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Community Dialogues Progress Report 2007

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Introduction

2007 marks the fourth consecutive year in which the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has engaged stakeholders, First Nations and the public on current topics through dialogue. The objectives of the sessions are to give citizens the opportunity to obtain information, engage in dialogue with government and with other interested parties, and provide input to decisions, all in a way that respects peoples' time and builds collaborative relationships.

Topics that will be addressed in 2007 include:

- Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI): improving conservation and sustainability through co-management and catch monitoring, the establishment of a traceability system, voluntary licence retirement, and enhanced First Nations commercial fishery participation. This topic follows from previous discussions on Pacific Fisheries Reform. More information about PICFI can be found [here](#).
- Reform of the Dungeness Crab Fishery: review of options for reform. More information about crab reform can also be found at the website above.
- Species at Risk: an update will be provided on Species at Risk

Progress Since Fall 2006

We're often asked what DFO does with the information provided by citizens through community dialogues. In an effort to improve our accountability to participants and the transparency of decisions, we have produced this report on progress since last year's dialogues. Following are updates on:

1. [Implementation of the Wild Salmon Policy](#)
2. [Environmental Policy Modernization Plan](#)
3. [Pacific Salmon Treaty Renewal](#)
4. [Species at Risk Act Legal Listings and Recovery Strategies](#)
5. [Draft Guiding Principles for First Nations Access to Fish for Food, Social and Ceremonial Purposes](#)

Pacific Fisheries Reform updates are being brought forward in 2007 under PICFI (see above).

Thank you for participating in the community dialogues and working with DFO towards more collaborative sustainable resource management in British Columbia.

1. Update on the Implementation of the Wild Salmon Policy (WSP)

Strategy 1: Standardized Monitoring of Wild Salmon Status

Conservation Unit methodology and identification

Information gathered at the community dialogues and other stakeholder consultation sessions was analyzed and a document is being prepared which outlines the accepted suggested changes to Conservation Unit (CU) boundaries, including additions or deletions, as well the reasons for not implementing other suggested changes.

In June 2007, a CU* methodology paper was presented to the Salmon Subcommittee for the Pacific Science Advice Review Committee (PSARC). The methodology had changed slightly from last fall based on new technical information as well as information received at the dialogue sessions. The paper generated a great deal of interest. It was extensively reviewed and accepted with revisions. The revised methodology and resulting modified CU list, boundaries, and constituent streams is expected to be available in late September, 2007.

** A CU is a group of wild salmon sufficiently isolated from other groups that, if extirpated is very unlikely to re-colonize naturally within an acceptable timeframe, such as a human lifetime or a specified number of salmon generations." Wild Salmon Policy, 2005*

Conservation Unit assessment

In early 2007, a two-step approach was used to develop a timetable for strategic planning for priority CU's. First, 20 stocks of concern/priority CU's were ranked using habitat status, stock profile and planning capacity. Second, the level of effort to be applied in 2007-08 to each priority CU was determined using overall ranking and available funding, balancing CU's chosen across different areas, species, habitat types and levels of available data. Final decisions on priority CU's and planning processes are expected in the early fall.

During spring and summer 2007, work continued on finalizing stock assessment frameworks and bench marks for Fraser River sockeye as well as developing frameworks and benchmarks for the next priority CU's.

Strategy 2: Assessment of Habitat Status

The community dialogue sessions last fall yielded much considered and diverse feedback. The two-tiered approach to monitoring, integration between Strategies 2 and 3 (Ecosystems), continued work on partnerships, and pilot projects with the Province of BC were generally well received and are still planned. Recommendations included:

- the need for flexibility of indicators and benchmarks
- inclusion of habitat threats
- increased identification of linkages with the Environmental Process Modernization Plan
- the need to prioritize restoration works and conservation areas

These are now being investigated for incorporation into our monitoring framework.

Products completed since last fall include: GIS mapping of the initial version of the CUs and an automated system for future updates; satellite imagery data and statistics for pressure indicators in the South Thompson; a practical assessment (cost, data availability, etc.) of potential indicators and their possible metrics and benchmarks and; a web-mapping application designed to house WSP products, such as the Conservation Unit mapped boundaries, and enable linkages to other environmental spatial databases.

It is our intention in 2007-08 to continue to build upon previous efforts and undertake collaborative test projects where appropriate.

Strategy 3: Inclusion of Ecosystem Values and Monitoring

The Salmon Chapter in the DFO National Ecosystem Overview Assessment (EOA) Project provides an overview of salmon production within an ecosystem context (BC-Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area) and identifies a range of general ecosystem values and objectives that will help inform the assembly of a WSP policy paper on this topic (to be completed in 2007).

Wild salmon were also identified at a DFO National Workshop as constituting a species complex that fully meets the criteria established for Ecologically and Biologically Significant Species (EBSS).

An Ecosystem Values & Indicators Workshop with ecosystem science experts was held at the University of British Columbia in March 2007. DFO's WSP team delivered several presentations on ecosystem objectives & indicators and obtained valuable feedback on both the content and process required to develop an integrated approach to ecosystem objectives, values and indicators for future management of wild salmon.

