

Overview of the Fraser River Salmon Roadmap Initiative

Purpose

- The Fraser River Salmon Roadmap (“Roadmap”) Initiative is aimed at building a co-management structure, process and agreement between Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and First Nations from the Fraser River Watershed, Vancouver Island and Marine Approach areas, related to Fraser salmon.
- This document is intended to: outline the overall aim of the Roadmap Initiative; identify progress and key outcomes to date; outline the potential scope and DFO’s commitment and objectives for developing a co-management process and agreement between DFO and First Nations for Fraser salmon; identify proposed next steps; and requesting First Nations leadership from throughout the Watershed, Vancouver Island and Marine Approach areas to engage in this process.

Introduction

- Both First Nations and DFO have identified co-management as a key priority, including a more prominent role for First Nations related to fisheries management, policy and decision-making.
- Over the past two years, First Nations and DFO have invested considerable time, effort and resources in the Roadmap Initiative. There is a unique opportunity over the next year (until March 2012) and beyond to work together to build and (eventually) implement a co-management agreement for Fraser salmon that will better meet the needs and objectives of both First Nations and DFO with respect to Fraser salmon.
- To date, the Roadmap initiative has had strong participation from First Nations technical and non-technical advisors, with some limited participation of political leaders. Both DFO and First Nations have indicated that greater engagement on the part of First Nations political leaders will be required in order to establish a framework for developing a co-management process and structure, as well as (ultimately) negotiating and endorsing an agreement.

Background

- The co-management or joint management of salmon has long been a key issue in the evolving relationship between First Nations and DFO. Similarly, discussions between DFO and First Nations regarding the management of Fraser River salmon have been ongoing for many years. Over that time, these discussions have led to both formal and informal agreements between First Nations and DFO.
- Since 1999, there has not been a formal agreement or process in place between DFO and First Nations regarding co-management and Fraser salmon. However, in that time, a number of reports and papers have been prepared which outline the potential benefits of an agreement for both DFO and First Nations, as well as

recommendations and potential approaches to building an agreement for Fraser salmon.¹

- The Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning (“Forum”) was initiated prior to the 2008 fishing season when it was anticipated that low returns of Fraser salmon may impact the ability of First Nations to meet their food, social and ceremonial (FSC) requirements from Fraser watershed salmon stocks. Since that time, the Forum has evolved into a Tier 1 and Tier 2 process for First Nations to come together and with DFO to review technical information, discuss management issues and approaches related to Fraser salmon, and ultimately inform the development of local First Nations harvest plans and the Departments Integrated Fisheries Management Plan.
- While the Forum has provided a good venue for Tier 1 and 2 discussions regarding FSC fisheries, it is widely recognized that a more formal and comprehensive co-management agreement would benefit both DFO and First Nations. The decision was made (jointly by DFO and the First Nations Fraser River and Approach Area Working Group (now Called the “Forum Planning Committee”) to support continuation of the Forum as a venue for pre-season planning and in-season decisions. There was general agreement by participants to continue the Roadmap Initiative as a separate process aimed at the establishment of a more formal, longer-term arrangement for management of Fraser salmon.

An Invitation to Participate

- Tier 1 and Tier 2 meetings of the Roadmap Initiative are open to all First Nation participants with an interest in Fraser salmon from the Fraser Watershed and Marine Approach areas (e.g. Vancouver Island).
- DFO and the First Nations, through the Fraser Salmon Roadmap Planning Group, strongly encourage First Nations political leaders to engage in this collaborative process (directly or by a delegated representative) to contribute to building an innovative partnership between DFO and First Nations.

Who is Involved in the Roadmap Initiative?

- The Roadmap Initiative is coordinated by the Fraser Salmon Roadmap Planning Group (FSRPG), which consists of appointed members (and alternates) from the following organizations: Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat (FRAFS), Island Marine and Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).
- The FSRPG provides overall strategic direction and manages the process related to the Roadmap initiative, including acquisition and allocation of resources, linkages between various First Nations groups and organizations, and other areas as required.

