

**Tier 2 Meeting Notes**  
**Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning**  
**February 19-20, 2014**  
**Executive Airport Plaza, Richmond, BC**

**DAY TWO: FEB. 19, 2014**

The documents referenced below can be found on the FRAFS website: <http://frafs.ca/node/43>

**1 – Feedback from the January 28-30, 2014 Forum**

The letters are posted on the FRAFS website.

**2 – Interior Fraser Coho (IFC)**

**Discussion:**

**Question:** What is the process for the DFO review of Interior Fraser Coho (IFC)?

**Answer:** The DFO review was originally scheduled for last fall in relation to the 2006 Recovery Strategies but was not able to be completed until January. On January 23, 24 there was a review of the CSAS paper, followed by a February meeting at which the CSAS paper was accepted with minor revisions. Next steps: (1) SAR (Science Advisory Review) which is a summary of the CSAS paper; and (2) translation and distribution of the CSAS paper. This is viewed as a key piece of information with respect to informing management of IFC in 2014 and beyond..

**Q:** What's the level of risk for not meeting escapement goals if IFC exploitation rates (ER) go up? Is the level of risk that DFO is planning on for 2014 consistent with other years?

**A:** Risk is a relative thing. We're still in a low productivity zone, but we have been achieving better escapements. DFO is looking for input from all groups to determine the level of interest in increasing ER's..

**Comment:** Identifying sub-populations that are consistently at a higher level of risk is a key concern. First Nations should be involved in the CSAS requests and setting objectives for the review from the get-go. This should be done before exploitation rates are increased by DFO. .

**A:** DFO hasn't done this (having non-DFO staff involved in setting CSAS review objectives) as a matter of process, but, it may be possible. The next input for CSAS requests is in the fall. I'll follow up for the next Forum.

**Q:** When will DFO share the ER model? How is the ER increase going to be shared (re: FSC and economic opportunity fisheries from the marine approach)? We require this information before the Comprehensive Fishing Agreements.

**A:** We'd appreciate First Nations input on what you see as the balance (ex.: between marine and interior). The ongoing modelling work and the information should come within a couple of weeks.

**Comment:** Yesterday, the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) had an on-screen presentation of a 15-page document about coho; we weren't provided copies. I'm concerned about what this information contained re: sport fishery bag limit impacts before First Nations have had a chance to closely look at the data.

**A:** We are having discussions with all sectors in the effort to get input to different options to consider.

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**Q:** A general comment and question with the IFMP coming up. There's a lot of capacity on the technical side in First Nations, yet, we haven't had the opportunity and time to look at the level of detail that we need. How are First Nations technical people supposed to provide input when we don't know the level of detail required?

**A:** I understand your concern. More information will be coming soon and there will be an opportunity to explore options with DFO technical staff.

**Q:** What I've seen historically is that safe recommendations from DFO go into the IFMP, but the big ticket items don't. If our technical recommendations re: coho are not implemented, will DFO provide detailed explanations as to why?

**A:** We seek and track input from First Nations and how it's addressed annually and provide responses.

**Comment:** With respect to the escapement modelling for IFC, I feel that there have broad, general statements about the impacts of the recreational fisheries; they could wipe out IFC sub-populations. First Nations have been on the shore for 20 years. I have these questions:

**Q:** Why can't First Nations technicians replicate DFO science work on Coho? Why are we waiting until March, when we'd like DFO to provide all current information Re: IFC ER? How are you accounting for what the recreational sector is taking?

**A:** The updates to the various models is currently underway and portions not completed until March. Once a full package is available opportunities to review the work and explore other options will be possible..

**Q:** What is the stock assessment plan for Coho?

**A:** The final stock assessment plan isn't complete; there are budget issues. We have recently flagged it as a huge issue with the Deputy Minister.

**Q:** How is what we've discussed about IFC today going to be reported back to First Nations? It's important for us to see impacts analysis on IFC sub-populations (re: Requests on the IFMP).

**A:** We'll report back at the March Forum. The data doesn't get down to the sub-population level; this could be subject of a future CSAS document. The bottom line is despite the data limitations for IFC, the result of our actions is an improvement in escapement (albeit in the low productivity zone) in recent years. All sectors are looking for an increase in coho impacts because of the big sockeye run expected in 2014.

