

DRAFT (July 9, 2007)

DECISION NOTE TO THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL

Regional Salmon Assessment Plan 2007

SUMMARY

- The regional salmon stock assessment plan was developed following the November 3, 2004 direction from RMC. The plan was prepared by area and regional stock assessment staff with input from Fisheries Management and OHEB.
- The current plan assumes funding allocations equivalent to FY 2006/07 with an increase of 120K S&W associated with the PIPS contract settlement. No supplementary funds from Science Branch, as in the past two fiscal years, have been assumed.
- Further delays in implementing the plan until funding levels are known reduce the flexibility to align projects with the priorities and available funding.
- As funding levels are uncertain, three options are identified for consideration.

Background

- Salmon assessment project planning proceeded consistent with RMC direction, except that budget uncertainties delayed completion. The Stock Assessment Coordination Committee (SACC) followed essentially the same process described for 2004/05 (Appendix 3 for process description).
- A coordinated effort was made to allocate resources to regional and area priorities with a focus on PST deliverables while considering other priorities such as conservation, domestic fisheries management, and First Nations interests.
- For spring projects, operational decisions were made in a timely manner, based on the available budget estimates and project priorities from past years.
- The 2007/08 O&M budgets are assumed equal to 2006/07. S&W budgets are estimated to increase by \$120K for the PIPS contract settlement.
- Although Regional budgets are currently unresolved, this decision note is provided now because:
 - some of the highest ranked projects will be compromised if they are not started immediately; and,
 - several priority projects and staffing actions must be cancelled immediately, and stakeholders notified, *if the salmon assessment plan must not exceed the assumed funding level* (Appendix 2).

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- A prioritized list of unfunded projects is attached as a separate Excel file (Appendix 2), which includes proposed funding reductions, start-up dates, and anticipated risks.
- Recent project funding levels are summarized by species and Area in Appendix 1.

Salmon stock assessment funding allocations from 2003/04 forward

Fiscal Year	S&W \$K			O&M \$K		
	Abase	PST	Total	Abase	PST ¹	Total
2007/08	3695.0²	1925.8	5620.8	2241.8	6105.4	8347.2
2006/07	3575.0	1925.8	5500.8	2241.8	6105.4	8347.2
2005/06	3920.2	1726.7	5646.9	1720.9	5862.2	7583.1
2004/05	3637.5	1684.8	5322.3	2634.7	6007.5	8642.2
2003/04	3093.1	1646.6	4739.7	3657.2	5907.4	9616.6

1. Includes assessment, fishery monitoring & MRP, and Selective Mark Fishery (\$300K fixed).
2. Contract increase for PIPS settlement estimated at \$120K by R. Dhillon. Added to Abase only for transparency, as actual allocation will resemble the relative distribution of Abase/PST positions associated with the settlement.

STATUS

- 2007/08 salmon assessment planning began with 2006/07 allocations, plus an estimated increase for a contract settlement. A list of recommended projects was developed according to 2004 RMC direction and the approach documented in the 2004/05 SACC report.
- The recommended project list includes several unfunded ones (~\$101K) to be risk managed by Area or PBS-Salmon groups, and \$518K of high priority projects and staffing exceeding the estimated funding level (Appendix 2).
- For several years, the salmon assessment funding level has supported only the most important and high profile activities. For 2007, reconciling the project plan with the anticipated funding level will result in the cancellation of priority projects necessary for salmon program delivery.
- The proposed program is not fully satisfactory for any client group or Area, but reflects a concerted effort by Area and Regional staff to deliver the most important salmon assessment services for the Region within the estimated budget.
- Funding relief via collaborations with sectors through non-DFO Science funding sources (e.g. AFS, SARA, PSC endowment funds, other government departments, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Fraser Basin Initiative, Living Rivers, Nature Conservancy, and Province of B.C., and cost sharing with industry) have been developed to the extent possible within legal advice (e.g. Larocque) and policy on the sharing of costs with industry and the recreational sector.
- During the past two fiscal years, Science Branch has provided between \$250K and \$400K from relief and transformational funds to assist in Salmon Assessment project delivery and Area assessment staff have been highly responsible in budget management.
- A decision on one of the following three options is necessary to finalize the 2007/08 salmon assessment plan:

1. Proceed with the proposed assessment plan including the activities identified in Appendix 2 (*valued at \$518K more than the assumed budget*).
2. Proceed with the proposed assessment plan *but cancel the activities identified in Appendix 2* (i.e., no deviation from the assumed budget),
 - or set a supplemental budget to allow inclusion of specific projects within Appendix 2.
3. Engage the Stock Assessment Management Board to determine the final salmon assessment plan. The practicality of this option is uncertain as an implementation plan is now urgently required, and the SAMB may still not have adequate information on budgets for 2007/08.

Recommendation

Give the apparent uncertainty in budgets for 2007/08, Dr. Riddell requested that each Area re-evaluate their projects and develop the plan in Appendix 2 that would deliver an assessment plan *within the assumed budget*. While each Area and Core Assessment has cooperated in this exercise, SACC notes that the projects included in Appendix 2 represent a significant loss of information. Consequently, it is very difficult for SACC to recommend Option 2 but in the absence of available relief funds in Science (to our knowledge at this time) and in light of Paul Sprout's memo in early June, Option 2 seems the only responsible action within SACC's authority. We recommend therefore:

- Approval of the proposed plan determined by Option 2,
- Plus, specification of a supplemental budget level the Region would agree to risk manage.

I concur: Director General, Pacific Region

Prepared by: Brian Riddell

Approved by: Laura Richards

Monday, July 09, 2007

Attachments:

Appendix 1. List of projects recommended by SACC, June 13 2007 (excel file: BusPlanSalmon2007PlannedProjects_22-Jun-2007.xls).

Appendix 2. 2005/06 Salmon Stock Assessment Project Candidate List (excel file: SACC Project Candidate List 2007-08 - June 25 2007.xls).

Appendix 3. Salmon stock assessment planning process 2004/05 (BusPlan04SalmonReport20July04.doc).

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Appendix 4. Summary of project funding levels by species and Area for 2007/08.
 Individual projects listed in the Excel file [BusPlanSalmon2007PlannedProjects_22-Jun-2007.xls].

Note: Project O&M excludes conversions to address salary shortfalls for non-project based staff (e.g. indeterminate positions), but includes O&M converted for salaries of project-based determinate staff (e.g. field technicians).

Summary From Project Sheets								
Area	sockeye	chinook	coho	chum	pink	fish mon	infraS	Total approved
BCI	1,149.4	382.5	195.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,726.9
LFR	119.2	163.0	70.0	23.0	17.2	198.0	0.0	590.4
NC	586.0	297.1	330.2	0.0	25.0	267.5	0.0	1,505.8
SC	146.0	425.9	250.6	61.1	0.0	655.2	27.0	1,565.8
YTB	265.5	225.0	101.0	53.0	0.0	22.5	0.0	667.0
CORE	31.5	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0	30.0	872.6	939.0
FES	37.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.8
Total:	2,335.4	1,493.5	951.7	137.1	42.2	1,173.2	899.6	7,032.7