Strategy 3 work for 2007-08 will focus on:

- completion of a draft policy paper that defines key ecosystem objectives, values and potential indicators
- initiating ecosystem-based management assessment elements in a pilot project focused on a coastal CU cluster of interest (e.g. Barkley Sound)
- expanding coverage of regional salmon index stock assessments to incorporate freshwater and marine climate factors into the 2007 state of the ocean report

2. Update on the Environmental Process Modernization Plan

The Environmental Process Modernization Plan (EPMP) was presented and discussed at the fall community dialogues in 2006. Comments from participants included concerns regarding the shift towards a results-based approach, the broad-based scope of EPMP, cumulative effects, and the lack of monitoring and enforcement to show that habitat is being protected.

Following these discussions, the Salmon Enhancement and Habitat Advisory Board (SEHAB) was invited to work with DFO's Habitat Management Program (HMP) to organize a workshop that would bring together members of the stakeholder community to increase the level of understanding of the EPMP, discuss specific concerns, and make recommendations for improving delivery of the HMP. An organizing team was established to develop a planning process for engagement. The team developed an issue paper to scope the discussion for the workshop, working with local communities including stewardship and advocacy groups to summarize concerns and recommendations regarding EPMP. Three key issues were selected for detailed discussion at the workshop: cumulative effects, monitoring and compliance, and sound science. The workshop was held in March 2007 and the workshop report is posted on the SEHAB web site (www.SEHAB.org). The SEHAB web site also includes a more detailed DFO status report and update on progress on the recommendations for EPMP.

3. Update on Pacific Salmon Treaty Renewal

Since the fall of 2006, DFO and the Canadian Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) have been working with their counterparts in the United States to renew key provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST). Five of the "fishing chapters" contained in Annex IV of the PST will expire at the end of 2008: Transboundary Rivers; Northern Boundary sockeye, pink and chum; coastwide Chinook; coho (southern BC, Washington and Oregon); and chum (southern BC and Washington). The chapter covering Fraser River sockeye and pink will expire in 2010. Together, these chapters set out the joint conservation and harvest sharing arrangements for key fisheries under the PST and provide an important framework for fisheries managers in Canada and the

U.S.

During the fall 2006 dialogues, First Nations highlighted a number of issues with respect to the PST and PSC, including:

- First Nations involvement in negotiations
- First Nations representation on the PSC
- Increasing awareness among First Nation communities of the PST and PSC

Engagement of First Nations is an integral part of the PSC process. In addition to representatives on the Pacific Salmon Commission (Russ Jones and Arnie Narcisse), there are several First Nations representatives on the PSC Panels and Technical Committees where much of the PST renewal discussions are taking place. DFO is also leading bilateral discussions with many First Nations on PST renewal potentially impacted by the outcome of negotiations.

DFO is currently reviewing the membership of the PSC and regional panels to ensure that a wide range of interests are represented. DFO will also be developing a longer-term strategy for appointments to the PSC, and welcomes the views of First Nations in terms of how to better engage communities and integrate their views and perspectives in the PSC process.

In addition to specific views on PST renewal and the current negotiations, DFO also welcomes the advice of First Nations in terms of how to increase awareness regarding the PST and the PSC process. The 2007 Fall Dialogues provide an opportunity to continue to improve understanding of the PST. DFO plans to further engage First Nations and stakeholders on draft amendments to the fishing chapters in the spring of 2008.

4. Update on Species at Risk Act (SARA) Legal Listings and Recovery Strategies

Three species were brought forward for discussion under SARA at last year's community dialogues, including: Okanagan Chinook, Northern Fur Seal, and Speckled Dace. All three species remain in the listing process; a decision is expected to be made in 2008.

The Governor-in-Council recently published a proposal in the Canada Gazette to not list Bering Cisco, based on results from consultations opposing the listing of the species. The rationale from those consulted includes the lack of information on Bering Cisco in Canada; that there is a healthy population in Alaska; and that the species is not under any human threat at this time.

Ten new species were recently proposed for listing by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in May 2007. Information is available about these species and the proposed engagement process online [here](#).

Progress has also been made on recovery strategies for Pacific Region species, with eleven final or proposed recovery strategies being published to the SARA Registry in 2007. An Interior Fraser Coho Conservation Strategy has also been published online [here](#).

5. Update on First Nations Access to Fish for Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) Purposes: Draft Guiding Principles

The draft principles were developed using input from First Nations received in a range of different forums. They were intended to support a consistent approach to discussions on FSC access and allocations between DFO and First Nations. The sensitivity of FSC access issues makes progress difficult. DFO continues to work with First Nations on FSC access issues on a bilateral basis. As

well, the BC First Nations Leadership Council has released its BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan, which identifies a number of action items related to aquatic resource sharing or allocation. DFO plans to work with this regional organization (and its Fisheries Council) on a range of fisheries issues, and anticipates that the emerging Fisheries Council may provide a forum for further discussions and progress on FSC access principles.

First Nations have also raised concerns about their ability to harvest fish as a result of decreased participation in fisheries overall (i.e., some no longer have the vessels to fish). The recently announced Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative will increase First Nations commercial fisheries access, thereby increasing First Nations ability to harvest their FSC allocations.

Contact Information

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