**Q:** How does this play into Salmon treaty modelling?

**A:** 0 to 20% ER (low); 21 to 40% ER (moderate); and 41+% ER (high). We're still in a low productivity regime but this is not necessarily the same as the low, moderate, high management zones in the coho chapter.

**Comment:** There has to be a good exchange of information between DFO and First Nations. It's a question of being realistic and of process (info sharing and analysis). The JTWG would be a good place to start.

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**Explanation** of “4/2” as in Early Timed 4/2 Chinook:

4 is the age of maturity; 2 is the time in fresh water;

2010: spawn; eggs

2011: fry emergence

2012: smolts

2012-14: juveniles

### **3 – Fraser Sockeye**

**Q:** Do these tables take into account historic information??

**A:** Yes. Many of the stocks have datasets going back to the 1940s. Some, however, only go back to the 1970s.

**Q:** With respect to Slide 1 (Raft River, Thompson), has there been an evaluation by the department, that includes First Nations, of whether or not this is the correct decision to manage them as part of the summer run?

**A:** We can and have looked at the run timing of these stocks as part of the post-season analysis and for the past two years their timing is consistent with the other stocks in the summer run timing group.

**Q:** What is the purpose of differentiating between 4/1 and 4/2 of a specific species that comes into a creek?

**A:** We forecast by age classes ... (ex.: Harrison three-year-old; Pitt five-year-old)

**Q:** Do we know if a 5/1 stays a 5/1? Does a 4/1 produce a 3/1 as well?

**A:** Stocks have a predominant age composition, with some variation. It would be extremely difficult and prohibitively expensive to try to determine if 4/1s produced all 4/1s, and not some 3/1s or some 5/1s.

**Q:** What is the value of this type of analysis in forecasting methodology?

**A:** This is something that could be explored, but: (1) it's beyond budget; and (2) not sure if it would improve forecasting. Previous efforts (Ken Wilson) have not been successful.

**Comment:** The Forum Planning Committee and the Joint Technical Working Group need to think about escapement goals for 2014 because it's part of the planning for fisheries this year.

### **4- Escapement Options**

**Q:** Is there a reason why First Nations aren't part of this working group?

**A:** This group sets out initial options, ideas and starting points for discussion. We can include a First Nations rep in future years.

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**5 – Management Adjustment 101**

The use of Management Adjustment (M.A.) models help reach escapement goals for Early Stuart, Early Summer, Summer and Late runs.

Management Adjustment models include timing and/or environmental conditions for inputs. Higher temperatures and flows usually result in lower numbers in the spawning grounds than fish passage estimates past Mission .

MA estimates made pre-season, in-season and post-season are made by the Fraser Panel (US and Canada) with First Nations representatives providing input through the Canadian caucus of the panel.

**Q:** Regarding “further work” bullet. Who’s doing this work?

**A:** Dave Patterson’s group (DFO Environmental Watch) and PSC staff as well as work done by academia (Scott Hinch et al) contribute work on sockeye mortality. . The MA models are run by PSC staff and reviewed by the Fraser Panel Technical Committee and Fraser Panel before it is accepted for in-season decisions.

**Comment from DFO:** We’re working on short-term improvements to M.A. implementation (to achieve next season), then a work plan to take us into the future.

**Comment from DFO:** There have been requests to explore using Management Adjustments on a stock-by-stock basis. There are data limitations to this approach however, we do have estimates for some of the larger stocks.

**Comment:** First Nations should be involved in escapement goal planning and the M.A.

**A:** I agree with you and through the FRPTC and these processes First Nations are involved.

**Q:** Almost all of the runs north of the Chilcotin have been in the red zone for some time. Will this be taken into account when deciding on the M.A.? And with respect to Quesnel Lake, what’s going to happen to those runs?

**A:** The 60% exploitation rate limit (TAM) for all run timing groups provides protection to lower productive stocks as several of the larger more productive stocks could withstand ER’s in the 70 to 80% range. There are also other management actions taken to reduce impacts such as window closures and such. In addition, there’s ongoing research on Quesnel and it’ll be presented to the Fraser Panel in April.

