

From: Farlinger, Susan
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2009 9:32 AM
To: Johal, Sharan <Sharan.Johal@dfo-mpo.gc.ca>
Subject: Update for MO on MSC Action Plan

MSC Sockeye Action Plan Update/Concerns from the Marine Conservation Council

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of four BC sockeye fisheries has been underway for 7 years. The assessment completed in fall 2008 resulted in 36 conditions. These conditions are routinely addressed in an Action Plan. The required Action Plan was authored by DFO as most of the conditions related to management and stock assessment activities of the department. BC also responded to the MSC certifier by outlining their response to conditions related to Steelhead conservation. All of these documents were publicly released in January 2009.

The Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC) review the Action Plan in January and provided written comments to DFO, the Certifier and the Industry Client (BC Seafood Alliance). DFO and the MCC met to review their concerns and agreed to work with the MCC to revise the Action Plan, noting that some issue would be resolved over a longer time frame.

Revisions to the Action Plan were to be released after a Peer Review, which was scheduled for February but has not been released. Comments have, however, been provided by the MSC certifier to DFO in May. Comments from the MCC and the certifier were incorporated into a revised version of the Action Plan. DFO and MCC met again June 10 to review the updated Action Plan.

Key issues raised by the MCC in their June 23 letter included:

- lack of details on recovery objectives and timelines for stocks of concern.
- No commitment from DFO to implement interim Limit Reference Points for salmon stocks of concern
- Lack of involvement of the Ministry of the Environment
- Lack of clearly identified funds or point person to oversee compliance with the MSC conditions.

The revised Action Plan has stronger language to address the concerns of the MSC assessment team and the MCC. In some cases timelines have been moved, although these timelines are realistic and we need them to get the work done.

There are also changes noted to the Skeena fishery to reduce impact on weak sockeye and chum stocks with benefits for steelhead. Although MCC would like to see faster movement, DFO is clearly committed to a process of implementing reference points through the Wild Salmon Policy; however multistakeholder processes are a key element of managing the social and economic impacts and DFO continues to take necessary conservation measures in the interim. MCC was interested in some changes to the IFMP that would set out the detail of changes being made that reflect the Precautionary Approach.

The MCC has also suggested that we reflect stock status by reporting on Conservation Units rather than stock groupings. DFO agreed to pursue these types of changes in our documents for the next year.

A stronger communication with the MCC would likely be beneficial and DFO will continue to pursue this. On the other hand, the MCC view could be read to be that they do not support the local multisector trade-off processes envisioned in Strategy 4 of the WSP or that these decision need to be made in a broad social context.

The revised Action Plan has been sent from the region to the certifier early this week. It is expected that the MSC Certifier will release the Draft Assessment Report, Peer Review and Action Plan for public commentary period.

The Action Plan will be revised after this period (note the MCC was consulted before this period), and a final certification decision made, one hopes in late August or early fall.

I hope this is helpful.

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