

## WILD SALMON POLICY UPDATE

By Pete Nicklin, Assistant Stock Management Coordinator – [indiseaent@shaw.ca](mailto:indiseaent@shaw.ca)

The FRAFS Wild Salmon Policy (WSP) Technical Analysis report was released to Fraser First Nations on March 4, 2005. Marcel Shepert drafted a letter to Fisheries Minister Regan, and attached that letter to the WSP report.

I have summarized the main points of the report for those of you that do not have the time to go through the original report, although I encourage you to check out the report. Many issues identified in the report require on-going consultations with First Nations by DFO, and due to the rapid nature of this round of WSP consultations, must be examined in much greater detail.

### *Summary of WSP Technical Analysis*

The WSP report covers the technical aspects of the Wild Salmon Policy, and does not comment on legal aspects faced by First Nations after the policy is finalized or during implementation of the policy. It is recommended that First Nations give careful consideration to the legal implications of the Wild Salmon Policy. This policy can affect your Aboriginal rights. A good place to start is with the legal analysis of the Wild Salmon Policy was prepared by the firm of Braker and Company, on behalf of the BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, and presented to WSP meeting held at Musqueam on March 1, 2005. Copies of this document are available from the FRAFS or by contacting Ken Wilson, Marcel Shepert, or me.

The 2004 draft Wild Salmon Policy is the result of an initial round of consultations performed in 2000. Substantial changes to the original policy have occurred over the past four years, both in substance and format.

The WSP aligns itself with the Species At Risk Act (SARA) legislation and the assessment process employed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). The WSP defines conservation as “wise-use” and adopts a precautionary assessment convention used in international agreements. The definition of a salmon species is presented in the functional management unit termed Conservation Unit (CU), which is analogous to the COSEWIC “designated unit”. Precautionary assessment of a salmon species will rely on assessing the CU’s identified during the implementation of the WSP. The red/amber/green status of Conservation Units, defined by the spawner abundance of the CU, will determine the management activities applied to those units, with the goal of maintaining sustainable benefits for all Canadians.

The policy states that no additional resources will be made available to DFO for implementation of the policy, and focuses on the need for building partnerships in order to meet the goal and objectives. Conservation units are based on population genetics and spatial (geographical) distribution. The downfall of managing CU’s is that certain sub-populations within the CU may fluctuate in abundance and will not necessarily be protected when managing the CU as a whole. Compounding this problem even further is that DFO is not planning on conserving or even monitoring each and every CU all the time. Managing CU’s does not necessarily protect salmon populations of importance to First Nations, and Fraser First Nations will have to play a critical role in the identification and assessment of salmon CU’s.

The assessment of habitat status within the CU’s is a huge job, some of which has already been done. This is not a one-time exercise. On-going assessment of the habitat status in the CU’s is required for healthy, or Green status CU’s, and less healthy CU’s. The WSP states that the Habitat Management program of DFO is undergoing an evolution in order to become more pro-active in the management and assessment of habitat. The scope of the role of habitat in fisheries management is huge, and requires expert opinion on what the implementation of this portion of the WSP will mean to Fraser First Nations. The same can be said of the inclusion of ecosystem values for identification and monitoring of the status of freshwater ecosystems.

A more complete understanding of the technical implications of the WSP is needed in order to analyze the management processes that will be applied under the policy. This could be accomplished by having First Nations biologists engage

DFO biologists in specific discussions of complex fisheries management examples and scenarios to determine how DFO would apply the implementation strategies of the WSP in order to meet the objectives of the policy. Some examples that should be considered a minimum for discussion are: Interior Fraser Coho, Early Summer Sockeye Complex and the Birkenhead Chinook. Only by going through these management examples would First Nations biologists be able to provide comment on the various broad-brush biological management statements in the policy. This task cannot be completed in the current timeframe allowed by DFO for consultation of the WSP, and is not included in this report.

Perhaps the biggest issue for Fraser First Nations to consider is that implementation of the policy will provide a way to justify infringement of Aboriginal Rights by defining conservation.

### *Final Comments on the WSP*

The WSP analysis report is only a small part of the technical work needed to begin the process of implementing the policy. The bulk of the work is still ahead of us technical folks, and it will take the efforts of First Nations and DFO to find a way to undertake this technical work, and in a way that respects Aboriginal Rights and supports an agreed-to consultation process by both parties.

Let's all sit down and figure out what a meaningful technical consultation framework should look like for Fraser First Nations, and what role the FRAFS biologists can play in that framework. Firing up the Ad-hoc Technical Committee is on the FRAFS workplan, and seems like a good place to start the technical discussions that cover Fraser watershed-wide issues. The first couple of tasks for the committee could be to work through specific fisheries management examples under the draft WSP framework document and to discuss the 2005 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP).

For more information contact **Pete Nicklin** at [indiseaent@shaw.ca](mailto:indiseaent@shaw.ca) or by phone at (250) 392-5888.

