

## TECHNICAL UPDATE: THE FRASER WATERSHED JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (FWJTC)

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Coordinator

The FRAFS 2006 technical season actually began in December 2005 with the first meeting of the newly re-convened Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Committee (FWJTC). The committee met on December 15<sup>th</sup> at the DFO Kamloops office with a full agenda discussing Terms of Reference (TOR) for the committee, the history of the FRAFS/DFO technical committee, the major technical issues for 2005 and 2006, a list of core participants, a preliminary reporting schedule, and action items for the next FWJTC meeting.

In a briefing note provided to the FRAFS Executive Committee (EC) by Ken Wilson and I back in November, recommendations were made to the EC to shift the focus of the FRAFS technical team from producing "one-off" products to products required by process. The hope with this approach is to focus on major workplan items that produce not only tangible and useful products, but also build on processes that effectively engage Fraser First Nations in watershed-wide technical work/issues.

The EC supported the idea of re-engaging a joint technical committee with inclusive participation from Fraser First Nations and DFO staff. Although the TOR from the FWJTC has not been finalized at this time, it looks like the FWJTC will function as technical support for the EC of the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat and undertake projects as directed by the EC. As a result of the desire to truly work together on facilitating the exchange of technical information and data in a cooperative manner, the FWJTC will be co-chaired by the FRAFS Stock Management Coordinator and a biologist designated by DFO.

It is important that the discussions taking place within the FWJTC are communicated effectively to the Watershed, and although the mechanisms for that communication haven't been completely described, it will start with regular reporting to the EC, the FRAFS website, and through the Watershed Talk.

2006 has a full suite of complex fisheries management issues that need to be addressed, some with major implications for change in how management is conducted. In addition to the regular post-season and pre-season discussions, some of the major issues are:

the potential listing of Interior Fraser coho under the Species at Risk Act, Wild Salmon Policy implementation, the Fraser River Sockeye Spawning Initiative (DFO's proposed mechanism for Fraser sockeye management under the Wild Salmon Policy), terminal fisheries framework development, decision guidelines for early-timed Fraser chinook, and developing a technical information dissemination process for Fraser First Nations in-season (particularly during the Fraser sockeye return). Each one of these issues requires significant effort and commitment by all participants in the FWJTC, so this is clearly a "working" committee with a full plate for 2006. I am encouraged by the results by the attendance, participation and work completed by the group at the first meeting held in December, and look forward to the next meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>, in Kamloops.

Highlights for the upcoming meeting's agenda include a final review of the FWJTC TOR, discussion of the preliminary post-season numbers for coho, chinook and sockeye, discussion of preliminary forecasts, early-timed chinook decision guidelines, updates from the Pacific Salmon Commission, and discussion of the FRAFS technical team workplan.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006:

- **Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Committee (FWJTC) meeting**
- **Topics:** FWJTC TOR, FWJTC process, FRSSI, Chinook management, Interior Fraser Coho Recovery,
- **Location:** DFO office, Dalhousie Boardroom, Kamloops, BC
- **Time:** 8:30am – 4:00PM
- **Co-Chairs:** Ken Wilson and Les Jantz

### January 31 (full day) – February 1<sup>st</sup> (half day), 2006:

- **Fraser First Nation Tier 1 Meeting**
- **Location:** Ponderosa Room, Days Inn, Kamloops, BC
- **Time:** 9:00am both days
- **Chairperson:**

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