Presentation notes from Paul and John Brajcich

In 1999 we (John and Paul Brajcich) proposed the idea of using flexible transparent grids in seine nets. We tested a number of different materials before finding and determining that clear, flexible poly vinyl chloride (PVC) had the best results while being:

- Able to withstand the stress and strain of the drum, spooling pins, power block and fishermen
- Amiable and flexible to allow the fish to pass through with apparently little stress or physical damage

We believe these grids:

- Safely release salmon without stress
- Reduce onboard encounters with non-target species
- Do not impair the catching ability of the vessel
- Require no additional care when working with flexible grids
- Are the best solution for dealing with non-target species

Our vision:

- One bunt coast-wide (15 fathom possibly with a zipper) therefore no need for an inside 70 mm bunt, a Fall 100 mm bunt or a West Coast 100 mm bunt. The one bunt can be adjustable by adding a strip for the West Coast.
- Knotless bunt web (one mesh size 60-65 mm)
- Grids that are interchangeable for the particular area that is fished

Summary of comments from skippers who used the grids in 2004 (Richard Johnson, Matt Farac, Brian Vogrig, Julius Boudreau and Paul Brajcich):

15 Fathom Knotless Bunt (60 & 65 mm

Pros

- Unanimously in favour of additional length
- Reduced scale loss with the knotless web
- Greatly reduced number of gillers in the fleet area
- Knotless web was soft on hands for the crew to work with

Cons or suggestions for change

- Increase the denier or weight of the of bunt twine to be more cost effective over time
- Bunt had a sea-anchor effect in the tide
- Reduce the web hang percent to allow the grids to hang flatter
- 2004 bunt web may have shrunk 15%
- New bunts (location of grids) require specific adjustments to fit the variations in vessels (e.g. length of deck)

PVC Grids

Pros

- Easy to work with
- Do not hamper fishing capabilities
- Oblong opening shape worked best for retaining target catch while releasing the highest percentage of small or juvenile coho and chinook
- Impressed by the high numbers of escaping juvenile fish
- Limited use of a six foot grid (versus two three foot) but appears to release fish extremely well

Cons or suggestions for change

- A 5mm increase in grid opening makes a big difference to number of escapes therefore must choose opening size carefully for area of use
- Grid material thickness was .250 in. and may be a little light therefore consideration of .289 in. or .400 in.
- Could increase the number of grids from 4 to 6
- Could experiment with larger opening grids aft in the bunt and smaller opening in the front (i.e. towards the breast line)
- Grids must be laced in properly, orientated and positioned correctly taking into consideration the influence of mesh size

Power Skiffs

Pros

- An essential piece of equipment with grids and knotless bunts (e.g. allows orientation of bunt and grids to maximize non-target escapes)
- Eliminates flattening out of the bunt
- Increases safety issues for the vessel and crew (e.g. can eliminate dangerous beach tie-ups)
- Should be considered coast wide

Cons or suggestions for change

- Some vessels too small to accommodate a power skiff

Other Issues

- A short learning curve (1-2 days) for both crew and observers and to make necessary adjustments to each vessel
- A video demonstrating fishing scenarios with grids could aid the entire fleet

Recommendations for consideration in 2005:

- Use of heavier grid material (e.g. .289 or .400)
- Six foot grid appeared to outperform two three foot with only one day of testing therefore test the efficiency of the longer grids
- Bunt web should be standardized to 2 – 200 mesh strips for the inside and 3 – 200 mesh strips for the West Coast
- Review of mesh size data to determine what size to use (60 mm, 65 mm and shrinkage?)
- Determine the weight of the bunt web

- Determine the final grid positioning
- A brief video to instruct the fleet on grid use

Note: The ordering of web in sufficient time to allow for construction of the bunt and preparation of the grids (order material and cutting) requires a decision in February to be prepared for the coming season.