## PRE-SEASON ISSUES

### *Integrated Fisheries Management Plan*

The 2005 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) has a target release date of March 18th. When that is released, Ken Wilson and I will be reviewing it and putting on a series of three workshops to discuss with Fraser First Nations. The workshops are tentatively scheduled for the first week of April, with stops in Prince George, Kamloops and Vancouver.

### *Pre-Season Forecast*

DFO released the updated pre-season run size forecast for Fraser Sockeye and Pinks on March 9<sup>th</sup>. The forecast table is on the following page. More on the details of this forecast in next week's Watershed Talk.

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## Pre-Season Forecast

Sockeye stock/timing group	Forecast model	Meanc Run Size <sup>b</sup>		Probability of Achieving Specified Run Sizes <sup>a</sup>				
		all cycles	2005 cycle	0.25	0.5	0.75	0.8	0.9
<b>Early Stuart</b>	Fry	<b>348,000</b>	<b>893,000</b>	<b>383,000</b>	<b>258,000</b>	<b>175,000</b>	<b>158,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>Early Summer</b>		<b>489,000</b>	<b>316,000</b>	<b>1,301,000</b>	<b>718,000</b>	<b>391,000</b>	<b>338,000</b>	<b>224,000</b>
Fennell	Ricker	28,000	18,000	74,000	40,000	22,000	19,000	13,000
Bowron	Power	23,000	14,000	44,000	28,000	18,000	16,000	12,000
Raft	Power	25,000	20,000	182,000	106,000	62,000	54,000	38,000
Gates	R/S	68,000	51,000	103,000	57,000	31,000	27,000	18,000
Nadina	Fry	75,000	76,000	194,000	106,000	58,000	50,000	33,000
Pitt	Power	57,000	81,000	152,000	88,000	51,000	45,000	31,000
Seymour	Cmean	156,000	27,000	37,000	20,000	11,000	9,000	6,000
Scotch	Power	57,000	29,000	28,000	12,000	5,000	4,000	2,000
Misc <sup>c</sup>	R/S	-	-	487,000	261,000	133,000	114,000	71,000
<b>Summer</b>		<b>5,800,000</b>	<b>11,873,000</b>	<b>15,658,000</b>	<b>11,048,000</b>	<b>7,834,000</b>	<b>7,196,000</b>	<b>5,747,000</b>
Chilko	Pooled	1,887,000	1,520,000	2,870,000	2,087,000	1,518,000	1,402,000	1,135,000
Quesnel	Ricker	2,536,000	7,402,000	9,510,000	6,948,000	5,076,000	4,694,000	3,813,000
Stellako	Ricker	532,000	343,000	843,000	562,000	375,000	339,000	259,000
Late Stuart	Cmean	845,000	2,608,000	2,435,000	1,451,000	865,000	761,000	540,000
<b>Late</b>		<b>3,378,000</b>	<b>1,070,000</b>	<b>974,000</b>	<b>524,000</b>	<b>279,000</b>	<b>239,000</b>	<b>156,000</b>
Birkenhead	Power	522,000	527,000	375,000	209,000	117,000	101,000	69,000
Late Shuswap	Ricker	2,316,000	92,000	33,000	18,000	9,000	8,000	5,000
Cultus	Power	21,000	4,000	<500	<500	<500	<500	<500
Portage	Power	63,000	87,000	47,000	23,000	11,000	9,000	6,000
Weaver	R/S	456,000	360,000	207,000	108,000	57,000	48,000	31,000
Misc Shuswap <sup>d</sup>	R/S	-	-	14,000	7,000	4,000	3,000	2,000
Misc. non-Shuswap <sup>d</sup>	R/S	-	-	298,000	159,000	81,000	70,000	43,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,015,000</b>	<b>14,152,000</b>	<b>18,316,000</b>	<b>12,548,000</b>	<b>8,679,000</b>	<b>7,931,000</b>	<b>6,247,000</b>
<b>Pink</b>	Fry, Salinity		<b>11,520,000</b>	<b>22,761,000</b>	<b>16,318,000</b>	<b>11,698,000</b>	<b>10,734,000</b>	<b>8,450,000</b>

<sup>a</sup> probability that the actual run size will exceed the specified projection

<sup>b</sup> 1980-2002 mean

<sup>c</sup> unforecasted miscellaneous Early Summer stocks

<sup>d</sup> unforecasted miscellaneous Late stocks

## STOCK MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR CONTACT INFO

Ken Wilson at [wilsonkh@telus.net](mailto:wilsonkh@telus.net) or by phone at (604) 301-0418.

## WEB LINKS

The FRAFS website is at [www.frafs.ca](http://www.frafs.ca).

The Pacific Salmon Commission's website is at [www.psc.org](http://www.psc.org).

DFO's Wild Salmon Policy consultation web page is at [http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/wsp/default\\_e.htm](http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/wsp/default_e.htm).

The BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission website is [www.bcafc.org](http://www.bcafc.org).

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tier 1 Meeting – March 22, 2005. Location Merritt, BC