**Q:** Is there a model for flow like there is for temperature shown in your presentation?

**A:** In-season we usually use temperature and discharge models for, but temperature is the driver for Early Summers and Summers, flow plays a larger role for Early Stuarts than the other management groups.

**Q:** What is the M.A. doing for Bowron?

**A:** Bowron is part of Early Summer group and would be protected by this group’s M.A.

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**Comment:** Qualark is a better hydro acoustic site than Mission; conditions change in the lower river, whereas, the Quarlark river channel is consistent. PSC has plans to purchase additional Didsons for Mission.

**Comment:** I suggest that you breakout the Pitt and Chilliwack components from the Early Summer aggregate DBE in your presentation it would make the non-Pitt and Chilliwack Early Summer DBE smaller. This would highlight the difference in the DBE's between LFA and BCI Early Summer stocks.

**Q:** How do we justify aggregate Management Adjustments? Wouldn't it make more sense to do the M.A. on a river-by-river, or, stock-by-stock basis?

**A:** We do pull some streams out, but, there are a lot of elements. Also, in most cases, there's little or no information available for the lower abundant stocks.

**Q:** This is my first Forum and I have question with respect to water temperature: Does DFO have the equipment available to give the First Nations on-river so that we can measure temperature and pollution? We could co-exist on the technical side.

**A:** (1) Talking to people on the grounds (ex.: catch monitoring programs) is valuable. (2) Getting fish health information from the rivers is important too. (3) How can we build information from fishers on-river into models that make the models more responsive in-season changes and decisions? There's a lot of work going on to improve MA implementation and this piece may be one option.

**Comment:** I believe that some of the problems in the northern and central interior are from logging (re: Mountain Pine Beetle). They're not logging patches, but huge tracts of land and nothing is holding the silt back.

**A:** I suspect that the Pine Beetle and logging practices have had an impact on salmon-production but in recent years we have seen improved returns system wide. .

**Comment:** Listen to our language, our people, our land ... they tells us the time for the Early Stuart.????

**Comment:** On the lower river we have a small window for the Early Stuart (Dry Rack) before the bees show up. I ask: Who are we conserving for? We're conserving for the people up on the spawning grounds. Last year, the Management Adjustment had a big impact on us. If First Nations can't decide on Early Stuart sharing, then DFO will do it as in the past.

**Comment:** Since 1996 DFO has made the sharing decisions. When are we (First Nations) going to take control of that decision-making: developing and implementing FSC?

**Comment:** First Nations leaders can use traditional protocols to make decisions on sharing.

**Q:** Will the Early Stuart study re: 8" gillnet be used by the department when deciding on Early Stuart release mortality?

**A:** This was the first year of the study and results do not show a significant difference from the current mortality rates being applied. For 2014 no change expected.

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**Recommendation:** “The Sterritt Share it Plan” proposed some years ago by the NStQ. The Upper Fraser are currently working on it. Bring it to the Tier 1 session in Kamloops.

**DAY THREE: FEB. 20, 2014**

**6 – Continued Discussion on Management Issues**

**Comment:** First Nations should start looking at what they think that the DFO technical group should look at regarding FRSSI and TAM rules going into the future.

**Comment:** I think that there should be a First Nations member of the technical group from the get-go (given that the tech group is connected to the Fraser Panel).

**A:** We’ll follow up. There has been a FN rep in the past.

**DFO Comment:** Principles and guidelines document status?. It was a FRSSI document prepared and reviewed last year and is currently on the backburner.

**Comment:** FRSSI is difficult to understand. We need to boil it down to laymen’s terms.

**A:** The document “Principles and Guidelines” can be found on the FRAFS website: More work may be required on this documents going forward.

**Principles and Guidelines Overview - revised Feb 2013**

**Q:** What is the consequence for weaker stocks when raising the TAM rule for a large run?

**A:** TAM rules are about allowing harvest of stronger stocks while protecting weaker ones.

**Q:** We shouldn’t go from 60% to 80% when there’s big run. My concern is that we’ll wipe out weaker stocks that are rebuilding. Are we trying to manage them into extinction?

