timed Chinook position on Day 1. Pete Nicklin and Mike Staley provided an overview of their analysis of the DFO chinook post-season review, and highlighted areas they felt will need further analysis throughout this fiscal year. In light of these outstanding issues, First Nations recommended that a placeholder be included in the 2009 IFMP indicating that there would be ongoing technical analysis of 2008 chinook work throughout this year.

The rest of the day was spent discussing communications strategies, and planning for Day 2 with DFO. There were also presentations given about fishing plans, which provided an opportunity for First Nations to learn about each other's fisheries.

Day 2 began with DFO tabling a response to the chinook recommendations put forward by First Nations at the March Forum meeting in Nanaimo. First Nations felt it was important to have more time to review the response before discussing it with DFO, so it was agreed that they (First Nations) would respond to DFO's response after careful technical and legal review.

Recommendations on Early Stuart and Early Timed Chinook as discussed on Day 1 were put forward to DFO:

1. Early Stuart Recommendations: Set the no fishing point at 200k for early Stuart, and start implementing conservation measures at 500k. I-FRAWG members will draft wording to be included in the IFMP, which will include a proposed sharing arrangement for any available TAC and ceremonial access (deadline for feedback is April 20).
2. Chinook Recommendations: Continue working on the 2008 post-season review. Have First Nations technical people and DFO sit down together prior to the sockeye fishing season (May or June) and sometime after to work through detailed data, calculations, etc. Continue the post-season work throughout 2009. Put a language placeholder in the 2009/2010 IFMP stating that there will be ongoing analysis throughout 2009/2010, and that there will be opportunities to present recommendations and feedback throughout the 2009/2010 season. One model for building on existing processes is to strike a joint

subcommittee of the FWJTC. The smaller working group should include 5 or 6 First Nations technical people and 5 or 6 DFO representatives. Their role will be to closely review the data in the spring and the fall, and report back to the FWJTC and the Forum. DFO will suggest some draft wording for the IFMP by the April 20 deadline.

It was also decided that the in-season communication protocol would include the Thursday afternoon Fraser Panel conference calls chaired by Mike Staley again this year. Marcel Shepert and Ken Malloway, members of the Fraser Panel, will also participate to get input from First Nations. Vancouver Island groups will have access to weekly calls with Ken Spencer, DFO Campbell River.

DFO proposed a series of fisheries workshops with participation from the ITFT, FNFC, and other aboriginal fisheries organizations to discuss various issues and priorities. Barry Huber expressed an interest in establishing a management structure and framework.

First Nations clearly expressed their wish to have another Forum meeting in May or June to further discuss important issues such as Early Stuart fishing plans, DFO's response to the chinook memo put forward by First Nations, Forum terms of reference, DFO's proposed collaborative management workshops, etc. A meeting has been tentatively scheduled for May 20-21 in Kamloops. More details will be sent out next week.

Update on FRAFS Proposal to AAROM

BY NEIL TODD, FRAFS OPERATIONS MANAGER

A small committee has been working on the FRAFS AAROM proposal to DFO for funding in 2009/2010. The Executive Committee has approved the Statement of Intent and the Appendix 2 (activities and budget). The proposal now appears to be in the hands of the DFO Interior staff to make any final decisions regarding the need for any changes (from the DFO perspective) before it goes forward to Pacific Region staff in Vancouver for scrutiny and approval.

The FRAFS total allocation of \$440,000 remains un-changed for this fiscal year. The Statement of Intent states the following Goal and Objectives:

Goal: The goal of the Secretariat is to assist

and support the meaningful participation of all Fraser First Nations in a collaborative partnership arrangement with DFO to address the management of Fraser River salmon stocks, and management of the fisheries upon those stocks.

The Goal is long term and is not expected to be met in 2009/10. However, if the following objectives for 09/10 are met, the first year of an overall five year plan to achieve the Goal will have been successful:

Objectives:

1. Continue to work with DFO and Aboriginal organizations in the Fraser River watershed to provide communications and biological/technical support services that will increase

the capacity for Aboriginal organizations to engage in the management of Fraser River salmon stocks.

2. Continue to support the emerging Tier 1 body (ITTO) as it moves toward completion of its mission of having a mandated representative from each of the Nations in the Fraser watershed and developing its organizational structure, processes, and draft terms of reference.

FRAFS is currently seeking expressions of support from Fraser First Nations to continue its work toward meeting its 2009/10 Objectives.

To subscribe or submit content, contact: Aimee Arsenault, Communications Coordinator

Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat • c/o The Nicola Tribal Association • Box 188 • Merritt, BC • V1K 1B8

Tel: (604) 836-1909 • Fax: (250) 378-9119 • E-mail: aimee@nicolatribal.org • Web: www.frafs.ca

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

Inter-tribal Treaty Organization incorporates as an independent society

BY AIMEE ARSENault, FRAFS COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

On April 22, 2009 the Inter-tribal Treaty Organization incorporated to become an independent society. The signing of the documents took place at a meeting of the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat Executive Committee in Kamloops.

The role of the Inter-tribal Treaty Organization is to implement the Inter-tribal Fishing Treaty, a treaty of mutual respect and understanding. The treaty is an agreement between nations that strives to unite aboriginal peoples in the Fraser River watershed. It was originally signed in 1989, and Grand Chief Saul Terry of the St'at'imc Nation has been working to revive it since October 2007.

Becoming a society is an important step in bringing Fraser First Nations together to protect and rebuild the Fraser salmon fishery. While the current focus of the organization is fisheries, Grand Chief Terry explained that leaving the word "fisheries" out of the society's title will broaden the scope of the new organization to address many issues that affect First Nations' lands and resources.

The Inter-tribal Treaty Organization plans to hold a general assembly in Kamloops sometime in May.

For more information about the Inter-tribal Treaty Organization and the Inter-tribal Fishing Treaty, visit their website at iftf.synthasite.com.



Grand Chief Saul Terry, with legal representative Hailey Bruce (left) and Chief Marilyn Camille of Canoe Creek, signs the documents to incorporate the Inter-Tribal Treaty Organization as an independent society. The signing took place on April 22, 2009 at the DFO office in Kamloops.

Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Forum Update

BY AIMEE ARSENault, FRAFS COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

At a meeting of the FRAFS Executive Committee on April 22 and 23, 2009, concern about referring to the FRAFS technical process as a "committee" was raised. It was felt by members of the Executive Committee that calling it a "forum" would more accurately reflect the structure and function of the process. Therefore, the Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Committee (FWJTC) will henceforth be known as the Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Forum (FWJTF).

Another recommendation for the FWJTF put forward at the Executive Committee was the formation of a chinook working group, to be made up of key DFO and First Nations technical

people. This joint working group would be a positive step toward co-management, and would help to lighten the agendas at FWJTF plenary sessions to allow for more meaningful engagement and discussion. The working group has been tentatively named the "Joint Technical Working Group".

While the primary focus of the working group would be chinook for the first little while, it was suggested that it could also do work on other salmon species in the future. Membership would be flexible depending on the topic being discussed.

The FRAFS EC approved a budget for 4 FWJTF meetings in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

MEETING NOTICE

FORUM ON CONSERVATION AND HARVEST PLANNING FOR FRASER SALMON

TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED
for May 20 & 21, 2009
in Kamloops

Specific location and meeting
details to be sent out early
next week