¹ For example, Brenda Gaertner’s paper “Establishing a Fraser Watershed Process” (2003) and Paul Kariya’s presentation: Evaluation: Interim Fraser River and Approaches Working Group (IFRAWG) and Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning (Forum)” (2009).

- Delaney and Associates (consultants), including Marcel Shepert, have also been hired to provide facilitation and strategic planning expertise for the Roadmap Initiative.
- That said, the Roadmap Initiative is designed to be driven by the participants—First Nations and DFO leadership—who will ultimately be responsible for building, negotiating, endorsing and implementing a co-management agreement. Ultimately, this will require the engagement and support of First Nations political leaders, as well as DFO senior Executive.

Potential Scope of a Co-Management Agreement for Fraser Salmon?

- The scope of the co-management agreement including the type of activities, functions and decisions that would be covered under the agreement will need to be negotiated between DFO and First Nations leaders.
- However, based on dialogue at previous workshops and interests identified by DFO and First Nations, a co-management agreement for Fraser salmon would likely include consideration of:
 - Conservation, management and rebuilding objectives for Fraser-bound stocks;
 - FSC fisheries impacting Fraser salmon;
 - Dialogue regarding the management of integrated commercial fisheries impacting Fraser salmon;
 - Dialogue regarding the management of recreational fisheries impacting Fraser salmon;
 - Catch monitoring related to fisheries impacting Fraser salmon;
 - Dialogue regarding DFO policies and programs which impact on Fraser salmon;
 - Stewardship activities, particularly those related to habitat and stock assessment; and
 - Strategies for allocation of financial and other resources related to fisheries management for Fraser salmon (both First Nations and non-First Nations);
 - Linkages between organizations / initiatives that contribute to the management of Fraser Salmon

DFO Commitment and Objectives

- On behalf of the Government of Canada, DFO is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs in support of Canada's scientific, ecological, social and economic interests in oceans and fresh waters. Under current legislation (e.g. *Fisheries Act*) the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for the management of fisheries, habitat and aquaculture for species under federal jurisdiction. Similarly, First Nations bring to the table a range of rights, authorities, jurisdictions, expertise and resources with respect to fisheries and resource management.
- As outlined at previous Roadmap workshops, DFO is committed to the overarching goal of jointly (in partnership with First Nations) building a co-

management process for Fraser Salmon that includes a vision, objectives, roles and responsibilities, clear outcomes, as well as a clear process for building an agreement (i.e. “roadmap” or action plan).

- Achieving this goal will require:
 - a strong commitment from both DFO and First Nations;
 - dedication of resources from both DFO and First Nations;
 - joint agreement on a vision, objectives and outcomes; and
 - joint agreement on a strategic plan (e.g. what needs to be achieved, when and by whom).

- In this context, the Department is committed to working with First Nations to build a more structured, collaborative approach to co-management. This includes working directly with First Nations to define the respective roles and responsibilities, and to develop mutually agreeable mechanisms for First Nations to engage in policy development and decision-making around fisheries and resource management.

Next Steps

- Next steps related to the Roadmap Initiative will include:
 - Development of an Action Plan by the Fraser Salmon Roadmap Planning Group and Delaney & Associates Facilitation Team;
 - Follow-up and engagement of First Nations, including political leaders, as requested; and
 - Focused discussion of a potential outline and key elements of a potential agreement at the upcoming Roadmap Workshop, June 22 & 23, 2011 in Campbell River, BC

Key Questions to be addressed at the Next Workshop

The following are key questions which will be addressed at the next Roadmap session:

- What is the appropriate “scope” of a co-management agreement?
- What principles should form the basis of a co-management agreement between First Nations and DFO regarding Fraser salmon?
- What other elements should be included in a potential co-management agreement between First Nations and DFO?
- What structure(s) would need to be in place for First Nations and DFO to begin negotiating the content of a co-management agreement?
- What action steps and timeframe would need to be in place for this to occur?