**A:** To clarify, the 80% figure is just on the PowerPoint slide; it’s not a decision. The questions is: How do we deal with large run sizes? Over time, DFO has lowered the Exploitation Rate. Right now we’re asking people, pre-season: How do we deal with in-season scenarios where returns are very large?

**Comment:** There should be a principle: If there’s a stock in the red zone, then you shouldn’t even entertain 20%.

**Comment:** 60% was meant as a cap so that we just don’t take everything. How many fish do you want to put on the spawning grounds while accounting for mortality (Management Adjustment) en route?

**A:** Right now we’re looking at 2014. We’re not suggesting an increase for every year.

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**Q:** Can DFO distribute the Escapement Options sheet as and Excel spreadsheet so that First Nations can work with the numbers and scenarios?

**A:** We'll distribute it to the JTWG, then, the FRAFS Communications Coordinator will send it out to Fraser Watershed and Marine Approach First Nations.

**Comments re: "over spawning"**

- I don't think that we're at a place where we can over spawn. Salmon bring nutrients to the ecosystem; in the winter this is food for our fry.
- The term "over spawning," it's not possible. If that had been the case, there wouldn't have been any fish when contact was made.

**Comment:** The Quesnel system had very large escapements for 3 successive years in the early 2000's and since then the returns have been extremely low every year.

**Comment:** I've been listening for a couple of days. The elders shared our history. DFO is new here, but we're controlled by them. We made a mistake. We showed our 'cousins' where to fish. Now we're under their control (permits).

**Use of Fish**

**Q:** Are we getting Operational Guidelines?

**A:** Yes, mid-March.

**Comment:** We have not yet seen the Operational Guidelines and that's just not the way to do business. Now the Test Fishery wants another 25,000 fish. We might not feel it in a big year, but, in a small year, we'll feel it. My big problem with that is that test fish comes before FSC.

**Q:** Re: Slide 7. Is this a commercial TAC, or, the overall TAC?

**A:** It depends on the particular project and what it's trying to accomplish.

**Q:** Who determines what the FSC requirements are? Who is eligible?

**A:** It isn't just commercial harvesters who're eligible (ex.: First Nations test fishery in Barkley Sound)

**Comment and Questions:** I'm still concerned that in some cases the priority is management. It seems like a cash cow for DFO projects. What is the decision-making criteria? Is it FSC? Or *Sparrow*? And with respect to eligibility, what is the process for First Nations to review these projects?

**A:** We'll post the agreements for all to see and provide concerns.

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**Comment and Question:** The deadline is a concern and it's necessary for you to get out the communities and speak with rights holders (We'll invite you to LFFA). With respect to the Guidelines, First Nations need to know how you operationalize decisions and how it affects us. For example, Test Fisheries had a surplus, but our communities didn't fish. What is the threshold for activating FSC?

**A:** A clarification: Use of Fish dollars are not going to Didsons; there's a \$270,000 surplus in the bank at the PSC until the multi-year agreement is sorted out. When the summer run wound down, test fisheries wound down and they were only taking what was required for research; others were released.

**Q:** Are you going to have templates that show what recommendations were accepted, which ones weren't and the rationale?

**A:** This wasn't foreseen in the policy development, but I'll get back to you.

**Q:** Is there room in the Use of Fish policy to minimize infringement as per *Sparrow*?

**A:** Can more clarity be provided? I'll be taking that back to ....

**Q:** Will this policy be 'Track One' for 2014?

**A:** Yes.

**Questions:** Is there the possibility that the Test Fisheries can bank fish caught in a big year to pay for other years? Is there special treatment of international organizations like the PSC?

**A:** There could be, but it would be a challenge because of established PSC caps. It would have to go to the Fraser Panel as it involves an international organization. It's worth exploring.

**Q:** Does Use of Fish include funding for labs? Are we going to start paying for DFO operations?

**A:** Salmon test fisheries use significant amounts of fish, many of the other 35 don't.

**Q:** Do the Agreements show budgets? Where will the money be held?

**A:** There is auditing.

**Comment:** DFO has to think about the impact of test fisheries on First Nations. The test fisheries get first crack at the fish and enter into market before First Nations up river get to fish. It's difficult to see salmon in the supermarket when we can't fish. This particular point is one that could cause the most trouble.