

Watershed Talk

A weekly Aboriginal fisheries newsletter for
fisheries representatives and their organizations

SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION IN THE ROADMAP WORKSHOP AT QUAOUT LODGE - OCT 12-13

BACKGROUND ON THE ROADMAP PROCESS

The Fraser Salmon Roadmap is a collaborative process aimed at building a joint management arrangement for Fraser salmon between DFO and First Nations from the Fraser River watershed and Marine Approach areas. Increasing First Nations' involvement in fisheries management decision making has been identified as a priority for both First Nations and DFO. It is hoped that the "Roadmap" discussions will lead to a process that will define the shape, scope, and depth of such an arrangement.

The Roadmap initiative began in the fall of 2009 following establishment of the Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (Forum). While the Forum has garnered considerable support as a collaborative process for consultation on specific conservation issues and pre-season planning related to the IFMP, it is not viewed as a joint management process. It is hoped that the Roadmap initiative will lead to the development of a more comprehensive joint management arrangement and/or agreement over time.

The "Fraser Watershed Agreement," which expired in 1999, was the last formal agreement between DFO and Fraser River First Nations regarding the management of Fraser salmon. The former watershed agreement did not provide the joint management approach for management of Fraser salmon that satisfied First Nations interests. Since the onset of the AFS program in the early 1990s, a number of reports and papers have discussed the need for such an agreement, as well as recommendations and potential approaches to building the agreement.

With assistance from the consulting firm Delaney and Associates, the Fraser Salmon Roadmap Planning Group (FSRPG) is responsible for the planning and coordination of the Roadmap process. To date, this initiative has included eight workshops over the past two years, which were open to all First Nations in the Fraser and marine approach areas with an interest in the management of Fraser salmon. Over this time, the initiative has gained broad-based support and has emerged as a viable opportunity for the potential development of a coordinated approach to collaborative arrangements between First Nations and DFO. DFO and First Nations have invested considerable human and financial resources into the Roadmap process (mainly AAROM and PICFI funded), with interest and support shifting toward negotiation of a formal agreement.

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

At the last Fraser Salmon Roadmap workshop in Campbell River, First Nations supported the development of a Letter of Understanding (LOU) between First Nations and DFO that would serve as a bridging mechanism to the negotiation of a formal management agreement. The purpose of the LOU will be to confirm the commitment of the parties to continued participation in the Roadmap initiative, and commitment to

engaging in a series of discussions and negotiations focused on developing a joint management arrangement for Fraser River salmon. The concept of an LOU was explored further in breakout groups, which resulted in a great deal of input from workshop participants on the potential content of such a document. By the end of the meeting, there was a consensus that the drafting of an LOU should be the main topic of discussion at the October Roadmap workshop in Chase.

First Nations and DFO representatives will be invited to sign the LOU once the final draft has been approved by both parties. Signing the LOU will confirm the parties' commitment to work on the development of a joint management agreement, and will also serve to demonstrate to DFO that the Roadmap initiative is a necessary process that requires their continued commitment and resourcing.

In preparation for the October Roadmap workshop, a draft outline of the LOU will be circulated to First Nations communities prior to the workshop. At the workshop, the FSRPG will be seeking feedback on the proposed outline, and also seeking input on the content and wording for the LOU. The contributions made by the workshop participants will be used to develop the first draft LOU, which will be presented at the following Roadmap workshop in December for further refinement by participants. It is hoped that the LOU will be ready (or almost ready) for signing at the conclusion of the December workshop. If DFO and an acceptable number of First Nations sign the LOU, the February 2012 Roadmap workshop may be organized to prepare for negotiating a formal agreement. An optimistic view could see negotiations on a formal agreement beginning early in the next fiscal year.

ATTENDANCE AT THE OCTOBER WORKSHOP

Members of the FSRPG are contacting political leaders to discuss the progress of the Roadmap initiative, and the value of political participation at this important stage of this process. The key focus for the October workshop will be to draft the LOU. To kick off this discussion, a presentation by Brenda Gaertner is planned, as well as a panel discussion that will include Barry Rosenberger, Brenda Gaertner, Ernie Crey, Murray Ned, and Jordan Point (Jordan to be confirmed).

Brenda Gaertner's presentation and the panel discussion are expected to provide an interesting opportunity to engage in a dialogue that explores the risks, challenges, opportunities, and benefits of participating in the development and implementation of a Fraser salmon management agreement that is supported by DFO and the majority of First Nations in the Fraser River and Marine Approach areas.

For more information about the Fraser Salmon Roadmap initiative and the October workshop in Chase, please visit our website at www.frafs.ca or contact us at info@frafs.ca.

We hope to see you at the October workshop!

USEFUL WEB LINKS

With Chinook and sockeye approaching and in the Fraser River, these links may be of interest to many.

Albion Test Fishery – Chinook Gill Net:

http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraserriver/commercial/commercialalbionchnk_e.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission Website: www.psc.org

Upper/Mid/Lower Fraser Catch and Openings:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fraserriver/firstnations.htm>

Pacific Salmon Commission Test Fisheries:

http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing_summaries.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission News and Regulatory announcements: http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm

Fraser River Mission Escapement Reports:

http://www.psc.org/info_inseasonfraserescapement.htm

Fraser River Environmental Watch Program:

http://www-sci.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fwh/index_e.htm

First Nations In-Season Technical Conference Calls

Thursdays at 4:00pm unless otherwise noted

Hosted by FRAFS Biologist Mike Staley

Toll-free: 1-866-512-0904

Passcode/conference number: 4954972#

The Watershed Talk is also available for download from the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat Website:

www.frafs.ca

To subscribe or submit content to the Watershed Talk, email us at info@frafs.ca or call 604-836-1909.

FRASER PANEL LISTEN-IN LINE FOR FIRST NATIONS

As in previous years, the Pacific Salmon Commission Fraser Panel will open a line for First Nations to dial in and listen to the calls (observer only). The dial-in information is sent out prior to each call on our email distribution list.

The PDF meeting package, as in previous years, will be distributed via email the morning of the call (probably just before the call begins).

The Fraser Panel calls are scheduled for Tuesday and Friday mornings at 11:00am, with the exception of the in-person meetings, which will be held on the following Fridays: July 29th, August 5th, August 12th, August 19th, and August 26th (might begin earlier on these dates – notifications will be sent via email).

Please note First Nations calling in on the observer line will be asked for their first and last name as well as their affiliation.

UPCOMING ROADMAP WORKSHOPS:

October 12-13, 2011: Quaaout Lodge, Chase, BC

December 6-7, 2011: Location TBA - Richmond, BC

February 8-9, 2011: Tzeachten Band, Chilliwack, BC

FORUM MEETING DATES FOR 2012:

January 24-26: Lower Mainland, BC

February 27-29: Kamloops, BC

March 21-23: Tsawout First Nation, Saanichton BC

May 8-10: Prince George, BC

