

Pacific Salmon Commission



600 - 1155 Robson Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6E 1B5
(604)684-8081
(604)666-8707 (fax)

To: Mike Lapointe, Don Kowal
From: Jim Cave, Keith Forrest
Date: March 30, 2007
Re: Possible options to reduce test fishing costs in 2007

On Thursday March 15, 2007, we met with Paul Ryall, Dave Cantillon and members of the Technical Committee to discuss Options 1 and 2 that were provided to the Fraser River Panel and Finance and Administration Committee of the Pacific Salmon Commission. Paul Ryall indicated that Option 1 (no sale of fish) was more likely than Option 2, based on discussions with Department of Justice lawyers. Paul stated that he would like to see a third option reflecting a reduction of test fishing programs. We indicated that further work on these options would be difficult, unless staff were provided with an indication of how test fisheries *could* operate in 2007 and what the maximum permissible budget would be, i.e. contributions from the Parties. We feel that the current Panel approved program is a minimum level of test fishing required to fulfill the Panel's mandate. If pressed these are the only options we see as possible, without significantly jeopardizing information requirements for Panel management activities.

Marine Assessments

1. Option to start Area 20 gillnet later. As the Early Stuart run will be small in 2007, directed fishing opportunities will be limited. Les Jantz indicated that the Musqueam-Tsawwassen fisheries could only start when 90% of the run had left the fishing area. As this is well after the peak at Mission, we should be able to estimate this point with data from the Mission hydroacoustics program and river test fisheries. The Area 20 gillnet test fishery could start on July 10. Possible savings in PSC operated test fisheries: \$40k. Possible jeopardy? Minimal given the forecast of Early Stuart sockeye. Round Island gillnet would start as planned on July 10.
2. Option to operate all Fraser River Panel approved purse seine test fisheries during August only. One potential concern is if the Summer-run has a much earlier timing (late July-early August) than has been observed during the past 10 years. However, gillnet test fishing information can be used in July without serious consequence to the quality of information provided to the Panel. Omission of the September PSTF information is more serious. Currently we do not have a reliable tool to estimate pink salmon escapement. As such, run size is approximated from the seine test fisheries in marine areas based on expansion of seine CPUE data. The timing of the run may be reasonably well known from this method, but I think our knowledge of the run size is poor. As for Late-run sockeye, only 6% in 1991, 4% in 1995, 7% in 1999, and 3% in 2003, migrated in September. To estimate Late-run impacts of possible fisheries

for pink salmon in U.S. Panel Areas, we could operate seine test fisheries in those areas and fund them from sale of fish. This would provide more accurate information for US waters, but would have some jeopardy because of the later timing of the assessment. In addition, in 2005 we ultimately applied the purse seine test fishing species composition to the hydroacoustic estimates of salmon passage to estimate the upstream sockeye and pink salmon abundance. Without the purse seine test fisheries in September, we would have no reliable way to generate species composition estimates at Mission should our in-river assessment tools fail in this regard. This would preclude the generation of reliable sockeye escapement estimates, and consequently, would limit our ability to provide the Panel with reliable updates of Late-run run size and exploitation rate estimates. Possible savings from August only seine test fishing in Area 20: \$150k. The savings would be reduced to \$75k with the August and September test fishing option.

3. Option to operate purse seine test fisheries every other day during July and August. This would provide some information about Summer-run stocks in July and regular information on Late-run impacts in September. This would require a standby rate on the alternate days (assume \$1,000/day). Possible savings from this scenario of seine test fishing in Area 20: \$63k. The test fishermen do not like this option and would suggest that they fish consecutive days, perhaps starting later in July and ending earlier in September, for the same equivalent savings.
4. Test fisheries in the Fraser River. No options. Note that we have not yet provided for increased test fishing in the Fraser River. I think we need to assign a minimum of \$50,000 for this test fishery. No savings here, the additional cost would be about \$50k.

Summary: Maximum savings would be \$40k for Area 20 gillnet plus either \$75k or \$150k for Area 20 seine (depending on whether the August only or August plus September option is selected), minus \$50k for Fraser River test fisheries. The option of fishing every other day in Area 20 would result in a similar saving to the August and September PSTF option. As stated above, we emphasize these are for staff consideration only at this time.

The option that we outlined during the Test fishing working group meeting March 30, 2007 was for the Area 20 gillnet option of \$40k, plus \$75k for starting the Area 20 seine on August 1st but continuing through September 10, minus \$50k for Fraser River test fisheries for a total savings of \$65k. With this option, we would require \$803k to operate the Pacific Salmon Commission test fisheries in Canadian Panel Area Waters in 2007.